



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 9; September 2026

Services, September 2026

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

:

6 September 10am: David Henderson-Howat
13 September 10am: Patsy Campbell
20 September 10am: Murray Campbell
27 September 10am: Colin Herd
4 October 10am: Isobel Hunter

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

From the Editor

September marks a sort of beginning too, new school shoes, new uniform, the holiday clothes packed away until next year and a familiar routine beginning again. Summer is over and the geese will be thronging the sky soon, filling the void left by the swallows, swifts and martins.

Why do we have an academic year that starts in August/September? Surely not so teachers can have a nice long summer break? If you think back, wouldn't it be better to have a break in winter when the weather is less harsh?

The reason harks back to the busyness of the farm and the factories in summer – everyone was needed for something – shepherding, picking, weaving, making. With all this activity there was no point having school in summer as no one would be free to go!



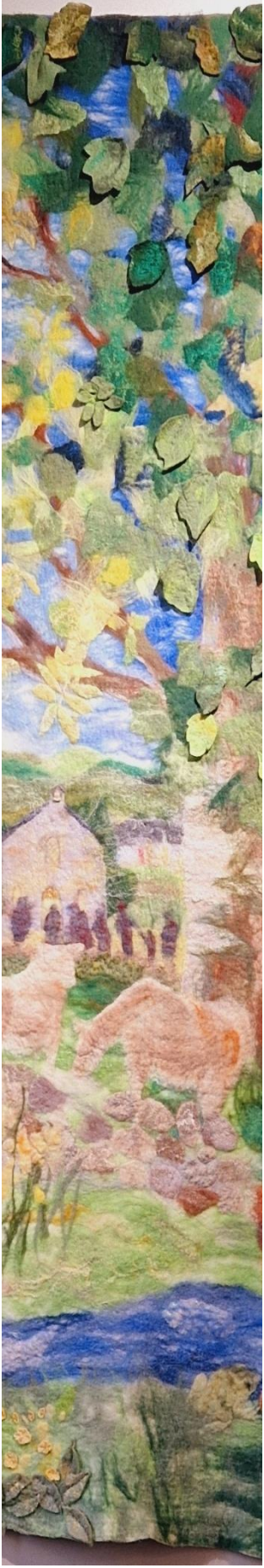
So, we have our second start. So much of nature begins the preparation for winter and we do to. The leaves are turning already, though high temperatures are still possible. Our bodies adjust to the gradual loss of daylight. We think about plans for the year ahead and the names of the months conjure up memories for each of us. October shows me trees in their Autumn glory, leaves to kick, lighting the fire again, restocking the wood pile, blankets and apple crumble, jams and chutneys.

In the church during autumn, we think of Harvest and remember to give, we think of the many bowls of soup we'll serve to our visitors and of seeing friends, like the geese, who reappear after the summer months.

Perhaps the changing season gives us more time to stop and chat, perhaps a warm cup is more welcoming when the fingers are chilled, and it invites us to tarry. The result could be a meaningful chat, a shared task, or a chance to spark new thoughts and ideas.

There is potential in these moments - for me God is present always, but the times when we can welcome or make a connection with people act to bring that presence closer.

Autumn brings an opportunity to commit ourselves anew to hospitality and love for others.



Meteorological Miscellanea

When we went to print on 27th July the month's rainfall stood at 1.13in/28.7mm. The driest July in the last 32 years was 1.90 in/48.26 mm in 2022. Were we to return a record smidgen? On the 28th we had 0.50 in/12.7mm and on the 29th 0.77in/19.56mm. The latter was the wettest day since the 12th of March. In just 2 days we had more than doubled the tally. Would you believe it?! The eventual total was 2.41in/61.2mm. We had plummeted to the sixth driest July in 32 years. We were still well below the average of 3.90in/99.11mm. The last 4 months have been drier than average.

Enough of statistics. Were you alert on the 12th of August? A 92% solar eclipse was much publicised for the early evening. Encouragingly the bulk of the day was sunny and warm – 78.5F/25.8C. Around teatime cloud developed – you could have bet on it. At the appointed time the light was reminiscent of a 40W lightbulb. The ragged cloud then teased us, and the sun made brief appearances. You could tell something was going on. Patiently I waited and then I noted what seemed to be a small black cloud heading our way. A helicopter perhaps? Perhaps a microlight. Nothing arrived. The body was parallel to the horizon and flanked the sun to the right. When a faint coloured patch of light, like a fractured rainbow, appeared, I knew I had a sun dog. A sun dog is also called a mock sun or parhelion. I missed my eclipse, but I enjoyed my sun dog.

There's a bit of 'déjà vu' about the final paragraph for this month. We are back to rain, or lack of it, and the way it's been flirting with records. On 19th August, Wisley in Surrey reported a 62nd consecutive dry day, then there was a lot of rain! On the 19th flash floods affected parts of Edinburgh with thunder and lightning that steered clear of Carllops. Our August looks like being drier than average (4.17in over 30 years). We're only just past 2 inches. But, you never know!

Peter Woolverton, Pyethall, 27 July 2026



Our Village Events

Hosted by Carlops Church

Friday 11 Sep 7.30pm **Gus Fisher** *Letter carver*

The 98 Lost Names of D-Day British Normandy Memorial

Earlier this year Gus with a team of letter carvers carved an additional 98 names that have come to light since the Memorial opened in 2021.

Thursday 24 Sep 7.30pm **Victoria Crowe** *Artist*

Kittleyknowe and Beyond

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

Friday 23 Oct 7.30 pm **John Kennedy** *Sailor*

Boats and Ocean Adventurers

One shipwreck, three Atlantic crossings and other adventures.

Admission free but donations are invited SC004340
Payments may be made by cash, card or QR code



www.carlopschurch.org

Church Fundraising Year to Date

Having passed more than half the year, I thought you might be interested to know how successful our different church events have been.

We held 5 soup lunches, totalling £839, so an average of £168. Thursday coffee afternoons totalled £957 over 7 months, so an average of £34 per week. Saturday coffee mornings vary, from £45 - £111, but total of £492 over 7 months, averaging £70.

So, more people on a Saturday than a Thursday doubled the income.

Money for greetings cards £23, and Jams £127, vary by month, and it is possible that some of the money has gone into the Open Plate or has been counted in with the other totals. If it has, we can claim Gift Aid anyway.

Friday talks have varied from £181 - £289 which is a great result. Again, numbers define the donations, so good publicity has made a big difference.

Altogether, we have raised £3,402 over the 7 months which is a fantastic total, making a welcome contribution to the church's running costs.

Anna Woolverton, Treasurer

Soup Lunch is back!

Soup lunch returns on Wednesday 9th September, 12.30-2pm.

A selection of delicious home-made soups with bread and a cuppa.

Hope to see you there!

Cairdean donation presentation, Thursday 17th Sept at the Carlops Café (2.30-4.30pm)

A group from Cairdean will visit the Carlops Cafe to present their Summer Fete donation to Sheena for the Malawi project.

For a reminder of how this came about have a look in the July issue, page 7.

[Newsletter - Carlops church](#)

General Kirk Session – 17th Sept 7pm

A General Kirk Session will be held at Carlops Church at 7pm on Thursday 17th September
Anyone is very welcome to come along.

Newlands Harvest Supper – Saturday 10th October 6.30pm

We will be holding our **Harvest Supper** at Newlands church on Saturday 10th October at 6.30pm. It will be a potluck supper, where everyone brings food to share and there will be a collection in aid of a charity which is to be confirmed.

Everyone is warmly invited and if you would like a ticket, please let me know.

Jean Howat: howatjean@gmail.com

Sunday Club and Baby Brunch – West Linton

Sunday Club resumes on Sunday 6th September at St Andrew's Church.

The main church service is at 11.30am and Sunday Club starts at 11.45am

Baby Brunch takes place every Friday in the Old Church Hall from 10 – 11.30am

Discussion groups on forgiveness

Rev Nick Bowry from St Mungo's Episcopal church in West Linton has invited us to join in a study on the theme of forgiveness taking place in Oct and November this year.

He has selected a booklet to assist with this

[Forgiveness : Douglas Connelly : 9781783598397 : Blackwell's](#)

Study groups are taking place in West Linton on Tuesday evenings (time tbc) and in Upper Tweeddale at the Laurel Bank Tea Room in Broughton on Tuesday morning at 10, running from 6th October until 11th November.

We also hope to hold a discussion session series in Carlops, so listen out for news of that.

Nick says

"If this type of study isn't your sort of thing, then I would like to encourage you to read a book related to the theme, and discuss it in a group. You may care to read one (or more) of these:

- 'The Hiding Place' by Corrie Ten Boom
- 'The Shack' by William Paul Young
- 'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini
- 'Atonement' by Ian McEwan
- 'The Story Teller' by Jodi Picoult
- 'Gilead' by Marilynne Robinson
- 'The Dutch House' by Ann Patchett
- 'The Language of Flowers' by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
- 'Crime and Punishment' by Fyodor Dostoevsky (a very long read!)
- 'The Sunflower' by Simon Wiesenthal
- 'Night Road' by Kristin Hannah
- 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry' by Rachel Joyce
- 'Looking for Alaska' by John Green (Young Adult genre)

You may want to read one of these books and reflect on it alone, or by gathering some others and discussing it together, book-club style."

The Column

My Reading Angel

I've always been an avid reader; loved it from age four. There were always books in our house and my parents encouraged me to read anything I chose, whenever I wanted, for as long as I pleased (though I recall disagreements about under the bedclothes late at night, by torchlight); all to my lifelong enjoyment and benefit. I still read anything I can lay hands on, though I have a preference nowadays for well-researched history, biography, and narrative-focused novels.

I didn't develop my reading habit unaided; I had a reading angel to encourage and guide me. Her name was Miss Grainger to my 1950s six-year-old self, and Miss Grainger to the adult Rennie too. I learned later that her Christian name was Elizabeth, Liz to her friends, but I never dreamed of addressing her so. She was in charge of the children's section of the then James Thin's bookshop on Edinburgh's South Bridge, opposite the University.

I was introduced to Miss Grainger when I was six. I won a primary school prize (boast) and was taken to Thin's to choose a book. She knelt to my small height and we talked: "Do you like reading, Rennie?" "Yes, I think so, Miss Grainger." "Well, let's find something that you will enjoy and see if we can turn 'I think so' into 'Certainly.'" She walked me round her domain, picking up books, letting me handle them, talking, explaining, and "we" chose *The Secret Seven*, by Enid Blyton.

These were the days before perhaps well-meaning, but mistaken, busybodies denounced Enid Blyton as not socially inclusive and perhaps habit-forming. Blyton is a cracking story-teller and may well be habit-forming, but her output was finite. Once one has read the canon, the habit formed is not of Blyton, but of reading itself. Blyton completed, the now habituated reader simply moves on to other writers. I devoured *The Secret Seven*, as Miss Grainger knew I would, and I wanted more: Enid Blyton again, and again, Percy F Westerman, Lucy Fitch-Perkins, R M Ballantyne, Richmal Crompton, R L Stevenson, H E Marshall, M B Synge, Alexandre Dumas, John Buchan, and ... and ... Miss Grainger knew what habits would be formed.

Next year, a prize again (boast again); a visit to Miss Grainger again. I started to receive book tokens as birthday and Christmas presents, and each brought another visit to Miss Grainger, another unfailing “Hello Rennie” (long before facial recognition technology); another discussion of where “we” might go this time; another step up a carefully designed ladder of thematic variation and intellectual demand of which I remained blissfully unaware.

Soon, Miss Grainger began to take me beyond the children’s section: fiction, including the most readable classics for children and adults, poetry, history, biography, travel, exploration, geography, natural history. All carefully chosen to satisfy and gently extend my reading capacity, appetite and imagination. The eventual choice of titles shifted gradually from her to me, but she was always there to suggest, nudge, confirm: “Have you read ...?” “I think you’ll like ...” “I enjoyed this ...”. From six to twenty-six, she held my literary hand and led me gently, surely and willingly along. I benefitted greatly and enjoyed it too. It was wise, kind, highly skilled, and never manipulative. Yes, she was selling books, but in addition, she the bookseller, after only our third meeting, introduced me the customer, to the public library in nearby George IV Bridge (that is, she put on her coat and took me there herself), where all this delight could be had for free.

When I went to Edinburgh University, Miss Grainger knew without being told that I’d read English as one of my subjects; and she told me how good a teacher Professor John Butt was, and why. When I turned 21, then the age of majority, she helped me select twelve to fifteen books that still provide the core of my library and my understanding today. And she put her personal gift on top of the pile: *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*. A long and rewarding road from *The Secret Seven*. Incidentally, I discovered recently that Rory McIlroy reads Marcus Aurelius to help him stay calm and focussed. Sadly, the great Roman did not do for my golf swing, what he has done for Rory’s!

Soon after the Marcus Aurelius incident, I began to consider a career in libraries. I consulted several people at this time, including Miss Grainger. She suggested what I later came to know as one of the great, if perhaps under-practised, truths about my chosen profession: that the principal job of a librarian is not to look after books, but to help people use books to their benefit and enjoyment. Not unlike a first-class children’s bookseller really.

Miss Grainger died aged 52; far too young; still at Thin’s. A great loss, but a friend remembered,

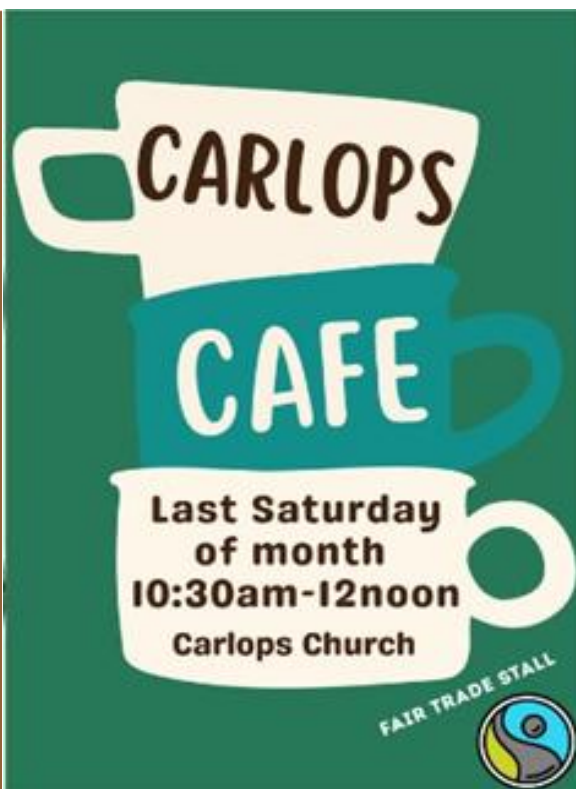
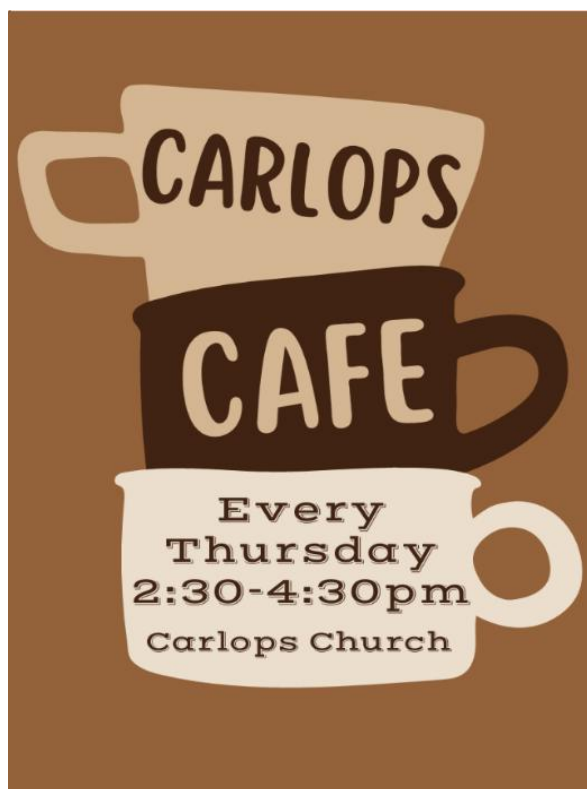
loved and honoured. And not just by me; I have met several people who knew her and who describe an experience like mine.

The Carlops Church community made me a generous gift when I ceased editing its *Newsletter* at the end of 2023: *Coffee with a bookseller* at Topping's bookshop. It is an excellent product, and I enjoyed talking to their well-informed, helpful staff and choosing books with them. But sorry Topping's, you didn't invent the *Coffee with a bookseller* concept; Liz Grainger, my reading angel, did that 75 years ago, and practised it with lasting success and with love for more than a quarter of a century.

Rennie McElroy

31 August 2026

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

September

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, Letter carver – 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 – Artist – 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

October

Thursday 1 October	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 6 October	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing

Thursday 8 October	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 13 October	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Wednesday 14 October	12.30-2pm	Soup Lunch
Thursday 15 October	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Tuesday 20 October	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 22 October	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Café
Friday 23 October	7.30-8.30pm	Our Village Talks – John Kennedy – Sailor – Boats and Ocean Adventures
Tuesday 27 October	7.30-9.30pm	Gaelic Psalm Singing
Thursday 29 October	2.30-4.30pm	Carlops Cafe
Saturday 31 October	10.30-12pm	Coffee Drop-in (Carlops Café) and Fair- Trade Stall

Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Monday 28th September 2026 please