

October/November 2026

Issue 4

PARISH NEWS



The magazine for West Calder and Polbeth Parish
Church of Scotland.

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Dear friends

After a lovely summer, the deep colours of autumn are starting to decorate the landscape around us, and with that comes the cooler weather and shorter days. But in every season there is beauty...

There is a warmth in the red, yellow, orange and brown leaves, that has nothing to do with temperature. A coziness. A wee reminder that summer might be over, but now the time has come to “*coorie in*” next to the fire, and appreciate the warmth that family, friendships, and faith can bring.

We have a busy autumn ahead of us at the church! There are many special events and activities planned (you can read all about these in the rest of the magazine), and it would be lovely to spend time with you at any or all of these get-togethers. *Meet Me @ The Manse* will now take place every 1st

Wednesday of the month, from 2-3:30pm, but please remember that I am always available for a cuppa and chat, just call or send a text if you would like to speak to me about anything.

I would like to set you all a challenge this autumn: As the *leaves* fall from the trees, let's try to *leave* a lasting impression on all those we meet. Let's *leave* people feeling loved and valued, and invite them to the church where the love of God and the fellowship of believers will help them to *leave* their cares behind and follow Jesus. Because as the days get darker, it is wise to follow the light that never stops shining.

May God bless you all this autumn, and always.

Much love,

Nanda

Reflection – Mark 4:2-9 (*New Living Translation*)

² He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: ³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!” ⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

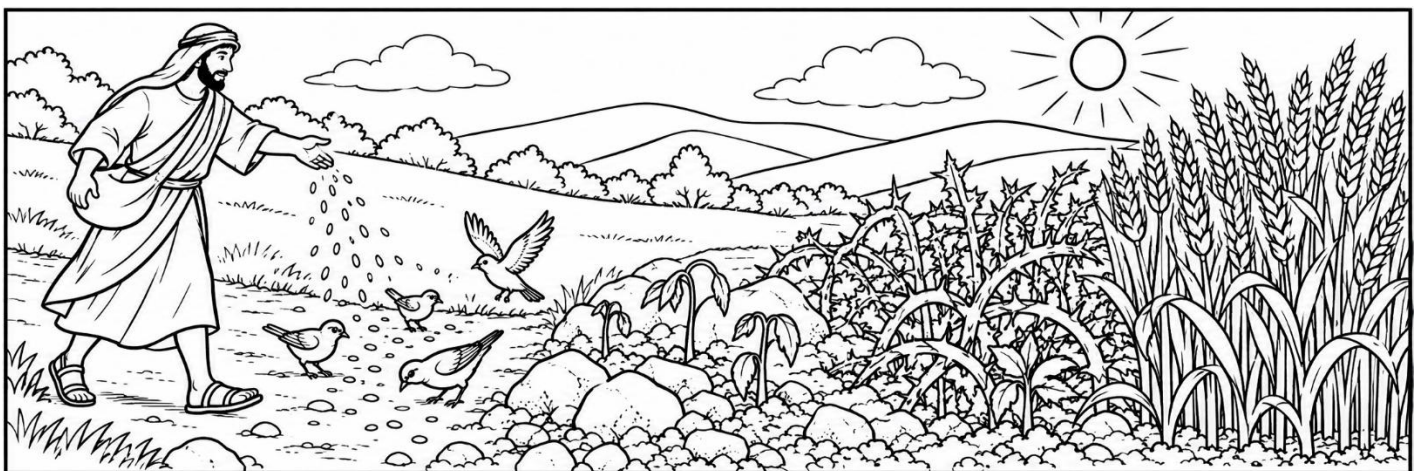
When you read this parable, have you ever wondered why the farmer wasn’t more careful where he sowed his seed? After all, seed doesn’t come cheaply, and I’m sure that farmers then, as much as now, would have been eager to maximise their profit margins, so why not plough and till the soil until there was no risk of any seed falling among weeds or on stony ground? It’s not that simple, of course, as I’ve often noticed while out walking. Frequently I’ve come across fields that seem to be more stones than soil, despite the farmer’s best efforts. Yet, somehow, such fields succeed year on year in yielding a full and healthy crop.

Never lose heart then, when it comes to sowing the seed of God's word. It may seem, looking at today's world, that we are faced with hopelessly stony ground that offers little prospect of the Christian message taking root in people's lives, but the fact is that God time and again overturns expectations, speaking to those we least anticipate, cultivating fruit in the most unlikely of lives. What to us may seem a barren wilderness to him can be a field ready for planting. The final harvest is out of our hands, but sowing the seed is very much in them, and the results may well surprise us.

Prayer

Living God, help us to recognise that the seed of your word can germinate in unexpected places, challenging those we least expect and transforming lives in ways we can scarcely credit. Wherever it is sown, nurture and nourish it so that it may yield a rich and fruitful harvest. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter



Discovering God in Silence

Waiting for God in silence, being still so that God may reveal his presence, is part of the teaching of the Scriptures. In Lamentations we read 'It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord....It is good to sit alone in silence' [Lamentations 3:26-28]. And in 1 Kings we find the story of the prophet Elijah who, in a most unexpected way, found God in the silence. Elijah is fleeing for his life. He takes refuge in a cave on Mount Horeb, but is called to stand outside the cave because God is to pass by.

'Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.' When Elijah heard it, he put on his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave, and God spoke to him (1 Kings 19:11-13).

The Psalms sing in many places discovering God in silence. In Psalm 62 we read 'For God alone my soul waits in the silence'. And in the King James version of the Psalms, we come across this lovely advice. 'Commune with the Lord upon your bed in silence and be still' (Psalm 4). Best known of all is the line from Psalm 46, 'Be still and know that I am God'. This is the invitation and the promise which Augustine constantly returned all his life.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus loved to spend time alone with his Father. Early in the morning he would take himself away to the hills to pray. Sometimes he would spend the whole

night in prayer. Luke's gospel tells us: 'His fame spread more and more, and many people came to listen to him in order that he should heal them of their illnesses. But he often withdrew to lonely places to pray' (Luke 5:16).

And when Jesus comes to visit Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, at Bethany we find that the only thing Mary wants to do is sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him. When she shows no sign of coming to help Martha with the supper, Martha complains to Jesus. He gently defends her sister. 'Martha, Martha.' Jesus says 'You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken away from her'.

The tradition grew quickly in the early Church that sitting in silence and stillness, that 'better part', led the way to inner peace, the way of experiencing the mystery of God.

We need only remember Paul's words in his letter to the Christian community in Rome shortly after Christ's death: 'The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words. (Romans 8:26-27).

Paul's words were echoed by Augustine, who tells us: 'When we pray, we have no need of spoken word. Sometimes the tongue is silent and the soul is sighing. That means that God is being prayed to inside, in the room of your heart'.

Amen

Rev Alison Quilter

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Harvest

"You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it... You crown the year with your bounty, and your wagon tracks overflow with richness." — Psalm 65:9, 11

Gracious and Creator God,

Our hearts are full of gratitude. You spoke the world into being, and by your steady hand, the seasons turn, the sun warms the soil, and the rain refreshes the earth.

"You give seed to the sower and bread to the eater." — Isaiah 55:10

Thank you for the abundance of our harvest. Thank you for the fruits, the vegetables, and the grains that spring from the dirt to nourish our bodies. We remember the hands that planted, tended, and gathered these crops—for the labour of farmers, growers, and all who bring food from the field to our tables.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." — Galatians 6:9

Lord, as we celebrate our plenty, open our eyes to the needs of others. Remind us of your great generosity so that we may also share what we have with the hungry, the lonely, and those in need. Teach us to be good stewards of the earth you entrusted to our care.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." — Psalm 107:1

For the food on our plates, the beauty of creation, and the gift of life itself, we lift our voices in praise.

In your holy name, we pray.

Amen.



The Quiet Service

The next quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will be held on **Wednesday 7th October at 3:30pm**, in the 'quiet room', and the November quiet service on **Wednesday 4th November at 3:30pm**.

All are welcome to this short service followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a 'blether'. The short service of worship includes a couple of hymns, scripture reading, prayers and a short reflection. Entry via the Ramp Door of the Polbeth Church building.

Anyone who would like to come and needs assistance with transport should call Sandra Dixon on 07855861223.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Sandra and Alison



FOODBANK DISTRIBUTION CENTRE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Would you like to be part of a team of people distributing food on behalf of West Lothian Foodbank from the West Kirk Hall on Monday and Wednesday afternoons? Please contact the Rev Dr Sheena Orr for more information, on 07922649160.

FUND RAISING GROUP

On Sunday 6th September we held our first joint fundraising event with participants from both churches taking part in our sponsored walk.

Nineteen adults, four children and three dogs set off from the West Kirk at 2pm to walk out to Polbeth as far as the Bowling Green and back, a distance of approximately 5K. The weather was kind that day so nobody got soaked and on return participants enjoyed a nice cuppa and a biscuit.

The fabulous total of £2137 was raised and a big thank you is extended, not only to all the walkers but also to those who sponsored them.

Our next scheduled event is on Friday 20th November when a musical evening featuring Laura Quilter is planned.

On Saturday 28th November Polbeth Harwood Christmas Fayre will be on from 2pm - 4pm with stalls selling hand crafted items.

On Saturday 5th December a West Kirk Christmas Mingle is planned.

There will be home baking and crafts on sale as well as a raffle and tombola.

Soup, sandwiches and snacks both savoury and sweet will be available so please come along and enjoy an hour or two of relaxation before you join the madness that is Christmas shopping.

Please remember that all donations for raffle, tombola and home baking will be very appreciated for all of our sales.

Further details for all of these events will be available nearer the time.

Thank you everyone once again for your continued support.

Margaret Hogg



HARVEST HOEDOWN

★ FAMILY EVENT ★

in the
WEST KIRK HALL

FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026

From
7 - 10PM

★ MUSIC BY: ★
JOHN MORGAN

ADULTS £8
CHILDREN UNDER 14 £4
SUPPER INCLUDED

★ **TICKETS NOW ON SALE.** ★

★ *From: Theresa, Evelyn, and Beryl.* ★



Polbeth Harwood
Church



Christmas Fayre

Saturday 28th November
2pm till 4pm



Stalls with

- ★ Christmas gifts
- ★ Pet goods
- ★ Hand knitted items
- ★ Jewellery
- ★ and other items



Tea, coffee
and cakes



Santa's Grotto



Tombola
and Raffle



West Lothian Foodbank Harvest Appeal.

Harvest Service Foodbank Appeal

Dear Church friends,

As we plan our Harvest Appeal this year, we are so grateful for the support everyone at your church has shown to our community by supporting our work. On behalf of West Lothian Foodbank, we wanted to thank you for your congregation's continued support of our work.

As you may be aware, sadly the need for emergency food in our area still remains incredibly high. During the last year, West Lothian Foodbank has provided 3650 emergency food parcels to people who can't afford the essentials.

Thank you for your support, which is so vital to ensure that we can continue to provide our services in West Lothian.

Vital partners today, together and forever.

Churches like yours are already vital partners as we seek to end hunger in West Lothian today, but there is so much we can explore together as Harvest approaches. As well as ending hunger today, our vision is to end hunger forever with our communities and by building more just systems.

This vision echoes, for us, God's call in Micah 6:8: to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. It's about supporting people today when they are in crisis, seeking justice by influencing people in power, all while serving one another humbly, and including as many people as possible.

Thank you again for all that you do to support us.

West Lothian Foodbank

Harvest Prayer

O Lord, what a variety of things you have made!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures.
They all depend on you to give them food as they need it.
When you supply it, they gather it.
You open your hand to feed them, and they are richly satisfied.
This Harvest, we thank you O Lord for every provision.
We pray for those who go without,
That in your mercy you may provide.
And when we have plenty, help us to share with those in need.
O Lord of the Harvest we praise you, and it is in Your Name we pray,

Amen!

Shopping List for donations as supplied by West Lothian Foodbank.

Please donate 1, 2 or as many items as you can off this list at our Harvest Thanksgiving on **Sunday 11th October 2026.**

Our current highest need items are: canned cold meat, kettle noodles (can be cooked with boiling water, don't need a hob), washing up liquid, vegetarian hot meals, diluting juice, cereal, baby wipes, long life milk - all varieties, meat paste, stock cubes, oxo cubes, male deodorants.

We will accept all reasonable in-date items.

Baby Loss Awareness Event



West Kirk of Calder

Sunday 11 Oct

3–4pm



*A quiet space to come
remember the wee lives lost.*

Tea/Coffee served in the hall.



Delve a little deeper

Please join me for our Bible Study at the Manse, every 3rd

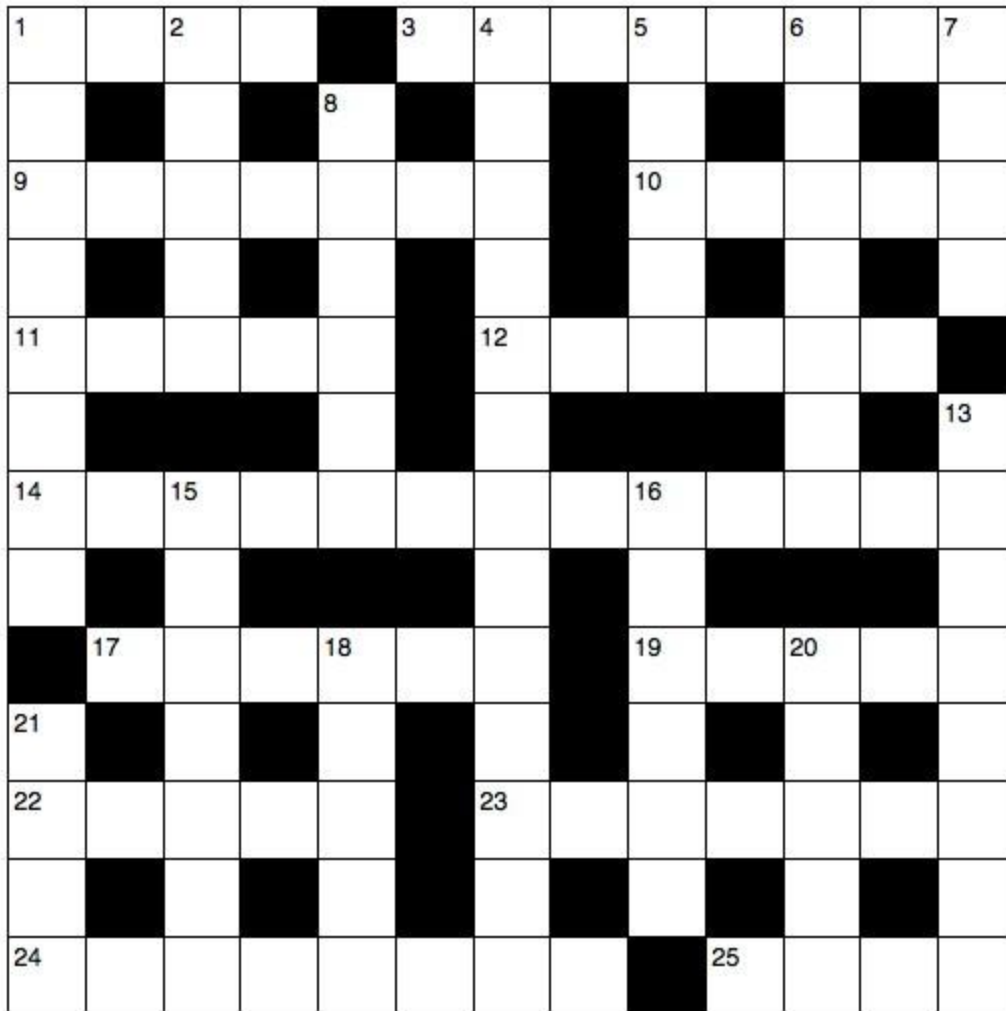
Thursday of the month, 7–8 pm.

Our next meetings are on

15 Oct, 19 Nov, no meeting in Dec.

Looking forward to exploring the Bible with you!

Nanda



Across

1 'The baby in my — leaped for joy' (Luke 1:44)

(4)

3 A 'don't know' in matters of faith (8)

9 In the distant past (Jeremiah 2:20) (4,3)

10 Armada (1 Kings 10:22) (5)

11 Where

Moses was confronted with the burning bush (Exodus 3:1) (5)

12 Hair colour indicative of skin infection (Leviticus 13:30) (6)

14 'The worries of this life and the — of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful' (Matthew 13:22) (13)

17 Expel (2 Kings 13:23) (6)

19 What Jesus wrapped round his waist when he washed his disciples' feet (John 13:4) (5)

22 The sixth plague to afflict the Egyptians (Exodus 9:9) (5)

23 For nine (anag.) (7)

24 Where there is no time (Psalm 93:2) (8)

25 Goliath's challenge to the Israelite army in the Valley of Elah: 'This day I — the ranks of Israel!' (1 Samuel 17:10) (4)

Down

- 1 'I will become angry with them and forsake them; I — — my face from them' (Deuteronomy 31:17) (4,4)
- 2 Usual description of prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, and so on (5)
- 4 'They cannot see the light of the gospel of the — — — , who is the image of God' (2 Corinthians 4:4) (5,2,6)
- 5 An animal's internal edible parts (Leviticus 4:11) (5)
- 6 Popular 20th-century religious novel by Lloyd C. Douglas, which became a 1953 film starring Richard Burton (3,4)
- 7 'A — on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (4)
- 8 One of the exiles, a descendant of Bebai, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:28) (6)
- 13 Old Testament hymn-singing (8)
- 15 'And O what transport of delight from thy pure — floweth' (7)
- 16 Of felt (anag.) (3,3)
- 18 'So — the — sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36) (2,3)
- 20 Comes between 'bad' and 'worst' (John 5:14) (5)
- 21 'Neither height nor depth... will be — to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8:39) (4)

Answers for issue 3

ACROSS: 8, Prince of Peace. 9, INF. 10, Unmarried. 11, Gulag. 13, Treason. 16, In aid of. 19, Arena. 22, Calvinist. 24, Pad. 25, Moses and Aaron.

DOWN: 1, Spring. 2, Sinful. 3, Scourged. 4, Commit. 5, Spur. 6, Matins. 7, Feed on. 12, Urn. 14, Erastian. 15, Own. 16, Income. 17, At last. 18, Friend. 20, Empire. 21, Adding. 23, Inst.

Festival of Light



All are invited to join us at this songs of praise service, with spoken word and drama to celebrate the light that remains with us, as we approach the dark months of winter.

West Kirk, West Calder

25 October at 6:30pm

Lasting approx. 45 mins

With light refreshments served in the church hall after the service.

Pyramid Rock

As we dust off the sand from what was once again an amazing week at our holiday club we have many fond memories of our adventures in August.

With a record number of young helpers, it was such a pleasure to see these young people progress from primary up into secondary and take on new challenges and responsibilities. We also welcomed a group of high school volunteers looking for experience working with children and in gaining experience in a volunteering role.

Our holiday club which started in 2013 has really grown in strength and is such a great outreach project.

Pastoral Care Group

The Pastoral Care Group next outing is to Pentland Plants Garden Centre, Loanhead.

A "Tour" has been booked for Thursday 12th November at 3pm to view the plants and Poinsettias in bloom. There are 15 places available for the tour so please give your names as soon as possible. We plan to leave the West Kirk car park at 12.30 pm. On arrival, we will have time to visit the shop and have lunch or a snack in the cafe before going on the tour. Some walking will be involved.

Names please to Beryl Henderson. Phone home 01506379230 or mobile 07500277201.

THANK YOU!!

Since September 1999 Lorna Graham has been involved with Sunday Club at the West Kirk. Under her leadership very many youngsters had the opportunity to learn about God, and at the same time have lots of fun on Sunday mornings! As Sunday Club Superintendent, Lorna arranged many events and organised a variety of projects for the young people in our community too.

Lorna has now retired from this role, and on behalf of all the young people, the rest of the Sunday Club Team, and everybody else at our church, I would like to thank you for many years of service Lorna. The light, love, and laughter you shared with these young people, will brighten up their lives forever.

May God bless you in abundance.

Much love, Nanda

A poem for Lorna

Since nineteen ninety-nine,

You've served our Sunday Club so fine.

Through years of change, through thick and thin,

You've welcomed bairns and brought them in.

With stories, prayers, and lessons too,
You've shared God's love in all you do.
You've organised, encouraged, led,
And looked forward to whatever lied ahead!

So now we say a heartfelt **thank you**
For all the years you've given here.
Your faithful service to our church
Has meant so very much, year after year.





We ARE Uniquely West Calder - Connecting Generations

Monthly Coffee Morning

**First Tuesday of
the Month in School
11am - 12noon
Come & Join us**



Do you have a little spare time, or maybe a skill, you can share with high school pupils? Would you like to go along on school outings or read with young people? No matter how much or how little time you can offer, it will be greatly appreciated. Please pop into the coffee morning to find out more.

BLYTHSWOOD 2026 Shoebox Appeal

Leaflets with the suggested List of Items to donate to help fill a box are available in the Church vestibules.

25th October 2026 is the Closing Date for handing in ALL donations be that items to help fill a box, monetary donation or your filled Shoebox.

Blythswood is grateful for every single donation. Each person receiving a Shoebox this Christmas will be so thankful that someone they don't know has taken the time to gift them an item which brings them dignity, hope and a glow of joy to their wellbeing.

Ready wrapped Shoeboxes are available costing £1.50 at both Churches. There are prefilled shoeboxes available in Polbeth costing £10.

Please remember the transportation teams who will travel through Eastern Europe in November and December to deliver the boxes in time for Christmas.

Thank you.

Rhoda and Eleanor





October 26

Sunday	4 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
		Bible Class	West Calder	09.30
Wednesday	7 th	Meet Me @ the Manse	Manse	14.00 – 15.30
		Quiet Service	Polbeth	15.30
Thursday	8 th	Beyond Kirk Walls services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Friday	9 th	Harvest Hoedown	West Calder	19.00
Sunday	11 th	Harvest Thanksgiving service	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Wednesday	14 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Calder	11.30
Thursday	15 th	Bible Study	Manse	19.00
Sunday	18 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Sunday	25 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
		Festival of Light service	West Calder	18.30
Friday	30 th	Youth Group		19.00



November 26

Sunday	1 st	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
		Bible Class	West Calder	09.30
Wednesday	4 th	Meet Me @ the Manse	Manse	14.00
		Quiet Service	Polbeth	15.30
Sunday	8 th	United Remembrance Service	West Calder	09.30
Wednesday	11 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Calder	11.30
Thursday	12 th	Beyond Kirk Walls services	Dickson Court	13.45
		Pastoral Care Outing	Burngrange	15.00
			Home	12.30
			West Kirk	
Sunday	15 th	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
Wednesday	18 th	Session Meeting		19.30
Thursday	19 th	Bible Study	Manse	19.00
Friday	20 th	Musical Evening	West Calder	19.00
Sunday	22 nd	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
Friday	27 th	Youth Group		19.00
Saturday	28 th	Christmas Fayre	Polbeth	14.00
Sunday	29 th	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15

DECEMBER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday December 5th 10am – 1pm at West Calder: Christmas Mingle

Sunday December 13th 7pm at West Calder: Evening of Christmas Music

Parish Record

Marriages

Love never gives up; and its faith, hope and patience never fail.

20th September – Laura Nicol and Sam Robertson

Deaths

Jesus said “I am the resurrection and the life.”

To all who have lost a loved one we extend our sincere sympathies and prayers.

3rd July – Ann Greenock, Burngrange Care Home, West Calder

7th August – Jean Cowan, Stewart Court, West Calder

1st September – Rita Gibb, Rusha Farm, West Calder

10th September – James Smirrel, Polbeth Crescent, Polbeth

Loving God,

Give comfort and healing
to all who are in any kind
of need, sorrow or pain.

May they sense your re-assuring presence
and know that you are there with them,
wherever their journey takes them.

Susan Sayers.

Special Services



Sunday 11 October Harvest Thanksgiving Service

9:30am West Kirk & 11:15am Polbeth Harwood

Donations towards West Lothian Foodbank gratefully received.



Sunday 25 October Light Service

6:30pm, West Kirk



Sunday 8 November Remembrance Service

9:30am, West Kirk, followed by a service at the War Memorial.



Sunday 6 December Bereavement Service

3pm, West Kirk



Sunday 13 December Gift Service

9:30am West Kirk & 11:15 Polbeth Harwood

Gifts for West Calder High School Cares gratefully received.



Community Carol Singing

in the West Kirk

Sunday 13 December, 7pm



Nativity Service

Sunday 20 December, 10am, West Kirk



Thursday 24 December Christmas Eve Family Service

Polbeth Harwood, 6:30pm



Watchnight Service

11:30pm, West Kirk



Please send all articles for the December/January issue of Parish News to parishnews@west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk before 21st November.