

# Carlops Parish Church

[www.carlopschurch.org](http://www.carlopschurch.org)



## NEWSLETTER

**Volume 15, Number 2 February 2021**

In-church services remain suspended owing to Coronavirus  
Contact [sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org](mailto:sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org) for a link to Carlops' Zoom services

### **Zoom Services, February 2021**

31 January 10am <i>Note changed time</i>	Rev Nancy Norman: <i>Linkage wide Communion</i>
7 February 10am	Steven Whalley
14 February 10am	Mrs Mary McElroy
21 February 10am	Miss Sheena Livingstone
28 February 10am	Rev Nancy Norman
7 March 10am	Rev Chris Levison

## From our Interim Moderator

On 13 January 2021, I watched the Christian organisation, Open Doors, present *The World Watch List* to Members of Parliament. *The World Watch List* is Open Doors' annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. We heard from Father Daniel in Iraq as he explained that a population of 1.5 million Christians has been reduced to around 150,000 – to one-tenth of its former strength! – as many have fled because of persecution. Father Daniel appealed for prayer that his own people would remain despite the persecution, in order that a witness to Christ would remain in that troubled land.

Jesus called his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:16). Christians in Iraq are called to shine with his light, as are we in the midst of the particular challenges we face in Scotland.

*Matthew 5:16 The Message translation*

*Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven*

Henrietta Blyth, CEO of Open Doors UK & Ireland makes the point that, “Salt and light is only needed in times and places that are dark, broken and tasteless, and lockdown for many of us is just like that, so we need to keep going. And in order to do that we need to press into Jesus.”

Something wonderful happens to people who spend time in the presence of Jesus, listening to his words. A light is ignited that shines brighter than the shadows cast by despair and fear.

If you would like to know more about *The World Watch List* or to hear Henrietta Blyth speak further on her theme you can do so with the following links:

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/>

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/covid-19/message-from-henrietta/>

Malcolm Jefferson

## New linkage for Carlops Church

Steps are being taken to establish the proposed extended linkage of Carlops, Kirkurd & Newlands, and St Andrew's West Linton with the three parishes of Upper Tweeddale. Details of the proposal have been sent to those on the Communion Roll and Register of Adherents of these churches, and they will be invited to vote on the proposal in February. If all six congregations approve, the new linkage will be instituted. Thereafter, the linked churches will be able to seek to appoint a new, permanent minister, who will be based in the manse at West Linton.

Church of Scotland regulations state that only people listed on the Communion Roll and/or the Register of Adherents may vote in this process. Carlops Church supporters were recently given opportunity to ensure that they are recorded on one or other of these lists.

## **Mike Clarke**

The *Newsletter* doesn't normally do obituaries, but Mike Clarke's sudden death so shocked the Carlops community as to demand notice; the weight and the unanimity of the response to his passing are remarkable. He was a kind and gentle man who will be missed from our midst. We will remember Mike whenever we look at the cross and dove he carved from a former pew to decorate Carlops Church.

Alex Gray read these lines in tribute to Mike at Carlops' Zoom Burns supper; they fit the Mike we know "to a T".

### ***On William Muir in Tarbolton Mill***

An honest man here lies at rest,  
As e'er God with His image blest:  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
Few hearts like his – with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

*Robert Burns*

## ***What's app for Carlops Church***

Readers may like to know of an informal Carlops Church *What's App* group that exchanges news, photographs and general camaraderie via mobile phone.

If you have a mobile phone that can connect to the internet and are not a member already, you are invited to join the fun exchange. Download *What's App* to your phone, then contact Mary Levison, who will enrol you: send email to Mary via [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org) remembering to include your mobile phone number!

## **Christmas tree to winter tree**

We've always enjoyed having a tree in the house over Christmas. Our nieces and then our grandchildren have usually descended on us in early December for the Advent Garden ceremony, and they helped to decorate it. It's usually up by the first of December and lasts until Twelfth Night. This year was different: no visitors, so we had to decorate it ourselves;

but we still enjoyed the 1,000 lights and the familiar decorations, some dating back to our own childhoods, but with something new appearing each year.

This year, we didn't want it to go! We remembered our ski holidays in Switzerland, in the distant past when people could still travel. There, the restaurants and streets were festooned with lights and decorations all season long. "We could do the same", we thought. So we removed all the obviously festive decorations – the Santas, the robins, the nativity scenes – and were still left with the stars, the icicles and the fir cones and, of course, the 1,000 lights! The tree is still there, cheering us up through this long winter, and will remain there until either the needles all drop off, or we need to get out through the patio door – which won't be until the spring!

The tree's visible from the road, so you might see it if you're walking along, and it would be lovely to welcome you indoors when we are allowed to have visitors again!

Anna Woolverton

## **The Column**

*This month's Column features two recent pieces by Galina MacNeacail. Both have been presented viva voce by Galina at Carlops Church Zoom events: the Halloween party; and a morning service in Advent. If Halloween and prayer seem an unusual juxtaposition, read Galina's new compositions carefully – both are about caring and joy.*

*Rennie McElroy, Editor*

### **Halloween poem**

Pitch black the sky,  
pitch black the witch's cloak,  
and pitch, pitch black her tall hat,  
pointed like a knife.

Red the blood of my racing heart,  
orange my lantern,  
yellow its light  
to scare the evil spirits away in fright  
from its brightness.

Gold my joy now they've gone.

Galina Edith Stevenson MacNeacail

## **Prayer for Carlops Eco Church**

Dear lord, I pray for the environment  
and taking care of the planet.  
The rain and sun will help  
flowers and trees to grow.  
The magic helps our bodies  
like wind in the rashes.  
The outside world  
is a garden to cherish.

Galina Edith Stevenson MacNeacail

## **Forthcoming Zoom event**

**The remarkable Mary Somerville, queen of 19th century science** Talk via Zoom by Ian Archibald, Bruntsfield Heritage Trust, Friday 19 February 2021, 7.30pm. Request Zoom link from Sophie Pilgrim via [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org).

No fee for attending. The speaker proposes donations be made to Carlops Church: account 00246459; sort code 80-09-39, or cheque to Mary McElroy, details below.

Scot Mary Somerville was an astronomer, pioneering mathematician and gifted writer. Largely self-taught, she has been described as the most remarkable woman of her generation. Her achievements were recognised in 2017, nearly 150 years after her death, when her portrait was featured on the Royal Bank of Scotland's £10 note.

## **Material for next issue**

To [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org) by Monday 22 February 2021 please

**End**