

# *West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church*

**March 2023**

**Scottish Charity No SC003938**

**Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley**

***Why read a book when a blog post will do?***

*(In defence of the morality of book reading.)*

The Web is changing the way we read. It seems more and more people of all ages, genders and backgrounds have little time for books. It is a striking irony that an era of ubiquitous screens that saturate our lives with words is characterised by an incapacity to engage in the habit of deep reading. Book publishers report that there is a marked decline in the public's appetite for the demanding rigours of book reading as more and more people prefer the frictionless activities of scanning, skimming, scrolling, swiping. We are by all accounts losing our appetite as a species for blocks of text that demand a certain quality of attention, preferring instead bite-size collections of words — usually interspersed with images, pull-quotes, adverts and other distractions all designed to break up the apparent tedium of reading. In other words, we prefer words we simply have to *look* at, rather than *read*. One of the most disturbing characteristics of such a culture is that it sees *utility* as the ultimate end for anything from TV's to human relationships. A world enthralled by *ends* will ultimately become a world emptied of all that makes us human.

*"I would never read a book ... I'm very sceptical of books. I don't want to say no book is ever worth reading, but I actually do believe something pretty close to that. I think, if you wrote a book, you messed up. It should have been a six-paragraph blog post."*

That telling comment was made by one of the most successful cryptocurrency pioneers of the modern era. One who despite reaching the

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dizzying financial heights of being a billionaire several times over by the time they were 30 years old is now facing charges of egregious financial fraud. I offer the quote not as judgement call on a particular individual but merely as an observation that begs the question(s).

Why read a book when a blog post will do? Why labour through a narrative when other media permit us to skip straight to the point?

While exploring the processes involved in *reading-with-understanding*, the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, writing long before the Internet, said: *“When I read a poem or narrative with feeling surely something goes on in me which does not go on when I merely skim the lines for information.”* That *“something”* Wittgenstein argues is a moral process which involves ‘opening oneself up’ to difference, to surprise, and even personal transformation. Is this *‘opening’* what is being lost in our screen-saturated culture? Because for all of the considerable advantages that we have gained through the use of modern technology, we have yet to truly reckon with what we stand to lose. Are we in danger of losing the moral faculties of imagination, empathy, and insight — faculties that are actively cultivated through the habit of the attentive reading of other people’s stories? *To quote the writer Kevin Kelly: “More and more our society is centred on pictures and images, which is a beautiful thing. But some of the most important parts of life are not visible in pictures.”*

Perhaps the Apostle John in the opening line of his gospel was aiming for something more than a mere metaphor, perhaps he was intimating at something far more vital to our moral well being, when he wrote, *“In the beginning was the Word.”*

*Peace,*

Tony

## **Cosy Café**

**Wednesdays 5–8 pm**

**Fridays 2–8 pm**

For all ages in  
the Old Church Hall  
Games for the brave!  
Snakes & Ladders  
Chess, Bridge, Snap, etc

**Home baking &  
Soup at 6**

**Come and bring your  
friends**

**Transport available**

**Contact Kate Whalley**

**07973 501665**

## **Guid Blethers**

**Wednesday 8th March**

**Plants**

**with Joanne Thomson**

**Wednesday 22nd March**

**Lent and Easter traditions**

**with Joy Middleton**

**2.00pm - 3.30pm**

**Old Church Hall, West Linton**

*Guid Blethers is about enjoying the company of old and new friends by sharing interests and skills together. Our programme has varying topics of local interest with speakers and other activities.*

## **Baby Brunch**

**every Friday**

**10.00 to 11.30am**

**In the Old Church Hall**

**For parents, grandparents  
and carers with young  
children**

## **The Open Gate**

This is a free counselling service for anyone, young or old, who would like some help with a problem .

Phone or text 07535 898 244  
for a phone appointment to be arranged.



**Who are we?** We are a group set up by West Tweeddale Parishes in response to the current economic and fuel problems to offer help and support to the whole community

**What are we doing?** We're signposting 'warm events' across the 6 parishes where a warm welcome, refreshments and a chance to meet friends is offered. We're also organising a few fun and informative events to help everyone save a bit of cash over the winter. Look out for further posters advertising these events with the Winter Warmer logo. A monthly timetable is posted around the villages and can also be viewed on the West Tweeddale website ([westtweeddale.org.uk](http://westtweeddale.org.uk))

### **Messy Church goes wild!!**

Please come and join us for our next Messy Church session



on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 4pm at the New Church Hall. All children from babies to P7 are welcome to come and join in the fun. This time we are hoping to spend some of the time outside (weather permitting!) so please wear warm clothes. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information contact Jean Howat: [howatjean@gmail.com](mailto:howatjean@gmail.com)

### **Stamp Appeal**

Thanks to all who have saved the stamps from their Christmas mail. Some of you have even looked out envelopes from long ago and cut off the stamps. It was interesting to see some with 2½d on them. Yes, you read that right—pre-decimal stamps!

The amount raised in 2022 from the country wide collection was **£000.00.**

Colin

## **Presbytery of Lothian and Borders**

The new Presbytery of Lothian and Borders took effect on 1 January 2023 and comprises the four former Presbyteries of Lothian, Duns, Jedburgh and Melrose & Peebles. The first meeting of the new Presbytery took place on Saturday 21 January at St John's & Kings Park Parish Church in Dalkeith and was attended by over 120 ministers and elders.

The first moderator of the new Presbytery was confirmed as the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 2018 and is presently the minister of Greenlaw Parish Church near Duns. The Presbytery Clerk was confirmed as Rev Norman Smith, formerly minister of Granton Parish Church in Edinburgh.

Overall it was a very positive event, with a real sense of a new beginning. Much of the agenda related to arrangements for transition from the former Presbyteries, to establish new committees, discuss plans for joint finances and for future meetings. There will be four formal meetings each year, with the next one to be held in June, though the various committees will meet separately in the meantime to allow business to be progressed. The closing session in the afternoon was a group discussion, reflecting on the experiences of local churches over the last few years - the comments and ideas gathered from that were recorded for consideration in future Presbytery planning.

## **Union of the congregations of Broughton, Skirling and Tweedsmuir**

The union of the above congregations to form the new parish of Upper Tweeddale took effect on 1 February 2023, with a service held in Broughton church that evening to mark the occasion - a recording is available at [Parishes of Upper Tweeddale - Parishes of Upper Tweeddale Welcome Page](#) As a union, the three congregations will operate with a single Kirk Session and one set of office bearers, but will remain a part of the wider linkage of West Tweeddale.

# Hope

## Psalm 16: 8-9 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me;  
Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will rest in hope.

## Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

I'm sitting here on Sunday (26<sup>th</sup> of February) afternoon watching the minutes tick past waiting for the kick off of the Carabao Cup Final, where my team (Newcastle United) will take on Manchester United.

I am hopeful. Hopeful that they will win their first major trophy in almost 55 years and their first trophy in the almost 50 years that I have supported them. Hopeful.

Hope is such a powerful thing. It draws us forward, encouraging us to believe in a better tomorrow when today disappoints or even defeats us.

Newcastle is a one team city, where the fans have almost religiously followed that team through crushing disappointment after crushing disappointment, season after season, year after year. Making the journey every other week or so up from the town to the stadium, 'the Cathedral on the hill' as it's known locally, in hope but in no great expectation. Because when hope is placed in anything that isn't God, whatever it is (and for the past 50 years you'd had to have been pretty desperate to place your hope in Newcastle United) the likelihood is that disappointment awaits. At times it can almost seem easier not to hope.

But we're made to hope, we are made to be hopeful and our hope should be different to just wishful thinking or keeping my fingers crossed that my team are actually going to do it this time. Because our hope is grounded on that which is more secure, on the steadfast assurance of God and His love for us.

The verses from Psalm 16 here should serve to remind us that with the Lord set before us, with our eyes on Him and His path for us, life and it's myriad challenges will not move us. I love the picture of resting in this hope. That I can be so secure in God's love and His promises for me that the hope I find there is something I can rest in. It's not a maybe thing, not a fingers crossed this might happen thing, it's a hope I can actually rest in.

It is secured.

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For as the prophet Jeremiah reminds us the plans that God has made for each of us are plans for the good and not for disaster, plans for our future and plans to give us a hope. To give us a hope from our God, a hope secured on His love, a hope that will draw us forward into the plans He has made for us, a hope that will never disappoint. So, secure in the hope that God gives me for my life, I accept that for 90 minutes this afternoon I will have to place some of that hope in the hands of eleven mortal and fallible football players. I remain hopeful that I won't be disappointed but recognise that whether they win or whether they lose, my hope will still rest, steadfast and assured in God and His love.

***Kevin***

## **Thank you**

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has been supporting us through the last weeks. Your thoughts and prayers were evident and all the practical help has been amazing, whether it be giving lifts to the hospital or the delicious soups, shepherds pies and goodies which appeared as if by magic. Also, the chats on the phone and e-mails and texts which always seemed to arrive at the right moment, and of course the visits that cheered. Thank you for all you have done and indeed continue to do. When Daryll can dance round the room and pop a few corks we will all celebrate together!

Jill would also like to say thank you for making her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday a happy day. It was so unexpected, and a lovely surprise and she is still trying to work out how the news spread!

Thank you for being there for both of us.

***Daryll & Jill***

**Material for the March Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Monday 27th March 2023. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email.**

**The April 2023 issue will be available by 2nd April 2023.**

## Services December

	<b>West Linton 11.30 am</b>	<b>Carlops 10.00 am</b>	<b>Newlands 10.00 am</b>
5th	Murray Campbell	Murray Campbell	Mary McElroy
12th	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Patsy Campbell
19th	Steven Whalley	Steven Whalley	Rev Dr Tony Foley
26th	Fiona Burnett	Fiona Burnet	Murray Campbell
2.4.23	Rev Dr Tony Foley (Communion)	Rev Dr Tony Foley (Communion)	Isobel Hunter

## Door Duties

### March

Kate Dykes      Choir  
 Mary Turnbull      Main  
 Colin Herd      Gallery

### April

Ann Lyon      Choir  
 Michael Knott      Main  
 Christine Leith      Gallery

### Readers

**Mar**    5th Christine Leith  
           12th Jean Macnab  
           19th Jean Macnab  
           26th Helen Bruce

### Readers

**Apr**    2nd Helen Bruce  
           9th Steven Whalley  
           16th Steven Whalley  
           23th David Campbell  
           30th David Campbell

## Sunday Club

**On the first Sunday of each month  
 for children in P1 to P5**

**Contact Kate Whalley or Ann Lyon**

**01968 661158 or 01968 661347**



## ***Lent Studies***

By the time this Newsletter is distributed our Lent Studies will have started. These are being conducted over Zoom. For the Zoom link please contact Colin—carradale42@btinternet.com.

On Thursdays we will consider the book **'The things he carried'** by **Stephen Cottrell**

This book is available from Amazon using the link – [The Things He Carried: A Journey to the Cross: Meditations for Lent and Holy Week: Amazon.co.uk: Cottrell, Stephen: 9780281060801: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cottrell-Stephen-9780281060801/dp/9780281060801)

On Mondays we will consider the book **'Lent in plain sight'** by **Jill Duffield**

This book is available from Amazon using the link - [Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects: Amazon.co.uk: Duffield, Jill J.: 9780664265465: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Duffield-Jill-J-9780664265465/dp/9780664265465)

Both studies will be led by Tony.

## **Church Flowers**

Donations to the Flower Fund are very much appreciated and sincere thanks go to everyone who contributes so generously. Many cards and letters expressing thanks have been received from people who have had a visit and flowers from the church, thanks to your generous donations, we can continue to have beautiful flowers in church every day and give comfort, peace and joy to those in our community who need our support in this way.

If you would like to donate to the Flower Fund you can use the (yellow) FWO envelopes if you have them, or look for the Flower Fund envelopes available in church, or you can put your name and 'Flower Fund' on any plain envelope. Envelopes can be put into the offering on a Sunday or passed on to any of the Elders on duty. Alternatively, you can contribute using online banking using the details below:

Account Name: St Andrews Kirk Session

Sort Code: 80-09-39

Account number: 00817827

It would be helpful if you could include the reference 'Flower Fund' and if you are a taxpayer please consider to 'Gift Aid' your donation.

If you have any questions, or would like further information, please choose one of the following:

e-mail [treasurer@standrews-westlinton.org](mailto:treasurer@standrews-westlinton.org)

write to Michael Knott, 9 Tarfhaugh Brae, West Linton EH46 7DP or call Michael Knott on 660977.

Thanks to all our arrangers and visitors who give their time and talents so generously and our flowers will be arranged in March by Nancy Porteous and in April by Sheila Forsyth.

**Ann Lyon**

## Contacts

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**Cosy Café: Kate Whalley**

Telephone: 01968 661158

**Baby Brunch:**

**Guid Blethers: Helen Dry,**

Telephone: 01968 660506

**Weekly Linkage News: Christine Leith**

Telephone: 01968 660800

email: intimations@standrews-westlinton.org