



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 12; Dec 2025

Services, December 2025

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

:
30 Nov 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
7 Dec 10am: David Henderson-Howat
14 Dec 10am: David Henderson-Howat
21 Dec 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
(Communion)
28 Dec 10am: Chris Levison
4 Jan 10am: Colin Herd

Join us, in the church, and in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

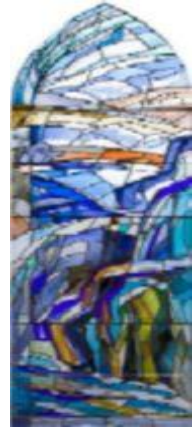
www.carlopschurch.org

Carlops is one of the West Tweeddale linkage of churches

www.westtweeddale.org.uk

Our Minister

Emmanuel – the oft forgotten and unwrapped gift



It is sometimes hard to remember, and very easy to forget, amongst all the shopping lists, the present wrapping, the food preparation and the over-eating, what a monumental event Christmas actually is. Christmas is '*Emmanuel - God with us*'. When we forget that, well Christmas just becomes an odd, overpriced and weirdly displaced reason to indulge in maudlin sentimentality. (Has anyone ever watched the Christmas channel?)

But to Christians Christmas is a time when we remember the immensity of God entering into the littleness of human history. And why did God do that not to critique us, not to audit our moral accounts, but to simply be *with us*? And God did this in such a counter intuitive way. In other words, he didn't do it like a god, at least not the way we think gods should act when we think of gods. The Son of God was born into a little town, among a little people, in a little nation that was of little importance especially by comparison with the great powers of the day. Now *why* did he do that?

Some people think that when God '*became a human being and lived amongst us*' JOHN 1:14 it was simply part of an emergency plan to tidy up and forgive our sins. But the Christmas gospel tells us that God did all this to be *with us*. Even more than that, he did it to release us all into becoming what we all were always made to be. Left to ourselves we humans so easily fall into the habit of living small, shrunken, short-term lives. But the "*repair*", (or salvation to give its theological name), involved God coming in human flesh to live among us and to repair not just our relation to him but also our relation to ourselves. Jesus described his mission among us this way.

'I have come that you might have life and have in abundance'. JOHN 10

The gift of God to us at Christmas is not more stuff (or stuffing) but a gift that would allow you and I to have '*life and life more abundant*'. And this gift is wrapped up in a baby, born of Mary, whose name was *Emmanuel*, which means *God with us*!

I do hope you all have a wonderful time this Christmas unwrapping that gift. *Peace, Tony.*



Meteorological Miscellanea

*There is wind where the rose was
Cold rain where sweet grass was
And clouds like sheep
Stream o'er the steep
Grey skies where the lark was.*

I was looking for a November poem and Walter de la Mare from school days popped up. I was looking for praise of autumn colours but will have to stick to my own. I thought the colours this year were stunning. There was colour at night too I believe as I read many reports of the aurora borealis early in the month. I stepped out one bright night, but it looked more like the “simmer dim”.

November is usually a “transitional month”. There was a swift change this year. 58F/14.4C on the 6th equalled my highest November temperature set on the 3rd in 2005. Just 15 days later I recorded 19.9F/-7C – the second coldest November minimum recorded. That was on the 24th in 1993.

Late news: October's rainfall was 3.53in/89.7mm. It was the 4th wettest month of 2025, but it was still 1.31 inches below average. Baddingsill Reservoir has been very low.

There are no prizes for guessing that November has already been wetter than average. The first four days were wetter than the whole of April. The 13th was the wettest day since the thunderstorm of 21st July. On the 24th, we passed 6 inches so far for the first time since May last year.

Once again, we are experiencing extremes and already we have had snow drifts lying on the Pentland Hills for eight days. What lies ahead I wonder?

Peter Woolverton, Pyethall, 25th November 2025



Our Village Talks

Monthly talks and a chance to chat

(Raising funds for Malawi and Carlops Church, suggested £5 donation per event)

Friday 5th December 2025, 7.30pm

‘Who wrote that carol??’

A talk with music by

Jean Arulanantham

Some Christmas carols emerged over many centuries, with regional variations in different locations. Other carols were quite certainly composed, some to cope with a local emergency, some to carry a political message. All of them are lovely. Some composed carols were set to tunes from quite surprising sources. Along with her talk Jean will play the music for some of the carols on the organ.

Jean’s talk will be followed by:

🎄 Seasonal refreshments along with time to chat 🎄

🎄 Art and craft stalls with potential Christmas gifts including Catriona Taylor, pottery, woodwork and Anna Marshall’s new book “*The Little Book of Christmas and Hogmanay*” 🎄

🎄 Fair Trade goods and an Eco stall with recycled goods 🎄

We are looking for donations to the Eco stall – are you having a pre-Christmas clear-out and do you have anything you could donate? If so, please leave in to the church on Thursday during the Carlops Café or before the event on Friday.

Advent Garden 7th Dec 3.45pm for 4pm start

This event is open to everyone and is held inside the church where a beautiful path will be laid out on the floor. Children should come with a cored apple and a plain kitchen candle in the cored-out centre.

There will be carol singing as the children walk the path to the magical garden's centre. There will be juice, mulled wine and biscuits with storytelling after all the candles have been lit and placed among the moss and foliage.



This is lovely event and has happened in Carlops for over a quarter of a century.

Planned and hosted by Gerda Stevenson.

Christmas Giving – Scottish Women's Aid



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.

Donations should be made before 7th December please, and you can give in the following ways;

Bank transfer (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 14th December.

Wreath Making class - results

Gill's class last Friday was very successful, and Ann was able to make one at home too. Thanks to Gill for running this again.



The Column

Old Chestnuts

I have a fondness for sweet chestnuts. The first time I had them I was about 8 or 9 and we had made the long trip from Co Tyrone to Suffolk, via road and sea, to visit my aunt and uncle and my 'English cousins', as I thought of them.

They had a walnut tree in the garden in Great Barton, and this seemed so exotic to me. Imagine how I felt about the chestnuts which were, as the song says, roasted on an open fire!

Since then, I've had roasted chestnuts wherever I've had the joy of finding them – Berlin, London, Edinburgh and most memorably on the beautiful Atlantic island of Madeira. There you follow the winding roads firstly up, up, up through the hills and then down through the chestnut trees to the town of Curral das Freiras (the Nuns' Valley). There they hold an annual festival for the loveliest of all the nuts and use them to prepare many delicious dishes.

These festivals happen in other places in Europe too, notably in Italy. Can we ever thank the Italians enough for inventing Marron Glacé??

So, when I see chestnuts appear in the shops in late October/November I always buy some! But, sad to say, this year I was waiting for the perfect moment to roast them and the moment passed, I hung on to them for too long. I thought '*I'll give it a try anyway*' and so I scored them and into the oven they went. When I came to peel them, the insides were shrivelled stones and some were mouldy – alas for them, and for me.

I'll get some more (maybe Santa will supply some of the extra special plump ones I saw in Valvona & Crolla?) and I'll make time to enjoy them.

The lesson of course is don't save your chestnuts - an old chestnut is only going to crack your teeth. And so, we can carry this message into all areas of life.

Julie Gamble

Christmas Events



CARLOPS CHURCH CHRISTMAS 2025

FESTIVE MUSIC, NIBBLES & GIFT STALLS
FRIDAY 5TH DEC 7.30PM

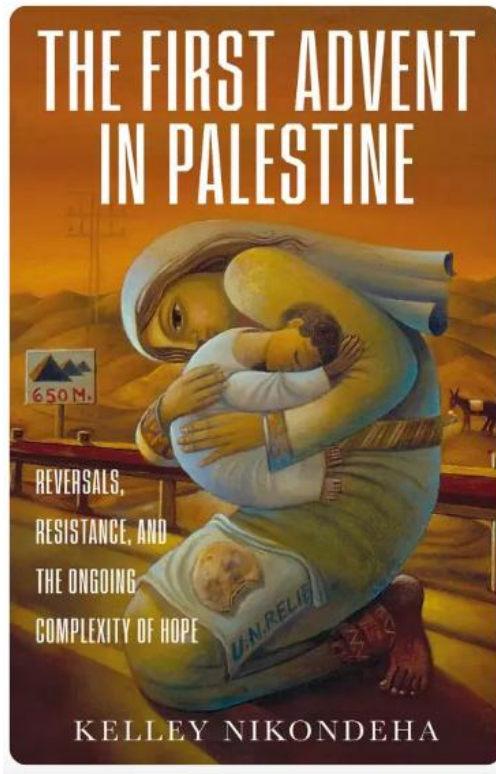
ADVENT GARDEN WITH GERDA STEVENSON
SUNDAY 7TH DEC 3.45PM FOR 4PM START

CAROLS AT THE PATIO GARDEN
SUNDAY 21ST DEC 11.15AM

CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLS
WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER 7PM

CHRISTMAS DAY MORNING WORSHIP -
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, WEST LINTON, HAM

Advent Studies - Wednesdays at 7pm on Zoom – The First Advent in Palestine by Kelley Nikondeha



“When we picture the first Advent, we see Mary and Joseph huddled by a manger. We picture Gabriel, magi, and shepherds tending their flocks. A shining star against a midnight sky. But this harmonized version has lifted the Advent story out of its context—those who experienced the first Advent had to travel through great darkness to reach the hope that shining star announced. Trusted scholar and community organizer Kelley Nikondeha takes us back, to where the landscape of Palestine is once again the geographic, socioeconomic, and political backdrop for the Advent story.

This runs for the next 3 Wednesdays at 7pm on Zoom – 3rd, 10th and 17th December

Meeting link [Join from Zoom Workplace app - Zoom](#)

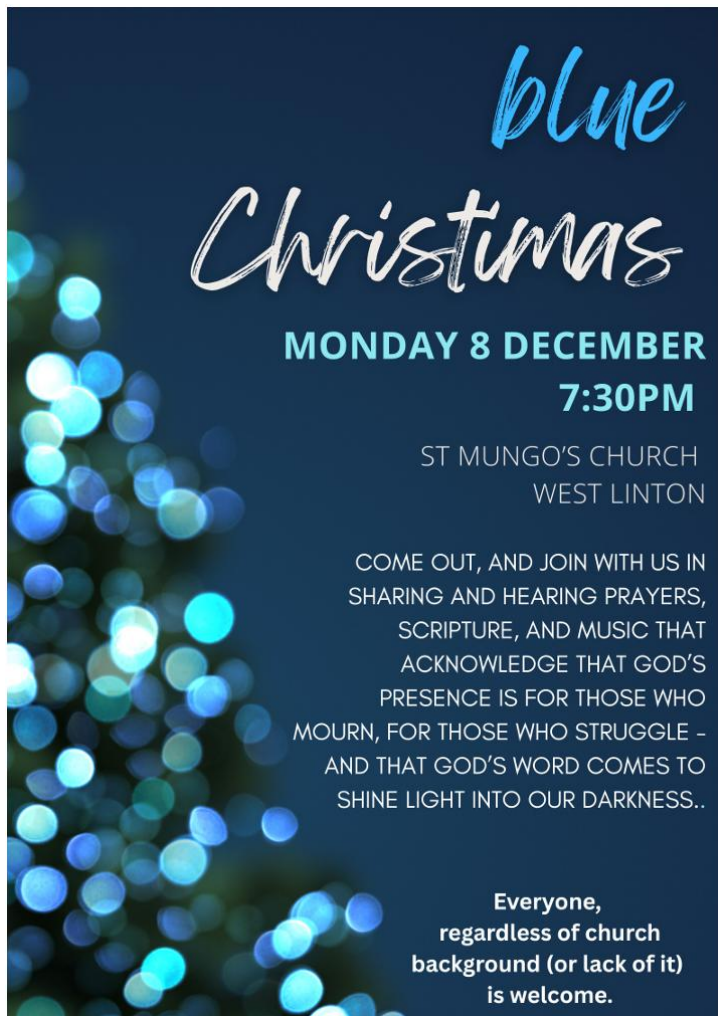
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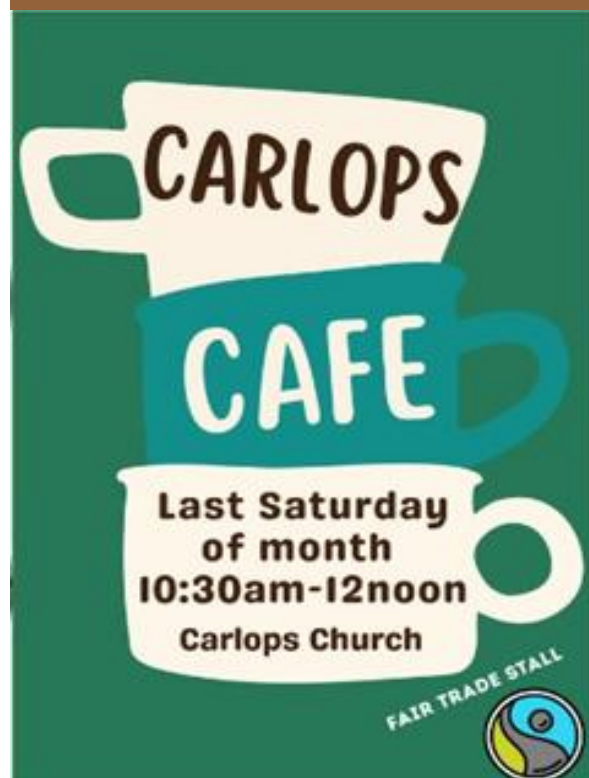
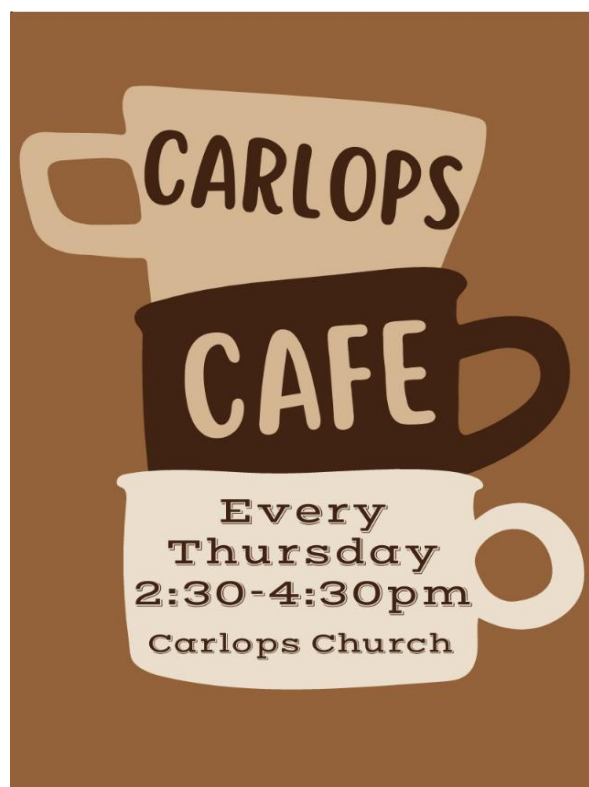
Your local bookshop would be happy to order this for you.

Hardback ISBN 9781506474793

Paperback ISBN 9798889838258



Our regular events



Our regular events will take a 2 week break over Christmas and New Year, spanning 21 December 2025 to 6 January 2026.

Keep up to date with all events across the linkage [West Tweeddale Parishes Diary](#)

Children's Events

Sunday Club meets on the first Sunday of every month in the Old Church Hall during school term times. We leave from church during the service (start time 11.30am) and walk the children to the hall and for those who wish to meet us at the hall we suggest 11.45am. This is particularly useful for those who attend the earlier service in Carlops Church. After Sunday Club we bring the children back to the church or they can be collected by parents around 12.15pm.



Dates For Diaries

Sunday 7th December

Sunday Club Christmas Party - 21st December in the New Church Hall between 2pm and 3:30pm

Thank you,

Ann Lyon and Kate Whalley

The next Messy Church session is on Sunday 14 December – Messy Christmas!

The session starts at 4pm promptly in the New Church Hall at West Linton and finishes 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 a song and then the children will do a range of craft activities, followed by 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 howatjean@gmail.com



If you need help

As well as The Open Gate (advertised below) 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

We are not professional counsellors but rather sympathetic listeners.



Got a problem?

Stressed? Anxious? Depressed?
Parenting difficulties? Relationship issues? Work
problems? Trouble at school/college? Etc.

Whatever the problem - large or small, recent or
long-standing - Solution Focussed Brief Therapy
can help.

Ask for an appointment at

THE OPEN GATE

Fridays 2pm to 5pm.

Anyone who wants help for their problem is
welcome, and will be seen locally and in
confidence by arrangement.

PHONE OR TEXT 07535 898 244

The Open Gate uses a counselling approach which is brief,
effective and future-orientated, building on your own solutions.
All sessions are free and confidential, with no long waiting-list.

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Telephone 01968 660 221
Mobile 07793 294 000

Email tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Church Administrator: Kate Whalley

Telephone 01968 733 112

Email kate@westlinton.com

Office - Friday 9.30 am – 12.30pm

Old Church Hall - Friday 2.00 – 4.00pm

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

Coffee drop-in, Carlops Café and Soup Lunch : Mary Levison

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Treasurer and 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: Julie Gamble

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk

Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell

Telephone 01968 660 530

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

Request a card for someone: Bridget Wilcox

Text only 07980 836 817

Diary notes



Forthcoming events

Thursday 4 December 2.30-4.30pm

Friday 5 December 7.30-8.30pm

Sunday 7 December 3.45pm

Tuesday 9 December 7.30-9.30pm

Wednesday 10 December 12.30-2.00pm

Thursday 11 December 2.30-4.30pm

Tuesday 16 December 7.30-9.30pm

Thursday 18 December 2.30-4.30pm

Sunday 21 December 11.15am

Wednesday 24 December 7.00pm

Festive break until...

Tuesday 6 January 7.30-9.30pm

Thursday 8 January 2.30-4.30pm

Friday 9 January 7.30-8.30pm

Tuesday 13 January 7.30-9.30pm

Wednesday 14 January 12.30 – 2pm

Thursday 15 January 2.30-4.30pm

Tuesday 20 January 7.30-9.30pm

Thursday 22 January 2.30-4.30pm

Tuesday 27 January 7.30-9.30pm

Carlops Cafe

Our Village Talks – an evening of Festive music, nibbles and gift stalls

Advent Garden

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Soup Lunch

Carlops Cafe

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Carlops Cafe

Carols by the Patio Garden

Christmas Tree

Christmas Eve Carols

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Carlops Cafe

Our Village Talks – Our Malawi Project

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Soup Lunch

Carlops Cafe

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Carlops Cafe

Gaelic Psalm Singing

Thursday 29 January

2.30-4.30pm

Carlops Cafe

Saturday 31 January

10.30-12pm

**Coffee Drop-in (Carlops Café)
and Fair Trade Stall**

Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Saturday 3rd January 2026 please