

Parish of West Linton St Andrew's

December/January 18/19
Church of Scotland



Interim Minister: Rev Stewart McPherson

From our Interim Minister ...

The news today informs us that it is 20 years since the launch of the first component of the International Space Station. Sixteen nations were involved in building this object which is the size of a six-bedroom house, requiring 136 space flights to deliver the parts to complete the single most expensive object ever built (£93.4 billion) and the third brightest thing in the night sky which we often see passing by in the dark. All this money, energy, effort, ingenuity, imagination, hope, to create something with a 30-year expected life-span. And what is it? It is described as a huge laboratory to enable long-term exploration of space and provide benefits to people on Earth ... serving as the gateway to new frontiers in human space exploration. It was created to help us discover more.

The season of Advent is about investing in a journey towards mystery in order to discover more. There is, of course, for so many people all the investment of money, time, energy, and emotion during this period which for some is dominated by a hope that Boxing Day will arrive soon so that it can all be over, and we can return to normal. For some it is a journey they make alone while, it appears, everyone else is having an exciting time with family and friends. For many, life gets busier and our sense of incompleteness rises as we buy more stuff, attend more events, eat more mincemeat pies, hunt the computer files for our address

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labels and check who has not died since the previous Christmas when we were last in touch. And amidst it all the mystery evades us, and the journey can be a chore rather than a joy. For many it is a journey of anticipation and hope.

This Advent will involve the beginning of a journey for our 3 linkage congregations as we meet together, reflect on where we have been, where we are, and where we want to go. It is a journey which will not be easy but is a journey that is made possible because it is rooted and grounded in Advent hope. It will require imagination, courage, working together, listening, exploring, a little grace and kindness, and most of all, trust in ourselves and in one another. Our aim is not to build something as expensive and big as the ISS, but perhaps to create something which enables us to explore the mysteries, discover more, and provide benefit for people on earth.

The end of the journey for those first Advent explorers led them to a baby in a stable which was not what they had anticipated at all as their expectations were of something grander, higher and richer. We may not know nor be able to predict what will lie at the end of the journey for any of us, but we set off and commit to it and trust that in the darkness shines a star which will guide us towards a huge surprise ... a recognition of the potential for new life that lies within us all ... and deeper into this mystery we call God.

Have a blessed and peace-filled Advent journey.

Stewart

Elders and Congregational Meetings ...

Meetings have been arranged at which people from our linkage will meet with members of the Transition Support Group (TSG). The TSG supports the Interim Ministry and forms a link with Presbytery and the Interim Ministries Task Group of the Ministries Council. It will number around five or six and represent each of these areas of church life and

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be led by people of experience.

The elders of the 3 Kirk Sessions will meet the TSG on **Wednesday 5th December 2018, 7.30pm, New Church Hall, West Linton**. A second meeting for all members of the three congregations with the TSG will be held on **Saturday 12th January 2019, 10am until 12 noon** in a location to accommodate everyone (probably the Newlands Centre).

These meetings are an important opportunity for everyone to reflect on where we are on our journey as individual congregations and together as a linkage, and to help set aims and objectives for the future. Please make every effort to attend and participate in these discussions to support your church, your elders, and your Interim Minister on our journey together.

Emergency Food Supplies ...

As the winter cold begins to nip at fingers and toes, we turn the heating up, pull on our woollies and eat warm foods. But for some people, we learn that they have little or no food and they need to make use of local Food Banks.

The Emergency Food Supply Committee of the Linkage continues to give food to those referred within our Parish but think we should show wider support to the local Food Banks in Peebles and Penicuik.

Therefore, from January 2019 the Committee will begin collecting items which will be taken to the Food Bank.

A list of the foods and toiletries most needed will be attached to a collection box in church. This will run for 3 months and then be assessed.

If you have questions, please talk to a Committee member:

Patsy Campbell, Carlops

Jean Henderson -Howat, Newlands

Helen Bruce, St Andrews

From the Presbytery Planning Task Group ...

We live in a fast-changing world. The way we shop has changed and as a result we are seeing the demise of many popular High Street names and the closure of many stores as on-line shopping becomes the norm for so many. In a way the church in the West is facing similar challenges.

At the General Assembly in May reports were presented, and deliverances passed concerning the future of the Church of Scotland.

The Council of Assembly detailed some of the strengths of the Church of Scotland – we have a committed people seeking to live out the Gospel; we have a base in every community in Scotland; we have the largest national body of willing volunteers; we are ecumenical breadth and outlook; we have a positive history of engagement in social reform and a proven record of social care delivery; we have many opportunities to network across society and to work with people at the margins of society.

HOWEVER, we face major challenges – a sense of uncertainty about the future; missing generations, especially of young people; falling numbers of people and ageing congregations; a rapid decline in numbers in paid ministry; too many inadequate buildings; falling income. It paints a gloomy picture.

The Ministries Council reported that, ‘The best estimate is that in 2023 the number of ministers available to serve as parish ministers will be in the region of 20% lower than is currently the case.’ A 20% reduction in the Melrose and Peebles Presbytery Plan would take us to 11 full time equivalent ministries. We currently have 13.7.

The General Trustees reminded us that we have far too many buildings. They encouraged us to develop ‘Well-equipped spaces in the right places’

It was a restless General Assembly. The Council of Assembly’s Strategic Plan was thrown out and they were told to go away think again - and be more radical. Two instructions came from the floor of the Assembly and were approved:

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Instruct Presbyteries meantime to challenge themselves in their Presbytery Plans to be robust, imaginative and courageous in reducing the number of charges, creating ministry hubs, and enabling new pioneer and new church planting opportunities, supported by a Ministries Council that enables new reformed pathways into ministry.

Instruct Kirk Sessions meantime to meet in conference, to reflect on the state of decline of the national Church and how that affects the Church locally and determine what their vision and mission is for the next three years in collaboration with Presbytery Planning teams.

It was against this background that the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles took the decision to suspend its Presbytery Plan until a way forward could be agreed. We've held 2 conferences for congregations to explain the background and to encourage new ways of thinking. We're encouraging Kirk Sessions and congregations to be realistic about their situation and also to be proactive – to talk to their neighbours, to think out of the box, to consider new ways of doing and being church.

It's an unsettling time but increasingly I'm hearing that people are excited about new possibilities. This is the challenge that was presented at the Presbytery Conference in June...

Be imaginative and courageous!

How do we deploy 11 ministries?

Where are the right places?

What is sustainable?

What is your congregation's vision & mission?

All that we do must be underpinned by prayer.

Pray for:

The work of our Presbytery Planning Task Group

Each congregation in our Presbytery

Ministers and church members who are feeling unsettled

God's wisdom and guidance

***Rev Rosemary Frew, Minister of Bowden and Melrose
Convener, Presbytery Planning Task Group***

Gift Service for children in the Borders ...

This year's Gift Service will be held on Sunday 9th December. There are children across the Borders region that will not receive any presents for Christmas, therefore donations of new toys and books would be greatly appreciated.

These donations will be given to the Salvation Army who will distribute them to children in the Borders. Your gifts will make a huge difference to children who otherwise would have nothing to open on Christmas Day.

Please note that all gifts should be NEW and UNWRAPPED.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Marianne Jack, 01968 660862

The Guild ...

With Christmas carols in mind, some of our Guild members will be adding their voices to many more at The Big Carol Sing on Friday 7th December. This will take place in St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh at 2.00 pm, and tickets for this event have already sold out. Another earlier carol-singing will take place in Innerleithen Church at 2.30pm on Monday 3rd December, and Innerleithen Guild members would be very happy for other folk to join them then.

Our Guild will be holding its Christmas Party on Wednesday 19th at 7.30pm, and as usual we will be hoping that friends from Castlecraig and other visitors will be joining us then for the fun.

On Wednesday 30th January we will be meeting in The Old Church Hall, West Linton at 2pm and will be using an excellent new resource which has been produced by the World Mission council of the Church of Scotland, 'Living Together in a World of Religions'. A special game of Dominoes will help us learn little known facts about the other world religions. Do come and join us then.

Margaret Habeshaw

Christmas Carol Quiz

Can you identify which carols these lines come from.

You need to provide the first line of the carol on the answer sheet
(see page 8).

Entries should be submitted to the Editor in a sealed envelope marked
"Christmas Carol Quiz" by 31st December.

There will be a small prize for the first correct entry opened on
Sunday 6 January 2019.

1	Oh, hush the noise and still the strife
2	God with us is now residing
3	Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all
4	Powers, dominions bow before Him
5	What your joyful news today
6	Thou its light its joy its crown
7	Sing the glory of God's gracious plan
8	Christ was born to save
9	.. heaven's exalted arches ring
10	Thy son shall be Emmanuel
11	Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
12	Now, as our glorious mighty Redeemer
13	All out of darkness we have light
14	Saviour and King we worship you
15	The bells of heaven rang for Him
16	Worship we our Jesus
17	Let every heart prepare Him room
18	All glory be to God on high
19	Through His own redeeming love
20	Gaze in wonder at the Son of God

Christmas Quiz Answers

Name Telephone

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Church Flowers ...

Have you ever wondered how we manage to have fresh flowers on the Communion table each week? If so – read on.

There are ten of us who arrange flowers. The process all begins at the beginning of the year when a list of people who wish to donate is made up alongside the flower arrangers who take a month each plus several extra weeks where needed. At the beginning of each month the arrangers receive a list of names and phone numbers to contact. At Easter, Harvest and Christmas as many of us as possible help. Another two people help with the important job of delivering flowers to folk in the community. Letters and phone calls of thanks confirm how much people appreciate just being thought of, especially at a low time. We all enjoy what we are doing and thanks are due to everyone who is involved, be it donating, arranging or delivering. It would not happen without you.

If you wish to donate please contact me, or you can use the flower envelopes (found at the entrance to Church). We now have about a third of the year without donations and have to draw on Church funds so are always very grateful for your help.

Please also let us know if there is anyone who you feel would appreciate flowers.

Jill Green Tel: 01968 660415

Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal ...

A great big thank you to all who filled a shoebox for this year's appeal. We collected 35 boxes which is a great effort by all plus there were donations of extras e.g hats, scarves gloves etc which Blythswood say is greatly appreciated. The shoeboxes will be going to Eastern Europe. The difference these boxes make to peoples lives is immeasurable .

Marianne Jack

Services In December

Date	Event	Location	Time
2nd	Morning Worship - 1st in Advent	St Andrew's	11.15 am
2nd	Carlops Advent Garden Ceremony	Carlops	3.45 pm
2nd	An Advent Communion	Carlops	6.00 pm
9th	Gift Service - 2nd in Advent	St Andrew's	11.15 am
16th	Morning Worship - 3rd in Advent	St Andrew's	11.15 am
16th	A Blue Christmas - A Time to Remember and Reflect	St Andrew's	7.00 pm
23rd	Nativity Service - 4th in Advent	St Andrew's	11.15 am
23rd	Joint Churches Carol Service	St Andrew's	4.00 pm
24th	Children's Crib Service	St Mungo's	4.00 pm
24th	Carlops Carol Service	Carlops	7.00 pm
24th	Watchnight Service	St Andrew's	11.30 pm
25th	Christmas Day Service	St Andrew's	11.15 am
30th	Morning Worship	St Andrew's	11.15 am
6th Jan	Morning Worship - Communion	St Andrew's	11.15 am
6th Jan	Carlops Christingle Service	Carlops	3.45 pm

What's on this month ...

CoSY Café

New Church Hall

2.00pm to 4.00pm

14th December

4th January

18th January

1st February

The Guild

Newlands Church

Christmas Party

19th December at 7.30 pm

Old Church Hall West Linton

30th January 2019

See article for fuller details

Guid Blethers

Old Church Hall

2.00pm to 3.30pm

12th December

9th January

23rd January

Prayer Focus Group

Old Church Hall

9.15am to 9.45am

5th December

9th January

6th February

Baby Brunch

Old Church Hall

Fridays

9.30am to 12.00 noon

(During school term time)

Preaching Rota - January ...

The preaching rota for January was not confirmed in time to include in this Newsletter. Once details are available, they will appear in the weekly intimations.

Services December

	West Linton 11.15 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
2nd	Rev Stewart McPherson	Rev Stewart McPherson	Murray Campbell
9th	Rev Stewart McPherson	Mary McElroy	Rev Stewart McPherson
16th	Rev Stewart McPherson	Rev Stewart McPherson	Mary McElroy
23rd	Rev Stewart McPherson	Patsy Campbell	Rev Stewart McPherson
30th	Rev Stewart McPherson	Rev Chris Levison	Rev Stewart McPherson

Drivers

December **Driver 1** Robert Higgins
01968 660629
Driver 2 Pat Graham
01721 752205

January **Driver 1** Kate Dykes
01968 660247
Driver 2 Helen Bruce
01968 661603

Door Duties

December	D Green	Choir
	S Whalley (£)	Main
	M Moore	Gallery
January	A Lyon	Choir
	N Calvert (£)	Main
	M Jack	Gallery

Welcome and Readers

December	2nd	Oliver Hoskins
	9th	Daryll Green
	16th	Daryll Green
	23rd	Tony Hoskins
	30th	Tony Hoskins
January	6th	Mary Turnbull
	13th	Mary Turnbull
	20th	David Campbell
	27th	David Campbell

Flower Donations - December

Lesley Johnstone
Anna Gibson
Flower Fund

Arranged by the Flower Team

Flower Donations - January

Flowers in memory of
Mrs & Mrs J Forsyth
Christine Leith
Flower Fund
Lillian Slater

Flowers arranged by Lillian Slater

Material for the February Magazine should be submitted to the editor by Friday 18th January 2019. The February issue will be available on 25th January. Copy to Colin Herd: email: herd.carradale@btinternet.com. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email.