

Carlops Parish Church

www.carlopschurch.org



NEWSLETTER

Volume 14, Number 12 December 2020

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

Zoom Services, December 2020

6 December 10am	Rev Nancy Norman
13 December 10am	Miss Sheena Livingstone
20 December 10am	Rev Nancy Norman
24 December 7pm	Carlops Carols
24 December 11.30pm	Watchnight service St Andrew's
25 December 11.30am	Christmas Day service; St Andrew's
27 December 10am	Rev Chris Levison

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From our Interim Moderator

In Advent we wait and long for Christ and His Kingdom to come. Advent is the season of groaning! Has a minister ever encouraged you to groan before?! The Scriptures tell us there is a place for groaning in our lives. But Christian groaning is not moaning! Rather it is responding to the pain of this world with relentless and expectant hope, like a mother in the pains of childbirth, eagerly anticipating the joyful birth of her child.

Romans 8:22-25, The message

All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Perhaps in 2020 we've been very conscious of a sort of global groaning. Although it has not necessarily been a God-directed groaning, the world has *groaned* under the weight of a pandemic. The collective experience of loss and anxiety born out of isolation from one another and the threat to our livelihood and other securities makes Advent more relevant to us than ever.

One singer-songwriter commenting on the experience of the pandemic, racial injustice and a divisive US election writes *this year has reminded us again and again of our mortality, lack of control, and collective brokenness. As 2020 comes to a close, we long – perhaps like never before – for hope, love, joy, and peace.* Caroline Cobb

This is what Advent is all about – longing, aching and groaning for God to come to us in Christ his Son.

At Christmas we rejoice that a new day has dawned, the Light of the world has come, and he will come again to complete the work he has begun. He will bring a final end to decay and death, sin and sorrow.

May this Advent be filled with longing for Christ to bring the hope, love, joy and peace that he alone can give.

Malcolm Jefferson

Re-opening Carlops Church

We have been given permission by Presbytery to reopen Carlops Church for meetings and activities which are permitted by current Government coronavirus rules.

The Kirk Session has decided that the Sunday morning Zoom services will remain our main

worship meetings until it becomes possible for us all to come together in the church. However, the rules allow us to organise occasional smaller worship events. To mark the re-opening we have planned a short series of brief midweek worship meetings on Wednesday afternoons during Advent. The first will be Wednesday, 2 December, at 2pm. The meeting will last around 15 minutes, with some organ music, readings, and prayers.

Anyone who wishes to attend will have to register by contacting me by email at sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org or by phone by Tuesday evening, 1 December. The total number of people will be limited to twelve. To ensure thorough ventilation we will have the doors open, so please wear warm clothing!

We hope that it will be possible to provide a Zoom connection from the Church; the Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/97286194788?pwd=Z2htbHhSa0wybCszbzZLMzROY0l2dz09>

It has also been suggested that we should open the building once or twice a week for private prayer, and we hope to develop a system for organising this shortly.

*Adapted from Session Clerk Murray Campbell's original
Rennie McElroy Editor*

Happy Christmas

We wish you a happy Christmas. In this strangest of years, it seems particularly important to greet each other and extend the traditional and healing blessings of Christmas.

May Christmas bring you joy and rest, no matter how you spend it, no matter how much it differs from “the usual”. And may the new year of 2021 bring some upturn in everyone’s fortunes.

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

Two Christmas reminders

Shoebox and Gift service will not follow the usual pattern this year, as coronavirus regulations mean that Scottish Women’s Aid cannot handle parcels safely. After discussion, we have decided to donate cash for them to target to needy families.

Some **Carlops Church Christmas cards** are available. One shows a red pillar box beside a cottage in winter; the other, a snowy woodland lane. The greeting in both is *May joy be your gift at Christmas and may faith, hope and love be your treasures in the New Year*. Order, and arrange uplift or delivery from Mary McElroy. £5 for ten cards and envelopes.

Pay for cards and/or donate to Shoebox and Gift Service by bank transfer to Carlops Church (account 00246459; sort code 80-09-39), or by cash or cheque to Mary McElroy. By Sunday 13 December latest please.

From the Kirk Session Monday 9 November 2020, via Zoom

Rev Malcolm Jefferson, new Interim Moderator, was welcomed to his first meeting of Carlops Kirk Session.

Session approved a draft *Basis of linkage* that will form the operating mechanism for the projected extended linkage with the parishes of Upper Tweeddale. Key points include ...

1. Present church buildings retained and used for worship
2. Worship times unchanged
3. Kirk Sessions may meet individually and together as a General Kirk Session. Powers similar to present KS & GKS
4. Ministry and other costs split 72/28 between the churches of our present linkage and those of Upper Tweeddale; this reflects the churches' income
5. One manse in the new linkage, at West Linton
6. Once the new linkage is established, the churches may proceed to the appointment of a new, permanent minister
7. Working title for new linkage: West Tweeddale

The formal proposals for the new linkage must be voted upon by each congregation. The inform-discuss-decide process will employ email, hand delivery and letter post to ensure that no one is excluded. Information and associated paperwork will be circulated early in 2021.

Church of Scotland rules state that voting rights in this process, and in the appointment of a new minister, extend only to registered communicants and adherents. The Session Clerk will contact supporters not currently in one of these categories to invite them to register their support for Carlops Church more formally and thus, be able to participate in decision-making.

All of the above was endorsed by the three linkage Kirk Sessions meeting as a General Kirk Session on 23 November 2020.

Treasurer Mary McElroy reported that the manse has been let (via a property agency, to create prudent distancing between tenants and church organisation). Rental income will be divided equally between the three linkage churches.

Mary McElroy reported on the 2020 finances and the effect of coronavirus: principally, lack of Sunday plate offerings and income from soup lunches, etc. Supporters have responded well to an appeal about Sunday offerings, but loss of the other funds means a deficit of c£2,700, to be covered from reserves.

Session agreed that the Eco Group would reach out to the whole Carlops community with a church Christmas card. More about 2020 Christmas greetings in *The Column* this month.

Foodbank and food donation pleas

Helen Bruce is organising a collection point for donating food to the foodbanks outside St

Andrew's Church on Saturdays 5, 12 and 19 December, 11am to 1pm. Drive up with your food donations and they will be gratefully received.

A reminder that in Carlops, the Allan Ramsay Hotel continues to provide weekly meals for over 100 needy people and will welcome your financial support: £2 pays for a meal. Donate online at www.allanramsayhotel.com

The Column

Greeting Carlops friends at Christmas

Many people exchange Christmas cards in Carlops Church at morning service during Advent. That can't happen this year, so we have devised a way for you to send Christmas greetings to all Carlops friends via the church website. It's easy to do ...

1. Visit the Carlops Church website www.carlopschurch.org and navigate to *News > Christmas 2020*. Or go directly to www.carlopschurch.org/christmas-2020
2. Type your message in the box *Add your greeting here*
3. Enter your name and email address, and tick the "I agree to my ..." box; (security and data protection requirements)
4. Click *Send Greeting*

For security reasons, and to protect both you and the Church, we will vet messages before they are published on the site. We can't let "just anyone" post "just anything" on our site with no controls; that is inviting trouble. Your message will appear as soon as possible after you send it, but please be patient; we website editing gnomes are part-time volunteers! We will not store cookies on your computer.

Address your message to anyone you want, or to everyone. The message can be very short, "Happy Christmas everyone", or up to 1,500 characters and spaces maximum. You can add a picture, maximum size, 2Mb. (An angel? A crib? A tree? Yourself in a Christmas jumper?). You can reply to a greeting that someone else has posted: click →*Reply* below that greeting and type into the box that appears, then add your name and email address.

Be aware that this is not communication in confidence; your greeting can be read by anyone using the site. It's just a way of letting us all say "Happy Christmas" to each other.

The greetings page will open on 1 December 2020 and will be taken down after Twelfth Night, 6 January 2021. We have launched the page with some early messages. Read these at www.carlopschurch.org/christmas-2020. Then send in your own greetings!

We hope this helps Carlops friends greet Carlops friend this Christmas. Have a happy Christmas – and have fun!

Julie Gamble, Rennie McElroy, Alun Morton-Lloyd
The Website Christmas Gnomes

Forthcoming events

Concert by the Linton Singers Wednesday 16 December 2020, 7pm. In support of *Kindred*, an organisation for parents of children with complex needs. Via Zoom; link from sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org

Carlops Christmas Concert by the Linton Singers Saturday 19 December 2020, 7.30pm, via Zoom; link from sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org

Material for next issue

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

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