



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 11; November 2023

Services, November 2023

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

29 October 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
GMT: clocks back one hour

5 November 10am: Rev Chris Levison

12 November 10am: Sheena Livingstone
Remembrance Day

19 November 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

26 November 10am: Dr Patsy Campbell

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

Empty space, or is it?

One of the things I first things I noticed when we moved to the countryside was the sky. In the countryside, the sky manages to be everywhere. It soars over the tallest hills and at the same time fills the deepest valleys. In my back garden on a clear winter's night, the sky seems even more present. It appears at its most exhibitionist, dressed up in sparkling stars.

Looking at the sky on a clear day or night, I am always struck by how much space there is. It sometimes seems as though space is the most basic ingredient in the universe. It is everywhere, even at subatomic levels, where we would expect things to be very dense and compact, there is space. It seems that even within atoms, there is space between particles. In fact, a cursory glance at an atom under a microscope suggests that 99.9 per-cent of an atom is empty! There may be less of us than we think. (I wish somebody would inform my weighing scales.)

But then along came scientists like Newton, Faraday, Einstein and others, who helped us to see that the space in our universe is not empty, but filled with invisible fields: fields like gravity. These fields, although invisible, act like non-material influences across great distances. We cannot see these fields, but we can observe their influence and impact. Michael Talbot in his book *Beyond Quantum* says:

Although we know a great deal about how fields affect the world as we perceive it, the truth is no one really knows what a field actually is. The closest we can come to describing what they are is to say that they spatial structures in the fabric of space itself.

I cannot help but wonder if Nicodemus felt the same sense of puzzlement and wonder during his conversation with Jesus in John's Gospel, chapter three, when Jesus tried to illustrate the dynamics of living one's life with God. So much of what we learn and discover about the laws that govern our existence have their beginnings in taking a step of faith. How much of our ignorance of God is down to our unwillingness to take that step of faith? As the cultural critic H L Mencken put it ...

Penetrating so many secrets, we cease to believe in the unknowable.
But there it sits nevertheless, calmly licking its chops.

Peace

Tony

News



Remembrance Day, 2023

We will mark Remembrance Day in Carlops Church on Sunday 12 November 2023, when our service will start at the normal time of 10am.

“Shoebox” appeal, 2023

It may be only late October as this is written, but if Christmas is to happen for everyone, it's time to start thinking ahead.

This Christmas, Carlops Church will again run a variation on the shoebox project, in support of Scottish Women's Aid. We invite everyone to take part and help to make Christmas a little bit happier for someone.

After talking to Scottish Women's Aid representatives and Carlops Church supporters, we choose to donate cash, rather than a plethora of small gifts in shoeboxes. This will enable Scottish Women's Aid to target what they know to be their principal needs. But no actual shoeboxes will be required; you will need to find a different excuse to treat yourself to new shoes!

Donations, by Sunday 3rd December 2023 latest please, in any of these 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 that will sit on one of the window sills at the back of the church from the start of November

Cheque

Payable to Carlops Church; send to Mary McElroy, Kitleyknowe, Marfield View, Carlops EH26 9NJ. Mary will do the transfer accounting for you.

Thank you in advance for your participation and generosity.

Social events problem? Please let us know

It's still early in Carlops Church's "social events season" – the regular Coffee morning, soup lunches and Cuppa and company event that we run. Most of them restart during September and run through till April, then break for the summer (Why? Don't know!).

But this year looks like it may be different from previous years, and we'd like to know from *you* if there's' some reason that we could deal with. Numbers are quite a way down on last "season" ...

- The two *Soup lunches* this year so far have attracted about 12-15 people, compared to last year's 25-30.
- *Cuppa and company* has dropped from around 15 most Thursdays, to about 8-10.
- *Coffee drop-in* on the last Saturday of the month has fewer supporters too.

We don't miss any familiar faces in particular; there are just fewer of them at any event. We haven't changed what the events are about. There are no formalities about attending; just turn up. And we haven't changed how we publicise them. So ...?

Please tell us if ...

- You know of some difficulty that has crept in
- You can no longer attend for any reason – especially if it's one we could deal with
- You would like us to do something differently

Or maybe it's the fact we *haven't* changed the events that's the problem. Or aren't we publicising widely enough, hard enough? Is the problem "same old"? Again, please tell us.

Telling us is easy ...

- Phone or email Nan Buchan or Mary McElroy: contact details for both are towards the end of this issue
- Or email info@carlopschurch.org
- Or speak to anyone of our helpers next time you see them

Please get in touch if you have an idea or feel uncomfortable with something. We really do want to run these events for the Carlops community, and we really do want to run them right!

We look forward to hearing from you. Better still – to seeing you at the next events in the church!

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

New Forward plan awaiting approval

Julie Gamble and Rennie McElroy have completed their task of revising Carlops Church's *Forward plan*. A first draft reflecting all comment received from supporters, and including Julie's and Rennie's analysis of the 2016 edition in the light of Carlops Church's actual performance, was discussed informally with the Church's principal office-bearers early in October. Following final "tweaks" (technical term in editing!), a final draft has been prepared and awaits approval before being published and distributed to our supporters throughout the community.

Recycling Medicinal Blister Packs

Several people have expressed interest in the prospect of recycling empty medicinal blister packs. The potential demand for this is huge: since our informal conversations about it started in Carlops a few months ago, the small number of people involved have given me enough empty packs to fill four large bin bags! I've done some research and have a partial answer!

Local authorities

Most UK local authorities don't accept blister packs in household recycling bins. They treat them as general domestic waste, so they go to landfill or are incinerated.

Superdrug with Terracycle*

Blister packs may be recycled via some Superdrug *pharmacies* (but not Superdrug drug stores!). This stems from a partnership between Superdrug and a company called Terracycle (see note below), which collects business and industrial specialist waste as a commercial venture. The blister packs are a modest proportion of Superdrug's total pharmacy waste. Superdrug outlets in Selkirk and Inverness offer this recycling service, but I haven't yet traced an option nearer Carlops.

Aldi with Terracycle*

Terracycle operates a similar arrangement with Aldi, whereby domestic participants can mail in limited numbers of blister packs – maximum of sixty items per month. I am mailing my first two bags this week as a “road test” and will let you know how I get on. The limit on quantity makes this option less than ideal, but it is a start, and it seems easy to do ...

1. Register as a collector
2. Pack your empty blister packs in a C4 size envelope
3. Download a mailing label from Aldi's website
4. Put the sealed envelope in any mailbox as *freepost*

I will also keep searching for a recycling option that does not impose limits on quantity and will report when or if I find something suitable. Anyone who knows of other solutions, please contact me. And meanwhile – keep taking the tablets!

Mary McElroy; E maryhmcelroy@outlook.com

* **Terracycle** <https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/> is a company that offers free-at-point-of-use recycling programmes (funded by brands, retailers and manufacturers) which can help you to recycle specialist items.

A little local (film) busy-ness – update

We understand that arrangements for a film company to use Carlops village hall for an extended period *will* go ahead, unless there is a major, late hiccup at the film company end. Operational issues mean that the timetable has slipped a little, but the hall's negotiators are awaiting final documents for formal agreement and signature as this is written on 26 October 2023.

Events normally scheduled in the church will not be affected by these arrangements, but the church will be used for several activities that would normally take place in the hall during the periods when the latter is occupied by the film company.

What follows is an outline of the current state of play. Details may well change as the hire progresses. Check www.carlopschurch.org, or www.carlops.net and local WhatsApp postings for updates.

It is currently planned that the company's use of the hall will cover two periods: 27 November – 21 December 2023; and 8 January – 1 March 2024. The intervening gap means that the hall is available to the community for the traditional Christmas and New Year celebratory events. In addition, the hall representatives have negotiated that the hall will be available to Carlops community for certain scheduled events on a few occasions on dates that technically fall within the hire periods. For example, in the hall ...

- 26 November – Wandering Willie's Tale
- 9 December – The Two Moronnies
- 15 December – Pentland Film Society
- 16 December – Children's Christmas Party
- 22 December – Linton Singers' Carol Concert
- 31 December – Hogmanay Ceilidh

From January 2024, the film company expects to be under more time pressure, so the community may not have such occasional use of the hall during the second hire period, 8 January – 1 March, though we understand that Carlops Burns' supper will be held in the hall on 26 January.

Alexander McCall Smith and Anna Marshall “in conversation”

Anna Marshall (Gavin's daughter-in-law, Laura's sister-in-law) and Scotland Street author, Alexander McCall Smith will be in conversation in the Graham Institute, West Linton, on Tuesday 14 November 2023, at 4pm. Their core theme will be Anna's new book, *The 44 Scotland Street cookbook*. Copies of the book will be available to buy; and culinary delights available to taste!

Tickets for the event, priced £10, are available at this link: [Alexander McCall Smith & Anna Marshall in conversation Tickets, Tue 14 Nov 2023 at 16:00 | Eventbrite](#). All proceeds support West Linton Early Learners.

Gavin Marshall on his bike! (again)

Some readers will recall Gavin Marshall's epic bike ride to Santiago de Compostela in 2008. Now, older but seemingly no wiser, he is cycling for a good cause once more: Oban to Inverness this time – about 108 miles, over the weekend of 20-22 October – in aid of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.

Gavin admits it's not such a long distance as some of his previous efforts, but points out too, that he managed to choose the most inclement weather weekend of the year to ratchet up the difficulty

level, and also, that he is, in his own words, “nearing my sell-by date and well past my best before date”. We don’t believe a word of it, Gavin!

Please assist Gavin’s fund-raising effort by visiting his dedicated appeal page and donating generously to a good cause, sponsored by a fine gentleman. Here is the link [Gavin Marshall is fundraising for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Scotland's-Charity-Air-Ambulance)

Christian Aid update

I have recently received an update from Christian Aid Scotland concerning our donation of £1118.25, collected during Christian Aid in May.

The money has helped women like Jen Bishop in Malawi to plant better seeds and secure fair prices for her crops, away from the hands of dishonest middlemen. You only need to look to Ester Saizi, another farmer in Malawi, to see the lasting impact gifts like ours can have. Like Jen, Esther struggled to obtain fair prices and couldn’t store her crops safely from storms and floods. But when she joined a pigeon pea programme run by a CA partner organization, and started to sell as part of a cooperative, she was able to earn much more – it provided her with financial stability.

Esther is doing amazing things for her family with her pigeon peas. She bought tools for her daughter Ziwone to use in her carpentry business and pays for her daughter Rashida’s school costs. She is now able to store her pigeon peas safely in a warehouse. What a transformation!

Robert Higgins
Chair, Linkage Christian Aid Group

Messy Church reminder



Messy Church will meet at the New Church Hall, West Linton, at 4pm on these 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

Children from babies to P7 are welcome to come and join in the fun! There will be a Bible Story, then a range of craft activities, followed by a song and a prayer. We finish with a meal together. All children MUST be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, contact Jean Howat: T 01968 660677; E howatjean@gmail.com

Castle Craig Hospital's work

A representative of Castle Craig Hospital will talk about the work of the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit, in Newlands Church on Monday, 30 October November 2023 at 7.30pm. All are warmly invited.

The Column



Nuclear issues and climate change

No-one should be in any doubt that we are facing a climate and biodiversity crisis which, together, pose genuine existential threats to humanity. Yet we cannot wait for governments to act. While they may occasionally make the right noises, manifesto commitments around the environment are not yet a core vote winner. We have seen this week [week beginning 25 September 2023] how the UK government has completely rolled back on its green policies. What example does this set to the young who are the ones who will outlive us and have to deal with the broken world?

I have been a member of Scottish CND since I was a teenager, believing passionately that the world must get rid of these obscene weapons. We all know the devastating impact of Hiroshima, but we have our own sites at Faslane and Coulport, only a short distance from our biggest city, Glasgow. The destruction would be wide-spread. But were you aware that the US has delivered new fighter jets to Lakenheath in Suffolk and other European NATO bases. These jets are able to launch satellite guided nuclear bombs, the most dangerous weapons in the nuclear arsenal as they are small and targeted. In reality, the radioactive fallout means that they are totally indiscriminate, killing and poisoning people for miles around.

Militarism fuels the Climate Crisis

- Did you know that Military emissions are exempt from global mandatory reporting and reduction targets?
- Global military carbon emissions account for 5.5% of total global emissions, exceeding the value of civilian aviation
- The UK spends over 7 times more on its military than on reaching the Net Zero targets.

92 countries have now signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This is good progress for a treaty that was only adopted six years ago. In Carlisle, we have been part of the national bell-ringing marking our support.

What can we do? Join Scottish CND. Write to your MP. Stand with “Women in Black” every Saturday 1-2 in Edinburgh. Come to the Festival of Survival in Glasgow on 4th November [THE FESTIVAL FOR SURVIVAL](#), where we will be discussing ideas to save the world.

Anna Woolverton

Diary



Forthcoming events

- 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
- Advent garden ceremony** Saturday 2 December 2023, 3.45pm for 4pm
- Cuppa and company** Thursday 7 December 2023, 2-4pm
- Cuppa and company** Thursday 14 December 2023, 2-4pm

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Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 20 November 2023