

Carlops Parish Church

www.carlopschurch.org



NEWSLETTER

Volume 14, Number 9 September 2020

In-church services remain suspended owing to Coronavirus
Contact sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org for a link to Carlops' Zoom services

Zoom Services, September 2020

| | |
|--|---|
| 6 September 11am <i>Note changed time</i> | Rev Stewart McPherson <i>Communion</i> |
| 13 September 10am | Rev Nancy Norman |
| 20 September 10am | Steven Whalley |
| 27 September 10am | Miss Sheena Livingstone |

www.carlopschurch.org

From Stewart McPherson, departing

I mentioned on a recent Sunday that one of my abiding memories of Carlops will be the evening service at Harbour Craig in 2019. Unfortunately, it was another thing we were unable to enjoy during lockdown. Praying at the place the covenanters gathered, singing the 23rd Psalm as we walked through a field chasing the midges away offered a sense of connection with the past and with creation. There was a similar feel about the lovely outdoor Celtic service in the ruins of the old Newlands Church. The weather was a little unpredictable, but a good number gathered in that sacred space to offer worship in the tradition of those gone before us. We then followed our outdoor service with an indoor picnic in the church as the potential afternoon drizzle began to materialise.

Past and present people, creation in its raw state and the remains of spaces and places created by human hands for worship and given a sacred quality even in the echoes of the stones. Both those events symbolised for me so many aspects of our faith journey. The remains of what once was linked to the present by the people walking through the field along the road and going inside to put the kettle on. Blessed spaces hewn from rocks and moulded by landscape held together by relationships of people from past to present and the varied places from which we had come and gathered. It illustrated the changing continuity, or the continuous changing, nature of church throughout the generations.

And this is experienced again, as I take my leave. We have been meeting via Zoom to worship and the building is not yet open for worship. Although I go with many good memories, there is also that sense of something unfinished or incomplete, and I am unable to be present with you again in that lovely space of Carlops church.

However, the story of church is always one of being on the move, ever transitioning to something other than it was. Yet ever running through it is that thread of faith, grounded in hope, and the passionate nature of love.

My time with you has been part of that journey during which we have experienced some awkward and some blessed conversations, some difficult and some delightful encounters, as we picked through the remains of what was to begin to shape a new future. But that is something which is never really complete, and the continuing re-forming lies in your hands.

But I have learned much from you, not least that sense of connectedness: connected to the past; church connected to community; head connected to heart; music connected to the spirit. Such connections are always threads creating a tapestry that connects time with eternity and when they break there is something lost. So my prayer is that you hold these threads with the gentleness and affection which connect you with one another and with fellow pilgrims across the linkage and beyond, as you create and design the tapestry which is as yet unfinished. God places this creating of what is yet to be in our hands.

My old church history lecturer, the late Gavin Whyte, once said: "In the history of the church the old may suddenly become the new, and the new may suddenly become the old. What seemed to be permanent often fades away, and what seems to have faded is there after all. The

church is pushed this way and that by waves and by winds, and yet it never quite goes on the rocks.”

In 1914, when asked where the church stood, Henry Scott Holland said that the church does not stand at all, but “moves and pushes and slides and staggers and falls and gets up again, and stumbles on and presses forward and falls into the right position after all.” That is the story of the church.

The church as we know it may be transient, as it was for the covenanters and for our predecessors, but remember that there are three things that do last for ever: faith, hope, and love. And these things will always bind us together.

Stewart McPherson

Thank you, Stewart McPherson

Stewart McPherson’s term as our interim minister ends in September, when he leaves us to take up a new appointment. Stewart has made an invaluable contribution to Carlops and our linkage: repairing hurt, improving communication, restoring trust and being a friend. With hindsight, we didn’t understand how much we needed Stewart’s help until he came here and offered it!

We thank Stewart and his wife Marjory for what they gave us and what they have achieved, and we wish them happiness and satisfaction in all their future endeavours.

Stewart’s final service here is on Sunday 6 September 2020 at 11am. It will take the form of a joint Carlops – Kirkurd & Newlands – St Andrew’s Communion service via Zoom. Please note the unusual start time of 11am.

Stewart will continue to work as an Interim Minister, serving in that role at Jedburgh Old and Trinity Parish Church from 1 October 2020. We wish him well there, and we congratulate Jedburgh on their good fortune.

Future ministry in Carlops

Presbytery has appointed an interim moderator to our linkage to take office upon Rev Stewart McPherson’s departure. He is Rev Malcolm Jefferson, minister at Lyne & Manor linked with St Andrew’s Leckie, Peebles. A locum minister may also be appointed.

Discussions with the parishes of Upper Tweeddale about the projected six-church linkage will continue. A principal aim is to draft a *basis of linkage* which will map out how the new, extended linkage might function.

Stewart McPherson’s departure will leave the manse vacant. The three linkage Kirk Sessions have agreed to let it, possibly until a new permanent minister is appointed. All linkage churches will share the letting income.

From the Kirk Session Thursday 30 July 2020; meeting via Zoom

Government regulations now permit churches to open if measures to counter coronavirus are in place. Session considered re-opening Carlops Church in the light of a risk assessment identifying what constraints and special measures would be necessary. These included: numbers limited to about 16; strict control of people's movements, both outside and inside the church; no singing; no "coffee and chat"; lavatory probably not available; frequent sanitisation of church and all its fittings and furnishings.

Members felt that social interaction is a key aspect of Carlops services and agreed unanimously that opening under such constraints would not serve us well. Zoom services are well received; nearly all former regulars "attend", along with several new participants. Session therefore confirmed its earlier decision not to open the church yet, but to wait for Phase 4, or until a vaccine is available, and to continue Zoom services *pro tem*.

Session thanked Gill Gold and Sheena Livingstone, who prepared the risk assessment, and congratulated them on a thorough and valuable presentation.

Session thanked Stewart McPherson warmly for his work and friendship.

The Open Gate by phone

The Open Gate phone is still open, ready to receive calls. Although not currently available as a face-to-face service, The Open Gate offers telephone counselling to anyone who makes contact. The approach used is *Solution-focussed brief therapy* which doesn't need face-to-face contact to help. Please tell people about this service; it can help with all sorts of problems and all age-groups.

Telephone appointments can be arranged for any time to suit client and therapist. The number is 07535 898 244.

Margaret Habeshaw

The Column Confessions of a novice Zoomer

"I can see you, but I don't hear you." No, not the theme for a sermon, but my first faltering steps in Zoom.

Who knew you could meet your whisky-tasting group without having to worry about transport home? Who would have guessed that I was once super-fit, judging by photos shared by my old walking group: intrepid on wintry Munros, or ceilidhing the night away at New Year? Was

there really a time when we were able to soak up the atmosphere of the Book Festival?

Who would have thought that all events would be free and live online this year, with no limit to the size of the audience? Who would have predicted that people unknown to me would be appearing in my kitchen, or that I would invade their homes?

Who suspected that some people consider their best aspect to be the view of their nostrils, and others the top of their head? At least the latter afforded the opportunity to monitor the evolution of their hairstyles over the months of lockdown.

Some people have impressive backdrops on Zoom, others don't mind their washing appearing in the background, or their pets getting in on the action. And who would have imagined that Grumpy, my companion in lockdown, would become an online sensation?

Perhaps we should not have been surprised that the ever-resourceful members of our church would find ways of taking part in our weekly services.

Who would have imagined that I would be cajoled into taking on organising the cultural and social events in Carlops Church and that I would have the audacity to suggest our September event take place on Zoom?

Don't worry, Sophie will be the Zoom host and I shan't be fiddling with any buttons. So please zoom in at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 4 September to hear Dr Malcolm Alexander regale us with his experiences as the lone GP on the island of Eday in Orkney. Another thing we can't predict: will we have a good turnout? We'd love you to come and see for yourselves.

Bridget Wilcox

Talk by Malcolm Alexander

Tune in to this Carlops Zoom talk. To receive a link to the talk, send an email request to info@carlopschurch.org

Doctor in the wild: tales of Orkney Island life Zoom talk by Dr Malcolm Alexander, author of *Close to where the heart gives out* Friday 4 September 2020, 7.30pm. Malcolm's talk will be followed by a question & answer session and "a quirky quiz"!

Signed copies of the paperback of Malcolm's book can be obtained from Rennie McElroy, or by sending an email request to info@carlopschurch.org. The book is available at a Carlops bargain price of £5.

No charge for the event, but we invite donations to the Lade Centre, Isle of Bute, which supports people requiring palliative care, and their families (www.facebook.com/theladecentre/). Donate by BACS transfer to Lade Centre: sort code 80 22 60, account 17402164; or send a cheque to Lade Centre, 58 Ladeside Street, Rothesay, Isle of Bute PA20 0DJ

Material for next issue

To info@carlopschurch.org by Monday 21 September 2020 please

End