



# CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

## Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 5; May 2024

## Services, May 2024

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

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28 April 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley  
5 May 10am: TBC  
12 May 10am: Peter Worthington  
19 May 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley  
26 May 10am: Stephen Whalley  
2 June 10am: Chris Levison

**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***



# Our Minister

## ‘Whatabouterism’

In 2013, the then future Prime Minister of the UK, Boris Johnson wrote an article, describing what he called “*dead cat*” strategy politics. Or what I have termed ‘Whatabouterism’. Imagine for a moment a family heatedly engaged in some hoary familial argument. When, in walks granddad and slams a mangy and very dead cat on the table. In that moment, the argument is forgotten. The dead cat is all the family is talking about. Johnson’s somewhat cynical point was that if you present the public with an outrageous, ridiculous, and scandalous piece of news, they completely forget about the much more pertinent issue that needs their attention. It is a tactic political media strategists and spin doctors seek to use almost every day — it’s when they shout “*Oh, look over there!*” - ‘*What about that!*’ This insipient form of ‘Whatabouterism’ is the plague of our time. It is the stuff that Social Media and our 24/7 news media thrives on.

In 1990, the Nobel Prize winner and Pulitzer Prize Saul Bellow gave a lecture at Oxford University titled “***The Distracted Public.***” In his talk, **Bellow** lamented what he called the looming “moronic inferno” that was being fuelled by our contemporary addiction to distraction, which if left unchecked would one day become, “the apocalypse of our times.” He called on artists and writers everywhere to raise their voices and use their talents to counter this “massive and worldwide hostile condition” that besetting humanity.

C.S. Lewis struck a similar note in a sermon he preached during the Second World War speaking to what he called the ‘The task of our times,’ counselled his listeners: “*Never, in peace or war, commit your virtue or your happiness to the future. Happy work is best done by the person who takes their long-term plans somewhat lightly... The present is the only time in which any duty can be done, or any grace received.*”

The ‘Whatabouterism,’ of popular media that is constantly trying to invade our daily lives is emotionally akin to finding ourselves out at sea caught in the thrall of neverending squalls. Perhaps that is what Jesus was trying to warn us about when he counselled us to: ‘*Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*’ Matthew 6:34

Peace,  
Tony

# News



## Meteorological Miscellanea

*Peter Woolverton writes:*

Paul McNamee, UK Editor of Big Issue, recently reported that “March was the 10th consecutive hottest month on record for global air and sea temperatures.” I can only speak for Carlops after 30 years of carefully noting temperature and precipitation readings on a daily basis. Obsessive behaviour, yes, but always interesting, and I do have records going back to 1959 for south Edinburgh! Readers of a certain age may recall this column in the much missed “Carlops News and Views”. I hope that it’s worth another airing.

1993-94 was our first winter in Carlops. There was lying snow in our garden for a total of 100 days. This winter the total, so far, is 23, and some of those were brief and overnight. That’s one example of how things are changing.

This winter, from 1st September to 23rd April I have recorded an unprecedented 42.98 inches/1092 mm of rainfall. You will have noted the waterlogged ground, the muddy pathways and the seasonal lochans between Nine Mile Burn and Penicuik demonstrating the raised water table.

On average April is the driest month of the year at 2.66 inches/68 mm. As early as the 15th of April this year we had our 2nd wettest April on record (5.40 inches/137 mm). It looks as if April 2000, with 7.39 inches/188 mm, will hold onto its title. I told you it was interesting!

Any questions? Find the answer here next month!

Peter Woolverton, Pyethall

*Editor’s note – huge thanks to Peter for this new addition to the newsletter, which is intended to be a regular feature. I’m sure those who enjoyed it in its previous incarnation will join me in thanks. As Peter mentions, questions will be happily received – just contact me using the email address at the end of the newsletter.*



## 12 – 18 May is Christian Aid week!

Events around the linkage for Christian Aid week and beyond.

- **Carlops Soup lunch Wed 8<sup>th</sup> May 12pm – 1.30pm**

Our usual delicious soup lunch, with all proceeds going to Christian Aid

- **Christian Aid plant sale @ Carlops Coffee drop-in Sat 25<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30am – 12.00pm**

All plant donations gratefully received – flowers, veg, house plants etc.

We should have a good selection - all looking for good homes! Please come and join us.

A promotional poster for a plant sale. On the left, the text "Plant Sale!" is written in large green letters, followed by "SATURDAY 25TH MAY" and "10:30AM - 12NOON" in black. Below this is a graphic of a pink mug with a smiling face and the text "Monthly Drop in Coffee Morning" and "Drop-in Coffee Morning Carlops Church on the last Saturday each month. 10.30am to 12 noon." On the right, there is a red arrow logo with "PROCEEDS TO christian aid" and the text "BRING &amp; BUY ALL PLANTS WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED". At the bottom right is a circular image showing a variety of indoor plants on a wooden stand and shelves.

- **Car Boot Sale - Skirling Village Green - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – with tea and cakes in the hall**





Volunteers are needed to help with the car boot sale. Contact Isobel Hunter if interested. [isobel@skirlinghouse.com](mailto:isobel@skirlinghouse.com)

### - Christian Aid Service

**St. Andrew's church, West Linton, Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 11.30am.**

Peter Worthington will lead the service. Slides will be shown telling the story of Aline who lives in Burundi. She was abused, homeless and hungry, poverty had pushed her to the brink of survival. CA funded her in a small business training course and she has now rebuilt her life and has hope for her children's future.

### - Christian Aid Cryptic Quiz

The theme this year is animal/creature names. Printed quiz sheets can be picked up from the church (optional discretionary donation). Alternatively, an electronic version is available from Robert Higgins [higfam72@gmail.com](mailto:higfam72@gmail.com) Answers by request (but not yet!) if you get stuck.

### - Donating

Donation envelopes will be available in church.

If you prefer to donate online look here <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/ways-to-donate>

## Gaelic Psalm Singing – Tuesdays 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Are you interested in learning to sing Psalms in Gaelic?  
Rob MacNeacail leads a session in the church on a Tuesday evening.

No prior knowledge of Gaelic is needed as the lyrics are learned phonetically; example below.

You can email Rob at [robmacneacail@gmail.com](mailto:robmacneacail@gmail.com) or just drop by one of the sessions.

Psalm (Salm) 13 v 1-2

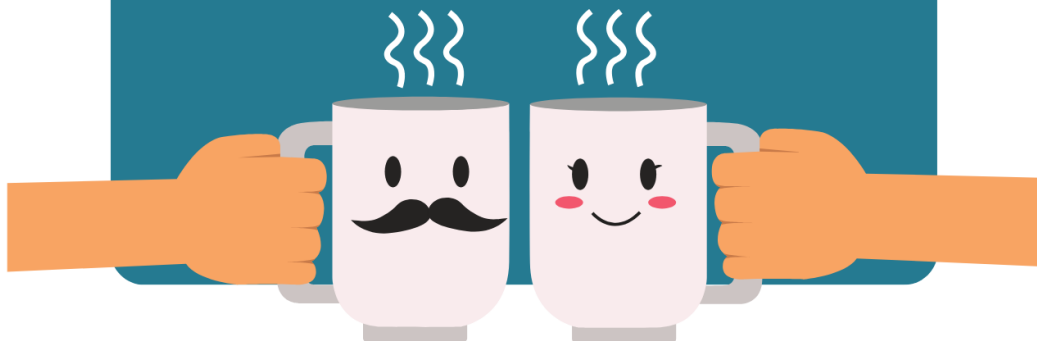
Gàidhlig	Gaelic – phonetic
Cia fhad a dhearmadar mi leat, a Dhia, an ann gu bràth?	Ceh-hat a ghermadar mi lath A ghi-a an ahwn gu brah
Cia fhad a cheileas tu do ghnùis om anam truagh gach tràth?	Ceh-hat a xha-ill-yas too do ghnoo-ish Om anam troo-agh gach trah
Cia fhad bhios imcheist ann am chom, le cridhe trom gach là?	Ceh-hat vee-us im-xhay-shch ahwn am chuhwm Le cree-yeh truhwm gaxh lah
Cia fhad a chuirear tharam suas an tì bha dhomh na nàmh?	Ceh-hat a xuhr-ar ha-ram soo-as An chee vah ghoh na nahv

English (literal)	English (traditional)
How long to forget me with you, Oh Lord, is in for ever?	How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?
How long to hide you your face? From my soul poor each season?	How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long will-be many-questions in my chest? With heart heavy each day?	How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long to you-put over-me up The being was for-me himself-an enemy?	How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

# Cuppa & Company



Carlops Church  
Thursdays  
2-4pm







## **Messy Church Picnic – Sun 19 May, 3pm, St Mungo’s Church, West Linton**

We will be holding a Summer Picnic on Sunday 19 May at 3pm in the garden of St Mungo’s Church, West Linton.

Families are warmly welcome and please bring your own picnic or food to share and a rug or chairs 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)

## **Newlands Cottager’s Garden Produce Show & Sale, with fun for kids – Newlands Centre, Sat 7 Sept, 12pm – 4pm**

Teas, coffee, home baking, bouncy castle & soft play, community stalls. Access to exhibits from 2pm.

Adults £1, Children 50p, Teas £2

Gardeners - full exhibit list and rules available from [manager@newlandscentre.org.uk](mailto:manager@newlandscentre.org.uk) Entries are free.

## **Your Will Be Done**

*Linda Hill writes the following and would appreciate the prayers of our whole linkage community.*

Come and pray with us for and about the future of Broughton Kirk. We will meet from 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. on the first Sunday and the third Thursday of each month at Broughton Village Hall.

The plan is to look at the many ways in which it is possible to pray, focusing on a particular type of prayer each month; to use that prayer in praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us in the way forward for the church in Broughton; and to reflect on our experiences of using different ways of praying.

## If you need help

Just a reminder that our linkage of 6 churches has some help available for anyone in need.

### Food bank

The minister's benevolent fund offers emergency assistance throughout our linkage areas. If you require assistance please contact us by email. All emails will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence. People may need other kinds of support and we are also ready to help with that or direct you to others who can

[emergencyfoodbank@standrews-westlinton.org](mailto:emergencyfoodbank@standrews-westlinton.org)

### Pastoral Group

We are a small group of people who are there to offer a listening ear in confidence. We are not professional counsellors but rather sympathetic listeners.

If you know anyone who might appreciate a visit, please do contact our minister [tfoley@churchofscotland.org](mailto:tfoley@churchofscotland.org) or our pastoral group lead Jean Howat [howatjean@gmail.com](mailto:howatjean@gmail.com)

# The Column

## The chair that is not a chair

*When is a chair not a chair?* Sunday regulars at Carlops Church will find this riddle easy. Answer: *When it's wheelchair pretending to be a car, or a tractor, or a shopping trolley* – or anything else that the fertile imaginations of J, M, M and T (full names withheld to protect the innocent) choose to make it.

I do hope that Tom Alexander, who thoughtfully donated the wheelchair to Carlops Church some years ago, knows just how much value, pleasure and satisfaction his gift has delivered, albeit perhaps not in the manner initially envisaged. But Tom will approve.

A succession of eminently qualified and deserving potential users of the wheelchair (including the good Tom himself) have emphatically refused to sit in it, preferring to walk with the aplomb they still muster, and determined to depend upon their own strength, spirit and sheer bloody-mindedness.

And so, Tom's gift might have languished, neglected in its corner. But the joyous and inimitable Carlops custom of after-service coffee in the church has prompted those of our regulars who are currently of lesser stature (and who understandably prefer not to converse with other people's knees or abdomens) to think outside the box, and to use the wheelchair as their imaginations suggest to them. Doing so enables them to derive as much pleasure from the protracted coffee-and-chat session as their loquacious elders.

J, M, M and T (with occasional assistance from E) are these smaller-sized Carlops supporters. They already make an important contribution to our church: they put smiles on adult faces and keep them there; and they lower significantly the average age of congregation that we can report to those on high (or on somewhere). Now, they add more value, enjoy themselves thoroughly, and entertain the taller coffee-conversationalists, by exercising their considerable powers of imagination and invention. They transform the otherwise mundane and utilitarian wheelchair into various transports (sorry!) of delight, as they employ it in play as a car, a bus, a tractor, a shopping trolley, a pirate ship, a go-kart – and no doubt sundry other devices beyond this observer's interpretive powers to identify.

It's self-evidently great fun to use the wheelchair like this. And it's great fun to watch. If you're in the young people's favour, you may even be allowed to push the wheelchair for a while. Just stay out of the way when it's pretending to be a Ferrari!

Rennie McElroy

# Diary notes



## Forthcoming events

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 2 May 2024, 2-4pm

**Soup lunch, proceeds to Christian Aid**,  
Wednesday 8 May 2024, 12.00-1.30pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 9 May 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 16 May 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 23 May 2024, 2-4pm

**Coffee drop-in and Christian Aid Plant Sale**,  
Saturday 25 May 2024, 10.30am-12noon

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 30 May 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 6 June 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 13 June 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 20 June 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 27 June 2024, 2-4pm

**Coffee drop-in**, Saturday 29 June 2024, 10.30am-12noon

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 4 July 2024, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company**, Thursday 11 July 2024, 2-4pm

## Contacts

**Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley**

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Mobile 07793 294 000

Email [tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk)

**Church Administrator:**

TBC

**Christian Aid: Mary Levison**

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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**

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**Newsletter and website: Julie Gamble**

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**Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell**

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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)

**Sunday School: Julie Gamble**

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Email [julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk)

**Treasurer: Mary McElroy**

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Email [maryhmcElroy@outlook.com](mailto:maryhmcElroy@outlook.com)

## Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Monday 21 May