



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 16, Number 7; July 2022

Services, July 2022

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

3 July 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
Communion

10 July 10am: David Henderson-Howat

17 July 10am: Prof Murray Campbell

24 July 10am: Colin Herd

31 July 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Join us, in the church, or in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

www.carlopschurch.org



Our Minister

Restaurant church versus Potluck church

When my family lived in Asia one of our favourite things to do was to attend and sometimes host a Potluck lunch. A Potluck lunch involves inviting people to eat with your family, with the proviso that they too bring along a dish or a drink to share with us in the eating and drinking. I have often wondered what it might be like if we thought of church, not as a set of structures, programming, goods, and services, but more like a meal? Of course, thinking of our church experience as a meal raises the question: “Would our ‘church as a meal experience’ be like going to a Restaurant for a meal, or more like sharing a Potluck meal?”

If it is a “Restaurant experience” we are looking for, then of course our tastes matter. We can choose from the menu and whether we would like our salad dressing to be served “on the side.” We would take note of the pace and delivery of the “Restaurant service”. We would consider the ambience and the décor, and whether our needs were met in accordance with our expectations. If we liked our “Restaurant experience”, we would of course leave a generous tip on the plate.

A “Potluck experience”, however, is hugely different to a Restaurant experience. If church were like a Potluck experience, we would arrive with different expectations. For example, we would know to arrive with an offering, and we would come prepared to serve and be served. We would naturally demonstrate gratitude to all those others who have come equally prepared to contribute to our shared feast.

How we would eat at a Potluck would of course be different to how we would do so at a Restaurant. At a Potluck, we would eat together in an environment in which we gave and received, and where we served and were served. Unlike a Restaurant experience where, oddly, we seek to eat privately in a public space. Potlucks on the other hand are always communal affairs. They invite us to sit and commune with others. At a Potluck, we get to hear one another’s stories. We experience together what it is like to celebrate good news and mourn the sad news. In a Potluck experience, the soul food is freshly baked by the diners. It is an eating experience where the diners, and the chefs, and the waiters are all involved in creating a meal for each and all, together.

So let me leave you with a question:

What kind of church experience do you prefer: a Restaurant experience where you consume privately in a public space; or a Potluck experience where you get to create a meal for all, with others?

Peace

Tony

News



Carlops' drop-in coffee to be a fixture

Drop-in coffee in Carlops Church is going to be a regular fixture in the Carlops social calendar again. The trial events held in late May and June were successful and widely welcomed. Guests enjoyed meeting and greeting at these long-awaited returns to pre-pandemic activities, and organisers were able to test safe models of layout, preparation and serving.

From now on, there will be a coffee drop-in meeting in Carlops Church on the last Saturday of every month, from 10.30am to 12noon. Everyone is invited: come and drink coffee, eat scones and cake, chat, enjoy good company. There is no charge, but donations are invited, for pandemic-depleted Church funds initially.

A small group of organisers will manage the show and do most of the work. They will welcome any help you can offer: moving chairs and tables before and after the event; providing scones, cake, biscuits; serving tables. Help can be regular, or just a one-off Saturday. If you can help from time to time, contact Mary Levison or Mary McElroy; contact details at the end of this issue.

Monthly mid-week get-together proposed

Following feedback received at the reinstated drop-in coffee events, it is proposed to run a regular, mid-week get-together in Carlops Church. Organisers hope to start these in September and to offer one each month thereafter; probably the middle week of each month; possibly a Wednesday afternoon. Expect coffee, tea and a biscuit; come and go as you please; meet and greet; chat and listen; in church and/or the patio-garden if the weather is fine.

Precise details later. Watch this space, or www.carlopschurch.org, or the Carlops Church WhatsApp group (ask Mary Levison to enrol you if you're not a member already). Organisers will welcome help from anyone, any time; if you can help, contact Mary Levison or Mary McElroy.

Carlops Church: latest enhancements

As this issue goes to press, and in the next days, final touches are being put to the range of enhancements made to Carlops Church in the past 12-18 months. New light fittings have been installed, and blinds will soon be fitted to the three large windows on the south wall of the church.

The new lights hang lower than their predecessors. They will improve illumination, use low-energy, long-life bulbs, and be easier to clean and service (bulbs can be changed without hiring scaffolding!). Increased illumination levels will be particularly helpful on dull mornings and dark winter evenings.

The blinds on the south wall will allow the church to be darkened when images are projected; this will enhance the legibility of projected text and improve the viewing experience for film. They will also address the longstanding problem of dazzle and flickering shadow on sunny days. No more will the minister have to duck and dive at the communion table and the lectern to avoid being dazzled by the otherwise welcome morning sun. No longer will congregation members be distracted by shadows cast on the wall behind the minister. And no longer will the same congregation members be tempted to retreat into reverie as they watch these shadows flit and change. What – me?

The new blinds and lighting complement recent improvements to audiovisual and information technology: new projector, additional camera to permit more viewing angles; additional speakers to improve sound delivery; new computer to drive the system; reliable wi-fi.

Together, all this enables Carlops Church to deliver events in-house and virtually to a standard that matches current standards and expectations. They provide our church with a desirable degree of future-proofing at a time when the viability of church buildings is under increased scrutiny.

Technically, this extended project has been overseen by the Property Committee on behalf of the Kirk Session. In practice, Murray Campbell has done most to advise and drive work on AV and IT, and Gill Gold has researched and organised the new lighting and blinds. We are grateful and we thank them. Finally, readers pondering cost and affordability will recall that most of the improvements were funded by a grant from the Orcome Trust; we thank them too.

General Assembly 2022: some outcomes

The 2022 General Assembly was held from Saturday 21 to Thursday 26 May as a hybrid event: some people attended in the Assembly Hall on the Mound in Edinburgh; others participated online. Two reports are readily available online.

The Church of Scotland's website carries a detailed report which is ultimately the more informative of the two, though for some topics, the reader needs to navigate up and down the website's menu structure to find all the information available. Find it at

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly/general-assembly-2022>

The second report is a summary published in *Life and work*: it is concise and approachable (it can be read "straight through" in one pass) but is selective in coverage and more journalistic in style. Find it at <https://www.lifeandwork.org/downloads/life-and-work-ga22-supplement.pdf>

Foodbank support invited

Our linkage churches have supported local foodbanks for many years. As inflation rises, the foodbanks are experiencing increased demand and are struggling to provide enough stock. Foodbank organisers have appealed for additional support, and we pass that appeal on to readers. Food items are welcome and can be handed in to the foodbanks in Peebles and Penicuik, but perhaps the most helpful response is to donate money, so that foodbank organisers can purchase those items they know from experience to be most needed.

More information from Food Facts Friends, 42 John Street, Penicuik EH26 8AB, and at <https://foodfactsfriends.org.uk>. You can donate by BACS transfer. Details ...

Account name	Food Facts Friends Project
Account number	00709837
Sort code	83-26-10

You can also donate regularly by standing order. If you are a taxpayer, you can gift-aid your donation. In each of these cases, visit Food Facts Friends website <https://foodfactsfriends.org.uk> to download the appropriate form.

The Column



The Eden Project

The Eden Project in Cornwall was the inspiration of Tim Smit, who was restoring the “Lost Gardens of Heligan” in Cornwall and began to talk about an idea: “To create a place like nothing anyone had ever seen before; a place that explored our place in nature, that demonstrated what could be done if people who wanted to make a difference got together”.

A huge, disused, china clay pit near St Austell was purchased in 1998 and work began. The site was drained, vast quantities of soil were introduced and two gigantic biomes were raised on the site. The Mediterranean Biome houses plants from warm, temperate regions; the second, the Tropical Rain Forest Biome, is home to plants from humid, tropical regions. The site opened to the public in 2001 and I first visited it in 2004. At that time the plantings were still very young and immature.



Mike and I visited it again in late April this year and the transformation is astonishing. The Mediterranean Biome has areas of beautiful, colourful plants from the Mediterranean climate zones

of Europe, California, South Africa and Western Australia. It has cork trees, citrus trees in fruit, olives and grapevines amongst other seasonal crops. Three lively sculptures of Bacchanalian revels by Tim Shaw are set amongst the vines. Other areas are devoted to herbs, vegetables and to plants for cut flowers. There is an aromatic scented garden.

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We joined a guided tour of the Tropical Rain Forest Biome. It is the largest fully enclosed, “captive” rain forest in the world (200 m x 100 m). The trees are of great height and diversity and the atmosphere is warm and steamy. Our guide enthusiastically pointed out to us the nutmeg tree, now bearing four fruits for its first time and posing the problem of how it was pollinated. Ants? She also got very excited showing us an exotic fruit from a *Coco de Mer* from the Seychelles. There are cinnamon and cacao trees, vanilla and banana plants in fruit, and pineapples. The diversity is extended by oil palms, rubber and coffee trees, a sugar plantation, and a baobab, even a young mangrove tree. High up in the dome, 50 metres above the floor, is a canopy walkway, though our legs were not up to the climb to that sky-high gallery. In the canopy, clouds are formed by transpiration from the trees, demonstrating the role that rain forests play in shaping the climate.

Outside, the steep sides of the claypit have been transformed with crop plants from around the world and an area devoted to plants of ancient origin. There is a third building named the Core and in it are exhibitions of microbial worlds invisible to us.

The whole project is aimed at researching and supporting the diversity of plant life and educating us about the vital need to live sustainably in our wonderful world. Organic agriculture is the base, with recycling of mulched prunings, whilst there is constant watch for invasion by such outsider threats as aphids. Recently, bringing the pH of the soil down in the Rain Forest Biome called for careful use of acid treatment, which unexpectedly has resulted in a marked, general increase in blooms.

Jo and Mike Blackburn

Diary



Forthcoming events

Drop-in coffee Saturday 30 July 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Drop-in coffee Saturday 27 August 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Drop-in coffee Saturday 24 September 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Telephone 07793 294 000

Email TFoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Christian Aid: Mary Levison

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone

Telephone 01968 661 282

Email sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com

Cultural and social events:

Position vacant; expressions of interest invited: contact Murray Campbell, Mary McElroy, or Rennie McElroy

Eco Group: Anna Woolverton

Telephone 01968 660 382

Email annapye@btinternet.com

Flowers: Hilary Watt

Telephone 01899 221 100

Email hilarywatt9lf@btinternet.com

Newsletter and website: Rennie McElroy

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com

Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell

Telephone 01968 660 530

Email d.m.campbell@ed.ac.uk

Sunday School: Julie Gamble

Telephone 07980 258 381

Email julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer: Mary McElroy

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email maryhmcElroy@outlook.com

Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 25 July 2022