



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 8; August 2026

Services, August 2026

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

:

2 August 10am: Rev Peter Wood
9 August 10am: David Henderson-Howat
16 August 10am: Murray Campbell
23 August 10am: Rev Chris Levison
30 August 10am: Peter Worthington

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

Abundance

In 2019 a small, ageing church was struggling with decline. During a clean-up led by three older members, they sensed a chapter of the life of their 145 year-old building was coming to an end. They wondered who they were even cleaning for, imagining a future congregation that didn't include themselves.

Unexpectedly, the answer arrived through the COVID-19 pandemic. The cleared space became a food pantry that grew rapidly, serving 100 people a day and delivering another 125 food boxes. Despite uncertainty and limited resources, volunteers kept going, often marvelling that the resources were there to let them continue. "It must be the Holy Spirit" they concluded.

The church discovered new purpose, new people, and new life emerging from loss.

After the death of John the Baptist, Jesus was upset and wanted to escape the crowds who followed him so he could grieve in peace. He left on a boat, but the people still followed him, and he had compassion on them, attending to their needs and putting his own needs aside. (Matthew 14:13-21)

Churches today share similar feelings of loss and feel fragile, dependent on only a few people.

Yet people still search for hope, just as crowds searched for Jesus.

When the disciples urge Jesus to send the hungry crowds away to find food, he responds with the startling command: "You feed them"! They gather up five small fish and two measly bashed buns, which seemed insignificant when there were thousands to feed. But Jesus transforms the food, everyone eats and there is some left over.

Bishop John Taylor's words capture the lesson: "Cherish the weakness of limited means."

The message is that though we think we may not have enough to offer, God works through our perceived limitations. As the text says, "Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled..."



God brings abundance from scarcity— from embarrassment to wonder, from emptiness to fullness.

The poet Mary Oliver writes:

“I don’t know if there is any lesson harder for us at this particular moment in history than this one: at the darkest times, our work is not to listen to our fears and act appropriately, but to respond to divine abundance and act extravagantly.”

One of the prayers of St. Ignatius says:

“Lord,

You have given all to me.

To you, O Lord, I return it.

Everything I have is yours;

do with it what you will.

Give me only your love and your grace,

that is enough for me.

Amen

*Abridged from **Rev Peter Wood’s** reflection in church, Sunday 02/08/26*

Thanks to Peter for taking the service and for pausing during the reflection so we could consider the full message in the moment.



Meteorological Miscellanea

How foolish I was when I signed off on the 26th June. “There’s never a dull moment” was my parting sentence. There are many meanings of “dull”. My Chambers came up with 24. My meaning was “uninteresting.” The first week of July was not dull. It was dismal. It was the height of summer? From the 3rd to the 7th inclusive I marvelled at the one and a half hours of sunshine reckoned when the cloud on Mount Maw periodically lifted.

It did get better, but first a post scriptum to the June report. On the 23rd June the mercury at Pyethall reached 80F. That’s 26.7C for the grown-ups. On the same day, in Lingwood, Norfolk, 37.7C was recorded. For the old folks it was a more impressive 99.9F – the hottest day ever recorded in the UK in June. Phew, I was glad to have been in Carlops. I wouldn’t have got anything done in Lingwood.

After the dismal opening July became interesting. 62F/16.7C it was on the 7th. On the 9th it whooshed to 78F/25.6C. I apologise for the technical jargon. The welcome weather persisted apart from breezes wrapped in lumps of North Berwick haar. I rate summers by the number of days “in the seventies”. In 1998 there were just 4. In 2021 there were 44. This month we’ve had 11. Since the dull, nae dismal, first week, we’ve had about 180 hours of sunshine.

It’s the lack of rainfall that’s been the main talking point. In 2012 I recorded 8.64in/219.5mm. Last year I recorded 5.95in/151mm. The driest year was 1.90in/48.3mm in 2022. This year, so far, I have measured just 1.13in/28.7mm. Will we get a record low? Flowers have wilted, grass has turned brown and further afield there have been massive wildfires that have been well reported. One morning I smelled burning for 2 hours as white smoke drifted over Patie’s Hill. Too close for comfort.

Peter Wolverton, Pyethall, 27 July 2026



Our Village Talks

Monthly talks and a chance to chat

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

Friday 14 August 7pm - Summer Garden Party at Birchbrae, Macbiehill

Come to Birchbrae at Macbiehill (EH46 7AZ) for a relaxing wander round the garden accompanied by seasonal refreshments. An opportunity to see the development of the garden since its early beginnings in 2020. A list of the plants that have been successful at this altitude will be available to people who are new to gardening in this area.

Friday 11 September 7.30pm – Gus Fisher, stone carver *The 98 Lost Names of the D-Day British Normandy Memorial*

Stone carver Gus Fisher has been involved with the British Normandy Memorial from the early stages of its creation and earlier this year he helped to complete the hand carving of an additional 98 names that have come to light since the Memorial opened to the public in 2021. These men were remembered in the D-Day ceremonies of the 5th and 6th June 2026 and now rightly join the 22,500 fallen on the Memorial. In this talk, Gus will give insights into the traditional craft of hand carved lettering.

Thursday 24 September 7.30pm – Victoria Crowe - Kittleyknowe and Beyond

An illustrated talk on how living at Kittleyknowe from 1970 to 1990 impacted the artist's life and work, and the development of her paintings over time.

All the 'Our Village Talks' events are held in the church, unless a different venue is noted in the advertising.

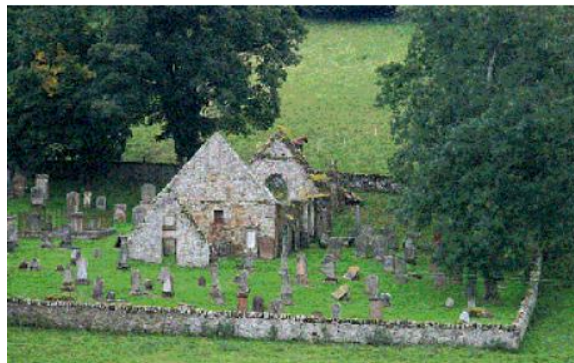
Newlands Open-Air Communion Service and picnic- Sunday 9 August at 3pm

There will be an open-air Communion service followed by a picnic for the whole West Tweeddale linkage at the site of the old Newlands church on Sunday 9th August at 3pm. Parking will be in the car park opposite the current Newlands Church. Everyone should bring their own picnic and folding chairs or a rug to sit on.

In the event of the weather not co-operating we will take refuge for the service and the picnic in the current church. Everyone is welcome.

For more information contact Jean Howat:

howatjean@gmail.com



Sunday Club

Sunday Club is officially on holiday, but please note a date for your diary

Sunday 23rd August – A Summer Family Service in St Andrew's, West Linton at 11:30am

Sunday Club resumes on Sunday 6th September

New reading and prayer rota

Murray has circulated a reading and prayers rota which covers August to December.

Please note your dates.

If you would like to contribute a prayer or join the reading rota just let Murray know.

Parish Profile Meeting

Whilst we have not yet been given permission to call a Minister, we will have to prepare a Parish Profile for when that time comes.

The Parish Profile tells any potential applicant what we are looking for and what we have to offer.

So that each Church in our linkage can contribute to the development of the Profile, a meeting, open to all congregations in the linkage, is being held on Sunday 30th August at 12.30 in the New Church Hall in West Linton.

Please come along and help to progress this important step in the process of calling a new Minister,

Session Clerks

Carlops Rural Product Show – Sunday 16th August

A chance to showcase your talents to all, the [Rural Product Show](#) takes place on 16th August.

Who will take home the coveted prizes this year? Possibly you!

Follow link above for all the details.

Sunday Coffee Rota

Poor Gavin will never be allowed to forget that time he said he thought Sunday coffee ‘just happened’. Everyone has forgotten the context of his comment!

Sunday coffee is not a modern miracle and if you wish to be part of the delivery, we have an empty-ish rota pinned to a board at the back of the church. Thank you!

The Column

The White Hoolet

Is there a bird or an animal that stops your heart when you see it? You have one of those moments when the world melts away.

It wasn't until a few years ago that I saw my first barn owl sitting on a post by the Carlops Road, caught by the headlights in the winter darkness.

Sightings since then have been fleeting and all on long dark nights.

I mentioned before that I've let my small field grow wild for a couple of years now and that the long grass is full of voles. I was so happy when the kestrel came to hunt but I have always longed to see a barn owl there.

Late in Spring the grass was growing tall, and I started to put my wildlife camera out overnight. No barn owl.



I tried again at the start of June, and then one morning I checked and, joy of joys, there it was in a photograph, sitting on a fence post in the wee small hours!! I could have cried.

The next task was to see it in flight with my own eyes. I say see because the barn owl is completely silent in flight while hunting – there's no way you can hear it coming.

The night before Midsummer I sat out by the firepit, a little spark of hope in my heart. The voles and shrews of Nine Mile Burn were all aquiver. I often think small mammals must find the long summer nights quite perilous, but perhaps I need to stop thinking of them as characters in [Brambly Hedge](#) or the Beatrix Potter books.

A large bird swept up on to a nearby pole – it was the tawny owl, maybe the same one who hoots for hours some nights. He didn't seem at all bothered that I was watching him as we stared at each other. A couple of weeks before I'd seen him on Mary's swing!

The sky had that beautiful wash of pastel pinks, violets and oranges above the horizon, and faded off into soft blue. I shoogled the wood around to get the last heat out of it.

Towards midnight I was watching some moths dancing above a patch of nettles when I saw the barn owl on a fence post a field away - how happy! Its head was bent in concentration as it scanned the long grass. Barn Owls have good eyesight, but it is their incredible hearing that helps them most while hunting. Their heart-shaped facial disc directs sound to their inner ears, which are just behind their eyes, within the disc itself.

It stopped a little closer then swept white over the end of the garden and away to the west - magical! That would have been enough for me, to know that one of these enigmatic and majestic birds had a routine that included my wild patch, but there was more in store.

I saw the owl again a few days later while letting the dog out before bed. Hovering right there by the fence. At this stage I am thinking 'this must be it, these are my whole life's barn owl encounters rolled into a few nights' and I was happy!

But I was wrong – and gladly. One day I was in the car close to home, around 6pm, when something creamy white and wedge shaped flew out from a stand of trees. Car stopped, door opened, I ran!



Tito Alba, white hoolet, Cailleach oidhche gheal (white old woman/hag of the night), barn owl - there before me in daylight, low over the wild meadow of the moorland edge. Happily hunting, swooping and silent, intent. It rested on a fence close to my neighbour's house – (I rang her, of course) and then I watched it fly back, round the edge of the trees and over my head, away, away back to the wild. (I even managed a shaky video which I have taken this picture from.)

That was definitely enough to fill my heart, but it still wasn't all. I keep seeing the owl – it may even be different owls. There may be young somewhere, as one night at twilight I saw the owl flying away with a chubby little rodent in its claws. If there are and they fledge and come hunting round my way before they go off to live their separate lives, I'll be in heaven.

Like many birds the barn owl has suffered from extensive habitat loss and struggles to survive through winter. If you have even a small bit of land that can be left to grow wild you can help to restore the natural food chain for the barn owl and countless other species. If you have an open barn over 3m tall or established open woodland you may even be able to accommodate a barn owl nest box. If you are lucky enough to see one of these incredible birds, you can report the sighting to The Barn Owl Trust [The Barn Owl Trust](#)

Their website also includes many fascinating facts about the barn owl.

Julie Gamble

Our regular events



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

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 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

Interim Moderator for West Tweeddale: Graham Astles

Email: GAstles@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: TBC

Telephone

Newsletter and website: Julie Gamble

Telephone 07980 258 381

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

Telephone/text 07980 836 817

Email bridgetwilcox@hotmail.com

Diary notes



Forthcoming events

Tuesday 4 August	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 6 August	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 11 August	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 13 August	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Friday 14 August	7pm	Summer Garden Party, Birchbrae, Macbiehill
Tuesday 18 August	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 20 August	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 25 August	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 27 August	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Saturday 29 August	10.30-12pm	Carlops Café and Fair-Trade Stall
Tuesday 1 September	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 3 September	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 8 September	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Wednesday 9 September	12.30-2pm	Soup Lunch
Thursday 10 September	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Friday 11 September	7.30-8.30pm	Our Village Talks - Gus Fisher, Stonecarver – The 98 Lost Names of D-Day, British Normandy Memorial
Tuesday 15 September	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 17 September	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 22 September	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 24 September	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe

Thursday 24 September	7.30-8.30pm	Our Village Talks - Victoria Crowe – Kittleyknowe and Beyond
Saturday 26 September	10.30-12pm	Carlops Café and Fair-Trade Stall
Tuesday 29 September	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing

Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Saturday 29th August 2026 please