



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 12; December 2024

Services, December 2024

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

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- 1 December 10am: Kevin Scott
- 8 December 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
- 15 December 10am: Sheena Livingstone
- 22 December 10am: Chris Levison
- 29 December 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
- 5 January 10am: 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



The Risk of Birth

It will soon be Advent – a time of hopeful waiting. It will of course be followed by a time of birth, a particular birth, a birth that speaks of new beginnings, of new possibilities and new potentials. All this happens because someone did not give up, someone was willing to take a risk, to make themselves vulnerable at a time when making oneself vulnerable was a dangerous thing to do. It happened at a time when demonstrating hope seemed such a forlorn thing to do. But do it He did.

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...' ISAIAH 9:6

I offer you this poem to think about this coming Advent season.

The Risk of Birth by Madeleine L'Engle

*This was no time for a child to be born,
On an earth beset by war & hate
When a nova lights the sky with warning
As time runs out & the sun burns late.
This was no time for a child to be born,
In a world suffocating under the rule of Rome
Were truth & honour are trampled with scorn—
Yet here the Saviour came to make his home.*

*When is the time for love to be born?
The Inn is full on the planet earth,
By greed & pride the world lies torn—*

*Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.
For this is the time for a Child to be born*

Peace,

Tony



Meteorological Miscellanea

Mist, fog, thick fog, low cloud, haar, clag or murk - call it what you will but we seem to have had a lot of it recently. Often it clears by mid-morning or later in the afternoon, but sometimes there are days when we never see the sun at all. It's the price we pay for living at c290m (c950ft) above sea level! There were just five and a half hours of sunshine over the first 10 days of November.

I took a look at the number of days without sunshine in each of the last 30 years. In 2012 we lost 84 days - the most. Last year we lost 80 days - 2nd place. This year we have lost 73 days (3rd place) with a month still to go. 1999 had the lowest tally - 38 days. Are we looking at another climatic change/trend?

I have precipitation totals for November in Carlops for the last 30 years. The wettest year was 2015 with 8.88 inches (226mm). The driest year was 2004 with 2.08 inches (53mm). The average for November is 4.59 inches (117mm). November is the wettest month of the year.

By the 22nd of November this year, remarkably, the ppt was just 0.38 inches (10mm) then came Bert with his Storm. On the 23rd we had 0.55 inches of snow followed by 0.29 inches of rain and another 0.20 inches overnight. This more than trebled the total for the month but it still remains the driest November on record.

On the 17th of November temperatures took a tumble as Arctic air blasted in and we had 7 nights of frost and 3 days "sub zero". Minimum was 22F/-6C. The sun shone, the frost sparkled. On one day I was in West Linton and expected to hear moans about the cold but the only words I overheard were "beautiful", "fantastic" and "wonderful". Storm Bert blew itself out on the 25th with Beaufort Force 9 gusts and all our first snow of the winter vanished as suddenly as it came.

Peter Woolverton, Pyethall

News



Our Christmas Charity



We have chosen Women's Aid East and Midlothian for our Christmas appeal and, as with last year, instead of collecting shoeboxes with gifts inside we have agreed to collect cash donations.

They will use the donations to give Christmas bundles to affected families across the area.

Last year the donations they received around Christmas allowed 293 bundles to be given out. Donations should be made before 7th December please, and you can give in the following ways,

BACS

Use the reference WA (for Women's Aid, the beneficiary charity) and transfer to ...

Account name Carlops Church

Account number 00246459

Sort code 80-09-39

Physical cash

Place in an envelope marked WA and add to the collection plate at the back of the church.

Our Gift Service, where we give thanks for the generosity shown to others at Christmas, takes place on Sunday 15th December.

Wreath making class – the results!



Gill Gold's wreath making class, held on Wednesday 27th November, produced the beautiful, elegant results above. Thanks to Gill for hosting this session again this year, it is becoming a tradition!

Carlops Advent Garden – Sunday 1st December 3.45pm for 4pm



Led by Gerda Stevenson, this simple, beautiful and atmospheric event is for the whole family. A gorgeous spiral of moss is constructed in the church. Children walk round the spiral and light their own candle, which is held snugly in a cored apple, then retrace their steps, placing their candle somewhere in the moss.

Some candles and apples will be available on the day, you may bring your own if you can.

BEM Presentation to Murray Campbell, Sunday 8th December

After the church service on Sunday 8th December Murray Campbell will be presented with the British Empire Medal for services to the Carlops Church and Community. Our church service usually finishes around 10.45am and the presentation will take place shortly after that.

Fundraising for children in Gaza, Sunday 8th Dec



Some of the children will have a stall after the service on Sunday 8th December to raise funds for children in Gaza. Find a Christmas gift for someone and support this crucial cause.

The proceeds will be donated to Medical Aid for Palestinians

[Medical Aid for Palestinians](#)

Lessons and Carols, Sunday 22nd December, 10am

Our traditional service of lessons and carols will take place on Sunday 22nd December and will be led by Chris Levison.

Christmas Eve Carol Service, Tuesday 24th December, 7pm

Our annual carol service takes place in the church on Christmas Eve at 7pm. Come early to secure a seat! Last year the church was packed with familiar faces and visitors, and the atmosphere was wonderful.

Christian Aid Scotland Carol Service

New Town Church, George Street, Edinburgh Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 6.30pm

This special local event has a Theme of Peace and will include many carols led by Siskin Green and Fischy Music.

The keynote address will be delivered by John Bell from the Iona Community.

Concert – Morag Brown and Lewis Powell-Reid Sunday 19th January 2025, 2.30pm

Mesmerising arrangements of traditional music played on fiddle, accordion, cittern and guitar. Join Morag and Lewis for an afternoon of repertoire from Scotland to the Balkans and beyond, alongside compositions, sparkling improvisations, musical intuition, audience connection and a joyful spontaneity that digs deeper into the music at every performance.

"wonderful" - BBC Radio Scotland

"two of the most talented and versatile Borders folk musicians" - Border Telegraph

Website: <https://moragandlewis.weebly.com>

Music video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nk_V4EXJ10Y&t=5s

Tickets £12/ £8 (under 26). Under 12s free, may be booked online via <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EEXM> or bought on the night.



Our regular events


(Please note that w/c 22nd Dec and 29th Dec these events will not go ahead)



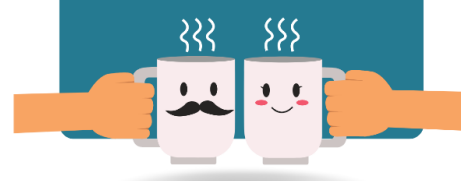
Monthly Drop in
Coffee Morning

Drop-in Coffee Morning
Carlops Church on the last
Saturday each month.
10.30am to 12 noon.

Cuppa & Company



Carlops Church
Thursdays
2-4pm



Cyaelic Psalm Singing

Weekly on a Tuesday

Carlops Church
7:30-9:30pm



Messy Church will take place on the following Sundays at the New Church Hall in West Linton:

Sunday 15 December – Christmas

Sunday 19 January – The house built on rock

Sunday 9 February – Lost and Found Sunday

16 March – The Seed and the Sower

Sessions start at 4pm prompt 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 (01968 660677) howatjean@gmail.com

**Skirling Village and the
Parish of Upper Tweeddale**

invite you to

**An Evening of Christmas
Carols and Mince Pies**

... and a quiz or two

**Skirling Village Hall
Thursday 19th December
7pm until 9pm
Everyone welcome**



The Guild – January 15th 2pm Broughton Village Hall

Advance notice is given of the January meeting of The West Tweeddale Guild. On Wednesday January 15th at 2pm in Broughton Village Hall Nicola Campbell will be talking about 'Wanderings' which she has been developing as an alternative way of worship as folk enjoy walking in Broughtonknowe Wood. Come and find out more. As usual, we will begin with a short act of traditional worship, and end with tea and cake.

General Kirk Session – 28th November, postponed

The General Kirk Session planned for 28th November did not go ahead and a new date will be agreed upon shortly.

December Pause for Soup Lunch

There will be no soup lunch in December, but from January until May 2025 there will be a lunch on the second Wednesday of each month. We hope to welcome you to one or all of these.

The Column

(Settle in for this one folks, it's a 3-pager, and could have been longer! Riveting from start to finish.)

Christmas arrives on Harris

Beltane, Midsummer, Clocks change, Hallowe'en, Guy Fawkes Night and now Christmas just around the corner with Hogmanay on its back... it's all so complicated I'm thinking, scratching my proverbial head... so many different celebrations with different references and histories, costumes to buy or create, food to cook/bake, gifts and cards to think about, fireworks, tinsel, pine trees... it won't be long before we're squeezing in Thanksgiving Day with its turkeys, sweet potato, yams, whatever else, while the pumpkin pies of Hallowe'en are barely off the supermarket shelves.

Now in MYYYYY day.. I hear our children yawn widely... but seriously folks, I continue, ignoring their groans... Growing up on a remote Scottish island in the '60s, life followed an easy structure based on cycles set since the beginning of Time... you cut the peats in May, fetched them home in July, pretty soon the grass needed scythed in the August, the potatoes lifted in October, (take note- no celebrations yet), then we children did get VERY excited about Guy Fawkes Day because the local sweetie shop would have squibs, Catherine wheels, Sputniks for threepence each.. my favourite were Roman candles... and someone might have some straw and driftwood dry enough to burn and you might hear of a Bonfire to go to! You could sook your Highland Toffees whilst warming your faces in the dark at an outside fire – very, very exciting - and watch a parent setting off a crackling Sputnik or 2. I would burst with joy watching the Roman candle, savouring every moment of its blinding glow - as exciting as the launch of Apollo 13 from Cape Canaveral any time.

From next day on, we all hunkered down waiting for the New Year, seeing the Old Year out and the bringing in of all things New. You had to be patient - there were no in-betweenies, just as there were no snacks between breakfast and lunch, or lunch and teatime. The 25th of December came and went like any other day. After all, there was still a week to go at that point to Celebration Time! No one had TV so we didn't see what we were missing - there was nothing to miss.

In the run up to New Year, the only extra shopping required were a few bottles from the local pub - that was mostly men's work as they would tend to be there anyway of an evening. Well, ok, maybe extra flour, butter and sugar, but actually the women never really stopped baking, so these

ingredients were normally on the list.

New Year was the Big Thing, lasting till everyone's stashes of whisky ran out- occasionally this was known to take a few more committed souls through to early March. Put it this way, March wasn't unheard of as a time to still be bringing in the New Year, it would depend on if you hadn't seen someone since before New year, well, it made sense to have a dram to celebrate the renewed connection.

However, as the Continental culture of Tree Cutting and Adorning branched ever northward and westward, our schoolteacher fervently hammered home the doctrine of Jeremiah, chapter 10, reminding us that we were NEVER to do as the Heathen do - the Heathen had reached England and England had capitulated... sacrifices of Hebridean children loomed imminent in our young minds! We would one day have to choose between Good and Evil... we could feel it coming! Which way would we go? The Wide Path of the Many Hordes or the Narrow Path of the Horribly Brave and Very Few? (I never did resolve at the time why Heathen was always a singular term but referred to all mankind outside of the Outer Hebrides 🤪 ... it was what it was).

There was a sailor in the village who was instrumental in quietly ushering Christmas into our village in one fell move, albeit a modest one. He had 2 little girls, and he brought them home a small 3ft tree covered in baubles and lights. We were all mesmerised by this delicious profanity in the sailor's window. Word flew round the village, and everyone went to stare and absorb the delightful evil of it, there it stood, unashamedly blinking boldly back at us... and no one felt they could protest as these wee girls had suffered life without a father who was at sea for most of the year, they needed a break.

The Ripple Effect was now in motion. Next thing, the schoolteacher appeared to be more concerned with the horrors of King Herod than the warnings of Jeremiah... we learned about a holy baby lying in a byre with the cows. He would rise with Majesty to great spiritual riches, saving us from Hell, so long as we repented first of our sins of course. Repentance was the key to keeping out of the Lake of Fire... FOREVER! We weren't sure where the trees and baubles came into it... the English had trees down there and they would have to harvest them, we imagined. Lights and baubles were a fancy extra for parties, no doubt.

One day after the winter holidays, the teacher suddenly sprang on us the question "What did you

get from Santa?”. There was some confusion... the Primary Ones had received toys... a lorry here and a doll there. But the older children (certainly 9y.o. and up) realised they would have to confess they had received Nothing as Usual, or maybe they had? We held our breath in suspense as some proudly stated that they’d got a gift while others hadn’t. Not to let down my parents and whole extended family, I claimed to have received a pair of gloves from a distant aunt. Meanwhile, my bewildered brother and sister confessed they hadn’t got anything from anyone. The teacher looked at me quizzically... I think she guessed at my dilemma and was kind enough not to comment.

New Year was still a very happy affair for kids and adults alike - we were always made to go to bed very early and then we were awakened at midnight for the arrival of guests and a house party. Calum Kennedy graced our sitting room with his lilting, golden tones... people smoked, drank, sang Gaelic songs and danced in what little space there was before moving on to the next house. We ate Dundee cake and drank pretend red wine out of proper glasses - Ribena it was, and it tasted extra special warmed up a little. Santa Claus took most of a generation to finally catch on - he had a long and pathetic introduction to the Hebrides, refusing to brave the Minch at that time of year when the ferry might be delayed or stuck in port. We did get the Tooth Fairy, true- well, fairies were everywhere, nothing new in that... but Santa - the Hebrideans were slow to welcome him and his strange ways - he didn’t speak Gaelic for starters!

As we reached our High School years, we were hostelled away on the mainland and delighted in spending the last of our pocket money on a Christmas present to bring home for our parents and younger siblings.

Modern children will find this hard to credit but, honestly, children in our day were just as happy without any presents at all- the best fun was being up at midnight and getting to join in with the grown-ups in the community, watching them all relax and grow sillier as the dawn approached, the music, the dancing, the smiles, the laughter, what could make a young heart feel more happy and secure? Connection and Oneness- every child knows at heart that that’s all that really matters- it’s the grown-ups now who have become distracted by the loud glittering commercial season that spans maybe 3 months of angst and, for many families, explosive, compulsive spending way beyond their means. I blame the 3 wise men. Their gracious intentions have grown arms and legs all over the world. We need to claw back what we’ve allowed to get buried under the mountainous heaps of treasure, clothes and food. After all, one pair of gloves was once more than enough to stun a whole classroom of children into silence.

Alice Burgess

Do you have something to share?

Contributions for *The Column* are sought for forthcoming issues. If you have anything you'd like to share – a thought, a poem - it will be gratefully received.

Email to julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk

If you need help

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

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 or our pastoral group lead Jean Howat howatjean@gmail.com

Diary notes



Forthcoming events

Coffee drop-in, Saturday 30 November 2024, 10.30am-12noon

Advent Garden, Sunday 1 December 2024, 3.45pm for 4pm start

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 3 December 2024, 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 5 December 2024, 2-4pm

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 10 December 2024, 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 12 December 2024, 2-4pm

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 17 December 2024, 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 19 December 2024, 2-4pm

Carol Service, Tuesday 24 December 2024, 7pm

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 7 January 2025, 7.30–9.30pm

Soup Lunch, Wednesday 8 January 2025, 12-1.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 9 January 2025, 2-4pm

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 14 January 2025, 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 16 January 2025, 2-4pm

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 21 January 2025 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 23 January 2025, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in, Saturday 25 January 2025, 10.30am-12noon

Gaelic Psalm Singing, Tuesday 28 January 2025, 7.30–9.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 30 January, 2-4pm

Contacts

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Office - Friday 9.30 am – 12.30pm

Old Church Hall - Friday 2.00 – 4.00pm

Christian Aid: Mary Levison

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Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone

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Email sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com

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Treasurer: Anna Wolverton

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Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Sunday 29th December 2024