

West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church

February 2025

Scottish Charity No SC003938

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

'American Dirt.' - books worth reading.

"This path is only for people who have no choice, no other option, only violence and misery behind you...Many will be maimed or injured. Many will die. Many, many of you will be kidnapped, tortured, trafficked, or ransomed ... every single one of you will be robbed."

The quote is a warning from a local priest ministering to those in the 'migrant caravan' from South and Central America. It comes from a novel I recently read called *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. The tale centres around a horrific tragedy that forces Lydia, a young mother and her 9yr old son to join the migrant trail from Central America to the USA. The novel challenges you to check your moral compass and is a powerful reminder of the value and importance of kindness. There is a very poignant part of the story that tells of when Lydia begs for a ride with a busload of young American missionaries. They are initially met with hesitant resistance prompting one character to ask, *"Are they just drive-by Samaritans?"* ... *"Do they just want to make pancakes and take selfies with skinny brown children?"*

The hesitancy of those responsible for the young group of missionaries is not one of callous indifference but struggling with the dilemma of weighing up the risk and their responsibility. The encounter causes Lyd-

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ia to remember a time when before the horrific circumstances that forced her to take such a desperate pathway to a hoped-for safety, she too was only superficially aware of the plight of migrants. When she half-heartedly listened to news items and wondered with the *“detached fascination of the comfortable elite, how dire the conditions of their lives must be wherever they came from, that this is the better option.”* This novel is not an easy story to read but it is one well worth reading. It is rooted in real life interviews with migrants and that is what gives the story its visceral impact. In the present climate it is a powerful reminder that every migrant is a human being with their own story of desperation and longing.

*‘you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land...
no one crawls under fences
no one wants to be beaten, pitied
no one chooses refugee camps
or strip searches ... [No one chooses]
prison, [unless]...
prison is safer
than a city of fire.’*

Peace,
Tony

Kirk Session Report

The Kirk Session met on 14 January. The meeting opened with a short reading and prayers. Previous services were discussed and the Blue Christmas, Reading and Carols and Nativity services were all commented on favourably. There was discussion about the Psalm Sunday services where we are hoping to have our usual donkey procession with coffee and cake before the service. Tony will propose books for Lent studies.

The proposed date for the Annual Stated Meeting is 23rd March. This will also be the date for the next communion service. It was stated there should be more notice of communion services as the last one was not well publicised. The joint Session Clerk apologised and proposed they should be verbally intimated in each of the two weeks before taking place (like Kirk Sessions).

The draft congregational accounts for 2024 were presented. The property report covered the problem in getting anyone to undertake the plastering/painting work needed for the inside of the Church. Presbytery will be approached for help in finding someone suitable.

The Kirk Session agreed to a request from the school for the Old Church Hall to be an assembly point if there was a need to evacuate the school.

It was recognised work is required on the website.

The meeting ended with the saying of the grace.

If you require any further information, please contact your Elder in the first instance.

Blythswood Care Thanks

Blythswood Care has been in touch to thank members and friends who generously supported the shoebox appeal again this year.

They report that 8500 boxes were sent to people in need across 8 European countries.

More than a third were sent to Ukraine. Five lorry loads went to Ternopil, Kyiv, Uzhhorod and Odesa.

Jeremy Ross, Blythswood CEO visited Ukraine in December and writes:

“The village of Partyzans’ke was occupied by Russians for several months. Less than 40 miles from currently occupied territory, there were shells in the road and homes were destroyed. Russians could come again. We delivered shoeboxes to families who had returned. It is hard to imagine what children there feel when they walk through their bullet -holed gates.

At a time when many families are struggling to pay bills at home, it’s testimony to how generous people can be to those in greater need. I want to thank everyone who filled a box and helped with the process. Your kindness really does make a difference to people living in hardship.”

The Open Gate

Just a reminder that The Open Gate is still available to offer an appointment to anyone of any age who could do with a little bit of counselling. This uses a Brief Solution Focussed Therapy (BFST) approach which is pleasant and helpful for all sorts of problems- often after only 1 session.

Phone 07535 898 244 to ask for an appointment in Newlands Centre on Friday afternoons 2-5pm. This is confidential and free.



**The next Messy Church session is on
Sunday 9 February – Lost and Found**

The session starts at 4pm in the New Church Hall at West Linton.

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

Guid Blethers

February 12th

Quiz on Saints

January 26th

Genealogy with Kirsty Campbell

Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from **2.00 pm to 3.30 pm** In the Old Church Hall.

Following a talk on an interesting subject or an activity (non strenuous!) we enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and some wonderful tasty nibbles

Further information from Helen Dry 660506

PEGGY WILLS – A good news story

Many of you will have known Margaret (Peggy) Wills, a longstanding member of the Newlands church congregation. She died peacefully in November 2024, aged 95. There was a large turnout for her memorial service. The generous leaving collection of £800 was split between Poppy Scotland and Christian Aid, her two favourite charities. Peggy was a lifetime supporter of CA being particularly involved as a door to door collector and organizer of coffee mornings in CA Week.

The thank you letter recently sent to me as CA treasurer is shown below.

With so much conflict in the world at present, this is a heart warming “good news” story of a life well lived helping others less fortunate.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING THEIR LIGHT SHINE

Dear Robert

I’m writing to say how sorry we were to hear of your loss, and how touched we are by the gift you’ve given to Christian Aid in memory of Peggy Wills.

Please accept our heartfelt sympathy, and our sincere appreciation for the generous £400 donated in her name. At this difficult time, it’s so compassionate of you to reach out to help others. And it says a lot about the kind of person Peggy was, the values she held, and the love they inspired.

It can sometimes feel like a light has gone out of our lives when we lose someone. I hope it helps you to know that Peggy’s light will shine on through Christian Aid’s community-led projects to create lasting change. Your gift in memory will support hope, dignity and justice in other people’s lives.

May that thought bring you comfort. On behalf of everyone at Christian Aid, thank you very much again for your gift and for choosing to remember Peggy in this special and beautiful way. We’re honoured to be part of helping their light and faith in a better world to live on.

With warmest wishes from all of us,

Yours sincerely,

Katie Mathers. Legacy and in Memory Team

Coffee Club

at the Old Church Hall,
West Linton



Tuesdays 10am – 12pm, every month!

FREE HOT DRINKS, CAKES and BREAKFAST.

All are welcome and it's an opportunity to meet your friends or have some company and a good blether.

Citizens Advice Bureau will also be there and can help with everything including benefits, money worries, housing, work and family issues.

**Come along on 17th Dec, 21st Jan
and 18th Feb**



Funded by Scottish Ministers in conjunction with Scottish Borders Council, as the Lead Partner for the Local Action Group

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Telephone: 01968 660221 email: tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Mobile: 07793 294000

Linkage Administrator: Kate Whalley

Office: 01968 733112 email: cos1560.tweed@outlook.com

Telephone: 07973 501665 email: kate@westlinton.com

(Most of the time Kate will be working from home therefore use the contact details immediately above)

Joint Session Clerk: Kevin Scott

Telephone: 01968 661744 email: kevin.scott@energrow.co.uk

Joint Session Clerk: Steven Whalley

Telephone: 07525 378187 email: stevenwhalley.westlinton@gmail.com

Treasurer: Michael Knott

Telephone: 01968 660977 email: michael.knott@talk21.com

Property Convener: Steven Whalley

Telephone: 07525 378187 email: stevenwhalley.westlinton@gmail.com

Weekly Linkage News: Christine Leith

Telephone: 01968 660800 email: intimations@standrews-westlinton.org

Newsletter Editor: Colin Herd

Telephone: 07792 815953 email: newsletter@standrews-westlinton.org

Sunday Club: Kate Whalley, Ann Lyon

Telephone: 07973 501665 01968 661347

Flowers: Ann Lyon

Telephone: 07702 984185 email: annlyon@live.co.uk

Cosy Café: Kate Whalley Telephone: 07973 501665

Guid Blethers: Helen Dry Telephone: 01968 660506

Baby Brunch: Mary Turnbull Telephone 01968 661737

Boys Brigade: Emma Lyon Telephone
Email: westlintonbb@gmail.com

Services February

	West Linton 11.30 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
2nd	Kevin Scott	Kevin Scott	Fiona Burnett
9th	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Peter Worthington
16th	Fiona Burnett	Fiona Burnett	Rev Dr Tony Foley
23rd	Peter Worthington	Peter Worthington	Isobel Hunter
2/3	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Chris Levison

Door Duties

February

C Leith (£)	Choir
K Scott	Main
M Turnbull	Gallery

March

T Hoskins (£)	Choir
P Graham	Main
M Turnbull	Gallery

Readers

Feb	2nd Elaine Robinson
	9th Daryll Green
	16th Daryll Green
	23rd Christine Leith
Mar	2nd Christine Leith
	9th Jean Macnab
	16th Jean Macnab
	23rd Kevin Scott
	30th Kevin Scott

Material for the March Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Monday 24th February 2025. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email. All submissions should be in MS Word or equivalent. Please do not embed in an email. The March 2025 issue will be available by 2nd March 2025.