

CROSSWIND



The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

*For at one time you were
darkness, but now you
are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light.*

EPHESIANS 5:8

November 2020
Vol 23:1

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SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 6th December

**Streamed live via the St Michael's website at 11.45am.
Have bread and wine/grape juice ready at home.**

Weekly Services

**Every Sunday at 11am on Facebook and YouTube
or listen by phoning 01506 306036**

Services in the Kirk

**Usually fortnightly at 2pm.
Places are limited so booking via Church Office is essential and masks must be worn.**

These services are followed by a time for personal reflection from 3pm to 4pm. Booking not required but masks must be worn.

Cover: Tree with Sam's Biscuit Decorations
Courtesy of Rev Dr Liam Fraser

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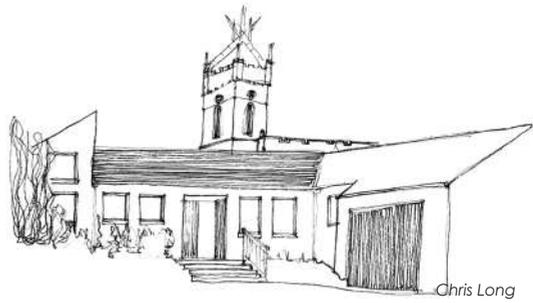
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The deadline for the February 2021 issue is 2nd January 2021.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam Fraser

It has been almost a year since I became Minister of St Michael's. The last time I wrote to you, the 'view from the Manse' was of removal vans and boxes, as my family and I arrived at our new home full of joy and excitement for the future. As I look out now, however, I see a town, and a nation, that is facing its greatest trial since the Second World War. The Coronavirus has changed life for all of us. On the one hand, it has brought out the best in our community, with a small army of volunteers from Linlithgow Coronavirus Support delivering shopping and prescriptions and offering emotional support to their neighbours. It has seen key workers risk – and sometimes lose – their lives to keep society afloat during lockdown. In addition to altruism and heroism, however, it has also seen unprecedented pain and suffering. It has seen hundreds of thousands of Scots forced to shield and self-isolate, increasing their isolation and loneliness. It has resulted in family members being unable to visit loved ones in nursing homes, and unable to provide them with the funerals they would have wanted. To lose someone at any time is hard, but to lose them in such circumstances is tragic, and cruel, and unfair.



At many funerals, one will hear the following words from Ecclesiastes 3:

There is a time for everything under heaven
a time to break down, and a time to build up
a time to keep, and a time to throw away

At this time in our history as a congregation, it can be tempting to do none of these things. When faced with unprecedented uncertainty, there is a strong temptation to *resist* change, to batten down the hatches and preserve what is within our control from the changes around us.

But ours is not a time to stay the same but to adapt, not a time to bunker down until things go back to normal, but to step out in faith and greet the future with imagination and hope.

That is why we are pleased to present our 2030 Vision for the future of St Michael's and the post-COVID world. This is the result of a consultation process involving 150 people. It has revealed a consistent desire to better realise the potential of our buildings and people, develop pioneering forms of ministry and mission, and work in closer partnership with other groups in the town. You can read the full 2030 Vision on our website.

The vision for the future of St Michael's is of an outward-facing parish church at the heart of Linlithgow, providing new forms of worship, events, and an improved visitor experience in a Sanctuary that manifests the beauty of God to a new generation. It is the vision of a repurposed Cross House, where different ages, groups, and faiths come together for community, support, and the sharing of resources to make Linlithgow a new creation. It is the vision of a community animated by hope, that becomes a blessing to our town through its renewed service, facilities, and witness.

I am *excited* by the future that God is calling St Michael's into, and hope that you will also be excited as you learn more about the Vision, and what role you can play in it. A church is not built on one person or one group alone, and we need *all* members, and *all* the people of this town to make Linlithgow what God wants it to be.

That is the challenge and the opportunity that awaits us. So let us use this time to not only survive but to adapt, and *build back better*.

May God bless you and your families, filling you with love, and hope, and peace.



John R Hume



OUR NEW APPOINTMENT

by Rev Dr Liam Fraser

Prior to being Minister of St Michael's, I was Pioneer Minister at the University of Edinburgh. Part of my role involved debating with the University's Humanist Society, and I will never forget my surprise when, one Wednesday evening, the President of the Humanist Society came to worship and took communion. That surprise only increased when I discovered a few months later that he had come to faith and had been baptised.

Why did this ardent Humanist come to worship, and why did he come to faith? Because we worshipped at a time that suited him, worshipped in a relevant way, and treated him as Christ commanded us to treat him – as a friend and brother, made in the image of God. When worship is relevant and accessible, and when it is wedded to love, *God is at work*, lives are transformed, and the Church is renewed.

That is why St Michael's is happy to announce the appointment of our new Pioneer Worker, Lorraine Orr. Lorraine will be doing in Linlithgow what I did at the University of Edinburgh: making connections with the unchurched, forming supportive and loving relationships with them, and creating new forms of church that meet their needs and interests.



Lorraine is married to Chris and Mum to Katie. She left her work at the bank to join the Church of Scotland's Church Without Walls team, supporting Fresh Expressions of Church throughout Scotland. 'Fresh Expressions' relates to forms of church that are designed to reach non-churchgoers. She then joined the team at St John's in Linlithgow as Children and Families Worker. She has a proven track record of reaching unchurched people in the town, and developing initiatives and forms of worship that are intuitive and relevant to them. She is industrious, entrepreneurial, and imaginative, and will bring invaluable skills to our team.

To support Lorraine, St Michael's is calling on anyone interested in creating forms of Church that can reach non-churchgoers to join our new **Pioneer Training Course**. This is for anyone with a passion to re-shape worship and outreach in Linlithgow for the 21st century. If you would like more information, please email us at pioneer@stmichaels-parish.org.uk

OUR MISSIONARY PARTNER IN MALAWI

by Allan Kennedy

West Lothian Presbytery has a Presbytery Partner, Reverend Professor Ken Ross, based in Zomba, Malawi. Under the Church of Scotland's World Mission, the official title is Mission Partner.

What is a Mission Partner?

Basically, someone who meets the needs of a specific project that a Church of Scotland partner church is involved in. These partner churches are all over the world and may require ministers, doctors or teaching professionals to help them with their project.



Malawi

Malawi is in SE Africa, a land-locked country bordering Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. Formed after the dissolution of Nyasaland in the sixties, it had been colonised by the British Empire in the 1800s. Lake Malawi forms a large part of the country.

After being ruled by Dr Hastings Banda from 1964 to 1994, Malawi became a multi-party democracy. However, it is still one of the least developed countries in the world. With an economy based on agriculture and a large rural population, Malawi has been stricken by HIV/AIDS like many African countries. Though English is the official language, the main language spoken is Chichewa. Malawi is

predominately Christian, with the Catholic Church and the Church of Central African Presbyterian the main two churches.

Recently, Malawi has been back in the headlines as the first African country to have its election overruled by its own High Court. New elections were ordered and the opposition party won, bringing some optimism.

Links to Scotland

As is usual in a lot of Southern and Eastern Africa, the link starts with David Livingstone, who sailed to Lake Malawi. Scottish missionaries then headed out to the newly established town of Blantyre. In recent times, Professor Ross has been a chair of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, a non-profit umbrella organisation which aims to foster enhancement of existing links and creating new ones.



Professor Ken Ross

Ken Ross is one of three mission partners in Malawi. Hailing from Kilmelford, he worked as a Professor of Theology at the University of Malawi in Zomba for ten years. Back in Scotland, he became General Secretary of the Board of World Mission. In 2010, he became parish minister of Netherlorn, as well as the Chair of Scotland Malawi Partnership.

Just over a year ago, Church of Scotland asked Ken to become a theological educator, working with the partner churches on developing their educational programmes. This was planned to

be not only in Malawi but also with partner churches in Mozambique, Kenya and South Sudan.

For his first six months, Ken laid out his plans, creating foundations, giving lectures and trying to establish what the 'mould' of his task was to be. Despite all this, he was able to write a new book called 'Mission as God's Spirit of Renewal', taking a global view of the meaning of mission and launched in March 2020. On returning to Malawi after New Year, Ken was inducted as Associate Minister of Bemvu CCAP, a church twinned with the parish of Netherlorn. He also visited the University of Nkhoma, one of many Christian Universities transforming Higher Education not only in Malawi, but also other parts of Africa.

Then, as in the rest of the world, Coronavirus appeared. For Malawi, like many African countries, lockdown brought its own problems, as many live hand to mouth. With no jobs or gatherings and restricted ability to move around, this brought serious problems – no furlough system available to help.

Ken was meant to return to Scotland in May, which obviously did not happen. However, West Lothian Presbytery was able to host a Zoom meeting on a Sunday night, during which Ken talked about life in Malawi during the pandemic; what he could do and what his plans were for the future, including writing a book about the history of the church in Malawi. He explained that the difficulty with shutting down schools and universities was that there was a distinct lack of, not just mobile equipment for people to view online, but also a very poor internet, so, although people had mobile phones, they couldn't always get a signal. However, Ken was also pleased that the new election, which had taken place, had given the country hope of a brighter future.

It is always good when you are in lockdown to hear stories from the other side of the world, of different lives and how they cope; of stories of hope and how churches try to inspire people. Ken writes a blog each week and every six months or so is meant to write his partner plan. The university has reopened and studies will start in the new normal. All we can do is offer our prayers for his journey.

IN A STRANGE LAND

by John Parkinson

Lockdown has brought many challenges – sadness, extensive difficulties, worries financial, personal, psychological and emotional, much loneliness and, for the majority, the need to adapt to an entirely different way of living. The church is not unaffected by these characteristics, arising from a set of circumstances none of us foresaw as we went about our 'normal' way of life – before everything changed.

In many ways, what the church considered 'normal' has gone and we find ourselves adrift 'in a strange land', seeking God for new purpose and direction, asking Him to show us the right pathway ahead and waiting for His lead as we tentatively move forward.



Thinking about these matters made me think back again to the 2019 'Exiles' production in St Michael's and to consider how we might use music and song to remind our souls, as we're encouraged to do, thus to worship the LORD.

How do these thoughts help us as those adopted into God's family, the people of God and followers of the Way, when everything has changed and we're looking for new direction and purpose? How can we sing our joyful songs of praise and encourage our spirits to 'put our hope in God' when we're on our own at home on a Sunday morning, perhaps with a companion pet, or with family members who each do their own thing on Sundays.

'Singing together or on my own out loud – you must be joking!' might be the reaction if we suggest singing and praising the LORD along with the hymns and songs in the St Michael's broadcasts. How can we sing the LORD's songs now that we're in this strange new land when we can't meet as normal in St Michael's Church and Springfield? How can we raise our voices together and lift our spirits to help us remain steadfast in our walk with God? Are there any suggestions to help us to engage again with a feature of church that we might have taken for granted – song and music in worship and praise?

Here are a few practical suggestions based squarely on scripture.

Statement: I don't like the sound of my own voice singing.

Aid: Remember, you're not alone in this respect. There's a brilliant and most lengthy encouragement for us in Psalm 119. In v97 the psalmist relates his personal experience. Think about the words, listen to the melodies and harmonies and teach your spirit to dwell on the song or hymn. Thus, without

uttering a word, you can receive great encouragement and build up your spirit. Refer to Ephesians 5v19. God listens to our hearts first and foremost. Don't forget, He gave us our voices!

Statement: I don't like singing aloud with other people around. I feel self-conscious and embarrassed, but I do want to sing!

Aid: Who is embarrassed here, you or the other household members? Just listen to what happened to King David for a moment, when he was caught up with so much exuberance in his expression for his love of the LORD. (2 Samuel 6, v14-15,16b, 20-21)

David clearly wasn't bothered what they thought of him because his celebration was to the LORD. If you feel hindered in singing on your own, remember David and you might gain joy in celebrating the LORD at home!



Statement: We don't really do the whole 'singing together as a family' thing, we don't all believe the same thing and it's a bit twee anyway!

Aid: Challenge everyone to find a new way of expressing yourselves together, especially if you usually attend church with one another. If someone can play instruments, try playing songs or tunes together. Or take it in turn to find a song that you can listen to together and compare what you like about it. You could start with something simple, like the short songs of the Wild Goose Resource Group. Or you can learn the Makaton signs so that you can sign the song to each other even if you don't want to sing it together.

The LORD is moving us out of old habits and ways, preparing us to find new ways of mission and discipleship. Perhaps He's taken us into this strange land to help us to see beyond the narrow confines of our old ways. How can we sing the LORD'S songs in a strange land? We can because He's made us and knows us. It's not about us or how we feel, but about Him. Let us return to the heart of worship and find creative ways to sing new songs to Him from our hearts, lifting our spirits while witnessing to His Great Name!

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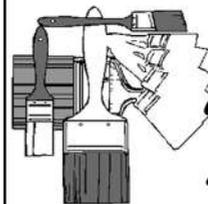
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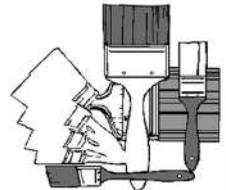
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PASTORAL CARE TEAM UPDATES

Coming soon...

The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) will shortly be launching a new listening service. This is a logical follow-on from the emotional support service provided by the Linlithgow Coronavirus Support Group and an extension of our current Pastoral Visitor service to reach out to people beyond St Michael's Parish. Many of those who have expressed interest in being a 'listener' are already Pastoral Visitors but new volunteers have come forward from both within our membership and also non-members. This service will support people in a wider range of ways than the current pastoral visiting service and may include telephone or Zoom support, going for a walk with someone, and a 'Drop in' service in Cross House when this becomes possible. Further details of this service will follow.

Tom Brown, Convenor



Keeping going...

Since the virus 'struck' the PCT has worked hard to maintain all our pastoral care services. Bereavement support continues to provide one-to-one support via telephone/Zoom, The Positive Pathways Group meets by Zoom and has a WhatsApp group for socialising and supporting each other. Sadly, post-funeral visits are impossible except by phone but we hope to have a 'socially distanced, within regulations' Service of Memory and Thanksgiving on 1st November for which invitations will be sent.

The Pastoral Visitors have kept in touch with people by phone, but Home Communion have not been possible. They will be restarted when allowed. Also we cannot deliver posies for the foreseeable future, instead we send cards.

The Prayer Ministry has been maintained throughout. Wednesday Prayers is meeting successfully by Zoom, but are missing praying for requests left in the Church. The Prayer Chain of dedicated people operates well for those with urgent prayer requests which are also passed to the Wednesday Prayer Group. If you need urgent, or indeed any prayer, please phone 01506 670980 or 07719966273. As with everything in pastoral care, confidentiality is taken very seriously. The monthly Prayer Diary is now weekly and is found either on the Church website from which it can be downloaded, or on Facebook. While the Prayer Quilts Group cannot meet just now, quilts can still be made. Please contact either of the above phone numbers to suggest possible recipients. The Pastoral Care Team are very aware of possible long-term effects of the pandemic and trying to respond to needs in an appropriate way.

Ruth Middleton

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TALKING OF FINANCE



by Anne Law



I do hope that you and your families are well and safe.

As leader of the Stewardship & Finance team I bring you up to date on our current financial situation in St Michael's. Tim Brown in the team has spent some considerable time reforecasting our budgets and you will not be surprised to learn that we will be in deficit at the end of the year, perhaps as much as to the tune of £36,000.

Our income has been reduced in certain specific areas:

1. Offerings are forecast to be almost £44,000 below budget. Standing orders are holding up well, but cash/envelopes are falling away badly. However, many people who previously put cash or envelopes in the bag have moved fortunately, whether temporarily or permanently, to standing orders.
2. Wedding income is projected to fall by £12500.
3. The Fabric Box in church normally brings in income around £8,000.

We have been monitoring expenditure very closely. Our Ministry & Mission contribution to the national church, our largest expense, remains unchanged. Jim Rae has reforecast the Property Team budget and injected considerable savings. We do know however that the repair work for the Crown is imminent for which we will be seeking external funding but we may have to match any external funds with money of our own. There is also still the cost of ongoing maintenance work for the Property Team even although our services have been predominantly online.

We are in the fortunate position of having reserves and we will have to use those reserves to break even at the end of 2020. We are very grateful that so much of our income comes monthly through standing orders and is therefore guaranteed. If you would like to give by this method, please contact Tim on finance@stmichaels-parish.org.uk or Andrew Jones at: giving@stmichaels-parish.org.uk

We do not know at the time of writing when we will be back with any regularity in our church building. The First Minister has indeed just tightened restrictions again so I suspect a physical regular return is not imminent. I do want to reassure you however that we are incredibly fortunate in St Michael's to have such a level of regular income and we will continue to manage the finances of St Michael's with considerable prudence.

Margaret's Way

by Pat Brough



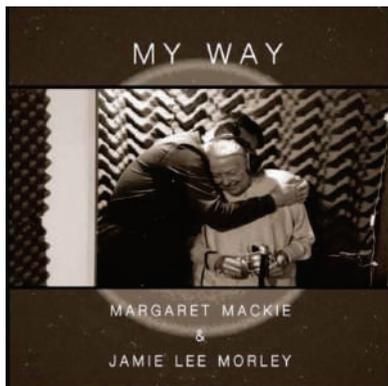
Jamie Lee Morley works in an Edinburgh Care Home, where he enjoys looking after the residents. Walking along a corridor one day, he heard singing. Thinking a radio or CD was producing the sound, he investigated further. To his surprise, he discovered that the singing was coming from the room of a new resident, Margaret Mackie – and she was the singer.

Margaret had lived at Springfield in Linlithgow for many years. She had always loved singing, either on her own or joining with Frank Sinatra or Elvis Presley on the radio. When she heard about the Thursday Singalong in Cross House, she was keen to go. For 18 months Margaret enjoyed the atmosphere, the lunch, a chance to blather, but most of all singing well-known and well-loved songs. The second Thursday of the month was a 'red-letter day' and marked

faithfully on the calendar. When Margaret had to move into a Care Home in October 2019, she realised that she would miss Cross House and the music, but nothing would stop her from singing, as Jamie found out.

Jamie also enjoyed singing and frequently performed at charity events. It wasn't long before Jamie and Margaret started singing together and, with Christmas approaching, what could be better than a duet at the Christmas Party. 'My Way' made famous by Frank Sinatra, was chosen, a favourite of both of them. Margaret had always loved the song and it had been played at the funeral for Jamie's grandfather. Margaret's daughter, Mairi, was present and thinks she recorded the duet on her phone as a memento of her mother's voice. That night Jamie put the recording on Facebook, and the following day the Daily Record contacted him for information, as the recording had gone viral!

The Record printed an item in the paper, Radio Scotland interviewed the singing duo; articles appeared in the New York Post and the Washington Post. The Facebook recording has been seen in Australia, New Zealand, Poland and Russia, to mention a few. A French TV programme featured a surprising new performance of 'My way' with Margaret and Jamie.



One Monday morning in January the ITV programme 'This Morning' interviewed our intrepid singers, along with Mairi, Margaret's daughter.

When Falkirk Football Club discovered that Margaret Mackie was a Falkirk Bairn, they invited her to the Falkirk Stadium where she had a tour of the premises, met the players and received lots of hugs, a signed programme and a Falkirk jersey with the signatures of the players. Margaret also received a donation to a gradually increasing fund that would help charities helping people with memory loss. Margaret had a wonderful day!

At the beginning of January Margaret and Jamie arranged for a proper recording of Margaret singing 'My way'. Margaret and her daughter were transported to a recording studio near Edinburgh Airport. Margaret was alone in a very small soundproof room, headphones, on, singing to an orchestral backing of 'My way' which Jamie had found. Margaret had never heard this version but sang along perfectly, astonishing the sound engineer. Apparently there was a line on the recording screen which indicated the singer's pitch. In Margaret's case, this line was absolutely straight, indicating she had 'perfect pitch' – a rare talent.

The single was released in January and reached the top ten of the iTunes Top 40 UK pop songs live chart, topping tracks by well-known popular singers.



Lockdown hasn't stopped Margaret singing. Her daughter reckons it has kept her mother cheerful, also helping the staff and residents get through these difficult times. She sang nearly every day to her daughter on SKYPE, and chose a favourite of her late husband, Philip, for her next recording – 'I love you because' sung in 1963 by Jim Reeves.

If you want to see Margaret and hear her singing, just look up Falkirk Football Club's website and you will witness Margaret's visit or ask Google for 'Margaret Mackie Fan Club'.

Mairi reckons that over £200 has been raised so far for the Memory Loss Charity. Quite an achievement for an 84-year-old with a love of singing and a young man who cares about the residents of a Care Home. An unlikely duo, keen to use their lovely voices to raise funds for memory loss – doing it their way.

A Younger Margaret

PARISH REGISTER

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

February

Ian Scott, Highfield Crescent

March

Rae Caldwell, Stoke-on-Trent
David (Colin) Weatherup, The Vennel
George Strachan, Clarendon Crescent

April

James McAlpine, Riccarton Road
Irene Mitchell, Blackness Road
Gladys Govan, Acredales

May

Margaret Gilmour, Polmont
Anna Grindlay, Baronshill Avenue
Rev Gordon Currie, Deanburn Park
Mana Coughtrie, Linlithgow Nursing Home (formerly Bellsburn Avenue)

June

Margaret (Sheila) McGaw, Merker Terrace
Thomas McIntyre, The Vennel
Catherine Shaw, Bailielands

July

Sylvia Barr-Hamilton, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Bailielands)
Cathie Kilgour, Kinloch View
Catherine Speirs, Kinloch View

August

Isabella (Isobel) Lawrie, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Braehead Road)

September

Graeme Lawson, High Street

October

Sheena Kettles, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Carse Knowe)





BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

January

Isla-Noor Khamneipur Smith, Los Angeles

February

Alfie James Crawford Mayne, Mannerston Holdings



March

Oliver Neil Pryde, Edinburgh

Daisy Rose Darragh, Braehead Place

August

Matthew Christian Norton, Kettil'stoun Grove

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

July

Sarah Park to Taylor MacLennan



www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk – See Crosswind in full colour! Also find podcasts of sermons, current intimations, details of upcoming events and all other church activities.

www.helpcentre.org.uk – For information on support available for most situations.



Thinking Outside the Building

by Trish Archibald

Since lockdown Youth and Family Ministry at St Michael's has been turned on its head. But all is not lost! God is still at work in our lives and there is much to be thankful for. Here is an update on what has been happening over these last few months.



Sunday Club Zoom: As soon as we heard schools were shutting,

Sunday Club reinvented itself to run each week on Zoom and has been doing so ever since. Each week we sing, play games and learn together about the love Jesus has for each one of us. It is great to see each other and our families too meeting each Sunday. In June Trish sent all of our young people their prize giving gift and we have had 2 family movie nights together on Zoom so far!

Bible Class Zoom: At the same time, Bible Class also quickly became Bible Class Zoom. Since then Paul Davidson has stepped down as leader, after more than 10 years of dedicated service. We are all incredibly grateful for Paul's leadership over these years. Trish is now running Bible Class which meets weekly before Sunday Club. We now have all become much more used to the technology, and Bible Class Zoom is a very fun and friendly place to be.

Online Youth Alpha: During the summer term Trish ran a Youth Alpha Course online for our older Bible Class friends. We met weekly online and went through the Course, watching videos and discussing what was said. Youth Alpha was enjoyed by everyone who took part and gave us all the opportunity to learn more about faith and also get to know each other better. Once guidelines allow, we will run this again in person, as the only thing missing from our Online Youth Alpha was food!



Seedlings: Since lockdown Seedlings has been available online every week, on both our YouTube Channel and our Facebook page. The number of people watching Seedlings online each week is often 10 times larger than if we had met in person. The online format follows closely to what our Seedlings friends would recognise from our Kirk Hall group. We all miss meeting in person for this joyful group; we especially miss singing together with our music shakers and Jean Meldrum on the piano.

- Youth and Family Ministry during Covid-19



The restrictions have been difficult for everyone, not least for families with very young children.



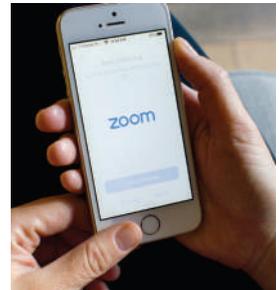
Online Youth Club (OYC): Several weeks ago, Trish started an Online Youth Club, for those in P6-S4. This is an informal club meeting weekly for a catch-up, silly games and a bit of fun. It has been a good way to stay connected with our young people and to see how we are coping with the new normal. For our young people Covid-19 has brought challenges at a formative time in their lives. OYC is there to give them a place to see familiar faces and let off some steam.

Low Port and Springfield Primary Schools:

Our Scripture Union clubs in both schools are on pause at the moment, as are our Bible Alive courses in Low Port, Cracking Easter, Christmas Unwrapped and Assemblies. We are, however, maintaining our links with the schools during the pandemic. Trish and Liam put together a virtual Easter service for Low Port's website. Trish was also invited by the management team to be the guest speaker for their socially distanced Primary Seven Leavers ceremony. While at the ceremony Trish distributed SU's 'It's Your Move' books to each pupil as a gift from us all at St Michael's. Trish is currently working with both schools on a Harvest project encouraging the pupils to donate one item each to West Lothian Foodbank. Along with Alison Murray (a regular Foodbank volunteer) Trish has made a video about the Foodbank, Harvest and the importance of sharing which is being used in both schools with all of their pupils. We continue to be in touch with staff to reassure them of our support and prayers.



Young Adults Small Group: At the beginning of lockdown, Trish started a weekly online small group for our young adults (aged 18-30). This has been running weekly for the last 5 months. We look at the bible passage from the Sunday service and discuss the questions raised by the passage. This group has been a great support over the months. We are now meeting monthly as many of our members have returned to study. The great thing about meeting online is we can meet from our different parts of the country and still be together.



Crazy Guy on a Bike

by Myra Lawson



Many of us will remember former St Michael's member, George Russell and his wife, Mary. George was an Elder and also sang in the choir and Mary used to draw up the rota of readers for the Sunday services. Fourteen years ago, after George had taken early retirement from his Solicitor's job in Edinburgh, he and Mary moved to America and settled in Snowmass, Colorado. They had always enjoyed cycling and their love of the sport intensified after they moved. They jointly celebrated their 60th birthdays by cycling across America and raised a vast amount for a Parkinson's Society in the States; we reported this in Crosswind at the time.

Now, at the age of 73, George is tackling the 3200-mile route from California to Florida on his own, this time to raise funds, hopefully £100,000, for The National Trust for Scotland, which has lost half of its expected income because of the pandemic. George's family has a long connection with the Trust; his grandfather was its first Secretary and Treasurer, his father was a Councillor

Member Emeritus, and George himself served for some time on the Council.

George left San Diego on 27 August and hopes to arrive at St Augustine in Florida's Atlantic coast 50 days later, having cycled in all weathers across extremely varied terrain. He will have traversed 8 states, including New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. He should be back in Colorado before this magazine goes to print. Mary will drive their car as a support vehicle for the first half of



George's trip, leaving in either Austin or Houston in Texas. She will then go home but will return to meet up with him again in Florida.

George has trained hard for the trip and has bought a new cycle, a high-spec Surly Disc Trucker to help him tackle the long trip. You can read more about George's cycle ride on <http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/23005>

Let us help you get ready for Christmas!

There is so much to do as we get nearer to Christmas, we make sure that we are ready now to help with **gifts and decorations** for you to get ahead with your tasks.

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UPDATE FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM



by Jim Rae

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected everyone's life, including their ability to work in the normal way. Property Team activity from March, until very recently, has been curtailed except for the weekly unoccupied property inspections carried out by a small team of members and their partners to check that all was well. Thank you to all who were involved.

In order to comply with Church of Scotland and government recommendations as the various stages of lockdown progressed, by June we began to involve activity with contractors on external works and eventually inside our buildings.



Our first major external project was the survey and cladding repair to the Crown of Thorns. The hydraulic platform lift, reaching a height of fifty metres, was visible for five days from all areas in and around Linlithgow. The appointed Conservation Architect, Structural Engineer and original installing contractor of the Crown spent a considerable number of hours being raised, manipulated around the structure and then lowered in a platform enclosure, socially distancing of course! It was clear from the invasive inspections that repairs to structural timber and rusting steel fixings to the Crown of Thorns would be necessary. It was impossible to assess the condition of the central steel spider structure and it is now evident that both structural repairs and further investigations of the joint

can be carried out only from a secure scaffold deck installed at tower roof level. Repairs to loose cladding panels were completed as was the inspection of all external cladding fixings. Future proofing the structure is necessary, and sensible, and to that end discussions have taken place to investigate the installation of a moisture monitoring and ventilation system into support leg structure. This will give accurate notification of moisture content within the structure indicating if excessive moisture is present.

Minor changes to fit rainwater deflection plates in the steel spider structure, which will not be visible from ground level, will prevent water gathering in collection points which currently cannot self-drain. The cost of this next phase of structural repairs and minor additions and modifications is in the region of £120k. After these repairs have been completed the Crown of Thorns will look as good as new, continuing to be an icon for the town. We also investigated

the cost of a like-for-like replacement structure, which has been advised as costing between £180k and £200k. All information will be presented to the Coordinating Team and members of Kirk Session in the very near future.

Relaxation of Covid-19 regulations allowed us to proceed with work inside the church, beginning with the survey and repair of the internal roof stonework in the north aisle. This extended from the Visitors Stall to the church organ. The vaulting, which over recent months, has been spalling or shedding stone dust, grit and larger pieces of stone, required attention as a Health and Safety issue. The organ was encased in plastic sheeting to prevent ingress of dust and stone particles into the organ workings. The work of clearing and checking the stone surface was successfully completed, with one area requiring further attention to stabilise an area of stone carving.



The new church rainwater and toilet drainage scheme proposal has been approved by Scottish Water with SEPA currently assessing the design. We hope to be in a position to present it shortly to West Lothian Council for comment.

As we approach winter, the annual maintenance of church roof rainwater gutters, hoppers, water spouts and downpipes are required. Suitable contractors have been invited to tender to carry out this work and also to provide a cost for a photographic survey of high-level stonework and roof condition. The successful contractor will be appointed by mid-October.

The original redevelopment plans for Cross House Phase 1 and 2 are being revisited by the recently formed Building Strategic Planning Group who are assessing the plans in relation to the 2030 Vision. External funding will be required to finance this project.

The Phase 1 repair and tuning of the church organ by Willis, the original manufacturer, is scheduled to commence on 12 October and will last for five days. A number of faults will be rectified prior to tuning the instrument. Phase 2 of this work will be scheduled for 2021 and will address further issues.

The Property Team embarked on a programme of minor internal and external maintenance project work in Cross House and the Kirk Hall at the beginning of October. Before this time access was limited as they were still classified as unoccupied properties. This was a suitable time to carry out work when external and internal organisations were still not able to operate. Thanks to everyone involved.

ESTD  1919

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

Are pleased to support the work of St Michael's Parish Church and Crosswind.

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GIVE THANKS

by Samantha Fraser



This has been the strangest year of all our lives. Like everyone, our family has sometimes found it difficult to adjust to lockdown and the ever-changing restrictions and rules.

We've missed a lot. We've missed family and friends. We've missed having parties for birthdays. The boys missed a lot of school and nursery this year. While there was home-schooling, this was challenging and stressful. Schools and nurseries exist for a reason! We've missed big celebrations in the church. We've missed lots of opportunities to meet with our church family and get to know you better. No coffee mornings to bake biscuits

for. No face to face fellowship. This year has been strange, and it has been hard.

Each evening before bed, I spend time after stories saying prayers with the boys. We structure our prayers in the following way: thank you – sorry – please. This is how we've always structured our prayers, and I find it a great way, each day, of taking stock. One day we might find ourselves being thankful for a fun family games night, for people we love, for a new book that we've enjoyed together. The boys might say sorry for fighting with each other, or not doing as they were asked. At the end, we usually say 'please' to God to help us be the best we can be the next day, or ask him to bring us a feeling of peace if we are feeling anxious or stressed.

It's useful because it gives us an opportunity each day to practise gratitude. I've found that we don't struggle, even on the most challenging days, to find something to be thankful for. We are thankful for the family and friends we have, even if we can't see them, remembering them before God and realising a little more each day how much we love them. We are grateful for our home, our health, and having food to eat. We are grateful for the NHS, aware of the sacrifices people make to help others, and we thank God for them. We remember the everyday helpers, those who love their neighbours in practical and tangible ways, and we thank God for the good works they have been doing.

We can always find something to be grateful for, a lesson that resonates in this passage of Scripture:

'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one other with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' Colossians 3:15-17

THE HOLY LAND - A WISH FULFILLED

by David and Davina Robertson



For our golden wedding anniversary last year we planned a trip to the Holy Land, a holiday we'd promised ourselves and Davina had hoped for since reading 'In the Steps of the Master' by HV Morton as a teenager. We flew from Manchester to Tel Aviv last November, took the bus to Jerusalem and found our well-appointed Airbnb apartment in a traditional Jewish district just a mile from the Old City.

Next morning we set off early and in half an hour reached the Jaffa Gate into the Old City and on to the Wailing Wall with the Dome of the Rock looming over it, its golden dome brilliant in the mid-day sun. Men were already praying at the wall, the women in their own separate section.

The City Ramparts tour gave us a panoramic view of the city and its surroundings. To the east looking out over the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives towards Bethlehem, south to Mount Zion, and King David's tomb only half a mile away. The Knesset and the Shrine of the Book, housing the Dead Sea Scrolls, are only a mile away in the west, and to the north is the urban sprawl of the modern city of Jerusalem.



We soon realised how compact Jerusalem is. The Old City is only half a mile across and the Mount of Olives, Mount Zion and Garden of Gethsemane are no more than 500 yards outside it. By just walking around we saw everything we planned to, and more. Which made my carefully planned itinerary redundant, as Davina had predicted.

We spent a few days exploring the Old City with its Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Armenian Quarters and the many souks. We often just sat watching people of all races and religious faiths, pilgrims and tourists from all over the world alongside local Jews and Muslims. Sometimes it brought surprises, like

the sound of bagpipes on the Via Dolorosa which turned out to be the Palestinian Liberation Army Pipe Band leading a large protest march.

We visited St Andrew's Church, run by the Church of Scotland, its wooden seats donated by parishes throughout Scotland, one donated by Linlithgow, as recorded by H V Morton.



A highlight was Hezekiah's Tunnel, dug under the city walls in 700 BC by King Hezekiah to bring fresh water into the city during an Assyrian invasion. We waded through the 600-yard-long, narrow tunnel in total darkness and thigh-deep in water, emerging at the Pool of Siloam inside the City of David.

A tour below the Western Wall was a drier experience, exploring the wall's foundations and following an underground Herodian street at the base of Herod's Temple, emerging on the Via Dolorosa.

Our main excursion was a wonderful day tour to Nazareth, Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee. The highlight was lunch at a restaurant on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for a special meal of 'St Peter's fish' with superb views across the lake to the Golan Heights in the distance. The last stop was at Yardenit, the Baptismal site on the River Jordan. Throughout the trip our guide explained everything of historical and biblical significance.

Our last excursion was to Bethlehem, 8 miles away in the Palestinian Authority. We visited the Church of the Nativity with our Arab Christian guide who later explained the issues facing the Christian community, once 85% of the population, now less than 10%.

Our holiday more than fulfilled our expectations and we had seen and experienced everything we had hoped for. We enjoyed perfect weather and never felt unsafe. It was the most memorable and moving experience of our lives and we would return again in a heartbeat if it were possible.





Connecting the Community

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC013502

by Marion Fleming, Co-ordinator

Linlithgow Link was set up in 1979 to provide a service to the community. We are a group of volunteers within Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge, working to help others. St Michael's Minister Emeritus, Rev Ian Paterson, was heavily involved in its creation.

OUR SERVICES

CAR SERVICE:

For those unable to use public transport we offer a friendly volunteer driver to take you to your medical appointment or we can arrange to pick up and deliver your medication if required.

Requests can be arranged directly with the Link Office or via your Healthcare Professional.

A nominal charge is paid directly to the volunteer driver. Linlithgow Link does not benefit from this payment.

BEFRIENDING SERVICE

We can befriend and visit anyone in the community who may feel isolated through age or ill health (a shared cup of tea and a chat are easy to give and welcome to receive).

In addition to one-to-one and group befriending, our volunteers also run social gatherings, bi-annual outings and visit people in the community to deliver seasonal gifts.

Our office staff also co-ordinate the running of the monthly Linlithgow Caring Café for people with a diagnosis of dementia.

DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

Due to the current COVID Pandemic, the roles within the Link have diversified, as there have been fewer car service requests due to the cancellation of many hospital appointments. Our Befriending Service has pretty much been carried out by telephone during this time ensuring everyone is kept safe.

The Link had been fortunate in receiving donations which have enabled us to organise and deliver Well-being Bags to the elderly and infirm people within the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge area, providing essential items and activity packs to help maintain their mental well-being.



Currently the Caring Café and our Tuesday group have been suspended following the Government guidelines. We look forward to welcoming everybody back when it is safe to do so.

VOLUNTEERS

The Link has been fortunate in the past with regards to volunteers but since COVID, some of our volunteers have not yet resumed Car Services and therefore the number of volunteers is temporarily reduced. However, hospital appointments are recommencing and our clients are once again requiring a Car Service to attend their appointment.

We are always looking for new volunteers and would encourage anyone who can spare a few hours to join us. We are sure you would enjoy being part of our team, and also find it rewarding.

If you would like to find out more information regarding our volunteering, please do not hesitate to contact us using details below. The Link office is open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm. There is a telephone answering service outwith these hours.

The Partnership Centre
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Linlithgow
EH49 7EZ
TELEPHONE: 01506 845137
EMAIL: co-ordinator@linlithgowlink.org.uk
Website: www.linlithgowlink.org.uk



A PRAYER

by Arthur Saville

I can pray
Anyway
In my bed
Read or said
Any place
By God's grace.

I can pray
Any day
In a shop
With a mop
Kitchen ties
Open eyes.

Thought is prayer
Anywhere
At a meal
At the wheel
Ease the load
On the road.

This is prayer
Anywhere
As we talk
On a walk
To the end
With a friend.

Prayer is praise
All our days
In poor health
Little wealth
For our food
GOD IS GOOD.

I can pray
Washing day
Things go wrong
Still a song
There Thou art
In my heart.

I can pray
As I play
On a bus
Waiting thus
In a queue
Seeing YOU.

As I pray
For this day
At Thy feet
Converse sweet
Hear Thy voice
And rejoice.

So I pray
Lest I stray
God will guide
By my side
I'll not fear
HE IS NEAR.

As I plead
In my need
Please help these
Thine eye sees
THE OTHERS
MY BROTHERS.

Plagues & Pestilence

I	N	R	O	B	T	S	R	I	F	E
S	M	E	L	L	N	S	T	A	N	G
R	G	O	A	A	R	O	N	D	D	Y
A	S	R	K	H	A	O	R	A	H	P
E	S	E	S	O	M	A	Y	R	A	T
L	I	V	E	S	T	O	C	K	I	I
I	S	O	L	E	E	L	I	N	L	A
T	E	S	L	I	O	B	T	E	M	N
E	Y	S	P	L	O	C	U	S	T	S
S	T	A	F	F	R	O	G	S	E	O
P	L	P	L	A	G	U	E	E	G	O

As told in the book of Exodus, God inflicted 10 plagues on Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery. The following words are all in the story and in the wordsquare.

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| Aaron | boils |
| darkness | Egyptians |
| firstborn | flies |
| frogs | gnats |
| hail | Israelites |
| livestock | locusts |
| Moses | Nile |
| Passover | Pharaoh |
| plague | smell |
| snake | staff |

The left-over letters spell out Moses' message to Pharaoh.

When Pharaoh Did Not Listen ...

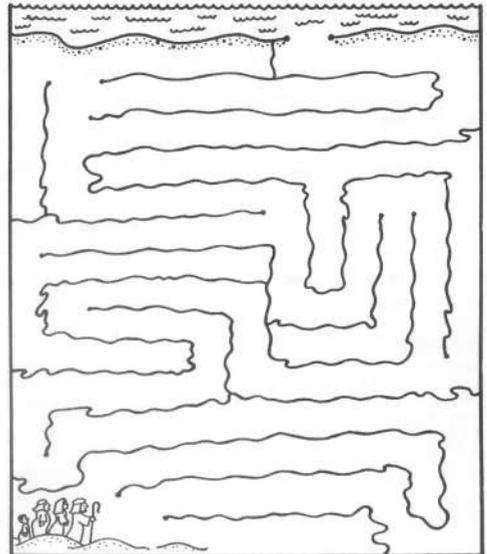
Using the key below, solve this code to find what God told Pharaoh in Exodus 9:14

... gsrh grnv r droo hvmw gsv ufoo
 ulixv lu nb koztfvh ztzrmhg blf hl blf
 nzb pml d gszg gsviv rh ml-lmv orpv
 nv rm zoo gsv vzigs.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
 z y x w v u t s r q p o n m l

p q r s t u v w x y z
 k j i h g f e d c b a

Help Moses lead the Israelites through the desert to the Red Sea.



AN UNSIGHTLY APPENDAGE

by Bruce Jamieson

In April 1854, a Committee of Heritors of St Michael's Church unanimously passed a resolution to remove the tomb-house of the Livingston family describing it as 'an unsightly appendage, deforming the beauty of the church.'



Alexander Archer's 1837 engraving showing the Livingston 'tomb-house' on the right

Some 117 years before, George Crawford in his 'History of Linlithgow' was more complimentary, describing the structure as 'humouring the church exactly with

a handsome pavilion roof and a vault beneath.' The mausoleum stood on the south side, to the east of St Katherine's Aisle with its magnificent medieval window tracery.

George Crawford does go on to say that 'the escutcheons hung up at the burial of the occupants are now in a very tattered condition.' Over a century later perhaps the whole edifice was in a less than handsome condition as the 1854 minute goes on to describe further the derogatory effect of the edifice declaring that it disgraced 'the most perfect and beautiful among the ancient ecclesiastical edifices in Scotland – one that happily escaped serious injury from the violence of the popular zeal at the Reformation.'

The removal of the offending structure had to wait for some years, however, as the legality of the situation was debated. It was argued that as the Livingstons, the Earls of Linlithgow, had forfeited all their land and possessions as a punishment for being on the wrong side of the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion; their burial vault then became the property of the Crown. However, it was discovered that the Livingston family had retained possession of the Estate of Parkhead and consequently still might have a right to retain their burial place which had been constructed in the 17th century, 'over the ancient resting place of the Livingston family'. The case dragged on until eventually in 1864, permission was given to demolish the structure, leaving only a fenced off enclosure and a memorial plaque on the church wall.



The Livingston memorial plaque and a mortsafe



George Livingston, 3rd Earl of Linlithgow, was buried in his family vault in 1690

For over 100 years the vault remained untouched until, during the evening of 5 October 1980, the disintegrating entrance stone above the vault was smashed open and a break-in occurred. The vandals tore open the lead coffins within and searched for valuables amidst the decaying bones. Five burials were disturbed: those of George 3rd Earl of Linlithgow; George 4th Earl of Linlithgow; two wives of the Third Earl (Lady Elizabeth Lyon and Agnes Scott) and the tiny coffin of a five year old daughter of the 4th Earl, Lady Henrietta Livingston.

The aftermath of the break-in



With the assistance of the Rev Ian Paterson and local tradesman Bill Bennie, myself and a group of sixth-year pupils made sense of the mess and the coffins were resealed. Just before leaving, a patch of soft earth was discovered and, after clearing away the top surface, another lead coffin was found beneath – one not listed on the stone plaque above the underground vault.

Bill Bennie clears away the soil above the unrecorded, lead coffin

Not wishing to desecrate the resting place any more, no further investigation was undertaken. It is tempting to speculate who may lie in a lower level of the tomb. Could Mary Livingston be interred there – one of the Queen of Scots' Four Marys and George Livingston's great, great aunt? Certainly, the Rev Dr David Steel was quite convinced that Mary Stewart's lady-in-waiting could indeed be buried there. She died in 1579 but there is no record of her burial. Could she have been placed in 'the ancient resting place' of the family – before the later sepulchre was erected over the spot? We can but speculate.

Living with Uncertainty

by Gordon Wardall

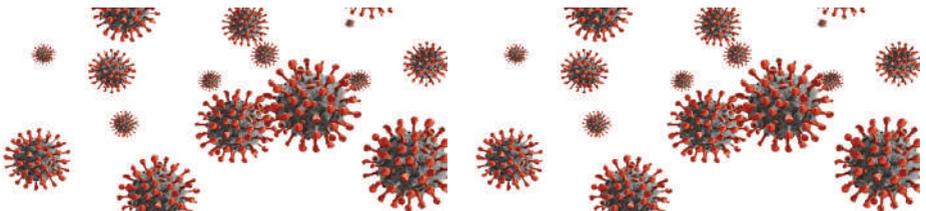
We all face uncertainty at some stage, perhaps concerning our health, work, finances or in our families. The Covid-19 pandemic has recently generated more uncertainty than many of us have ever known. Although some people handle uncertainty better than others, most of us find it unsettling, if not truly worrying.

Recently, I read of an encounter between the philosopher and ethicist, John Kavanaugh, and Mother Teresa. Kavanaugh, while working with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, was agonising about his future career. He asked her to pray for him, that he should be given clarity. She declined firmly, explaining that he was clinging to clarity, and must release it. When Kavanaugh commented that Mother Teresa always seemed to have clarity, she laughingly replied that she never had clarity. 'What I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God.'

It's natural that we should want clarity or certainty, particularly in these times. Understandably, we are anxious about the road ahead for ourselves, our families and our society. The Bible stresses that we can and must trust God; He will help and guide us, providing strength and comfort through every situation. Often we want God to detail every turn our road may take, as if He were a divine Satnav; yet the Bible never suggests God will do that. Rather, Jesus says simply: 'Follow me.'

The Bible (notably Hebrews 11) makes it clear, through stories of Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, etc, that trust is strongest when the future is uncertain. The point is made repeatedly: faith grows when, rather than desiring certainty, we place our trust in God.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites are reminded of all that God had done for them in their past, to emphasise the fact that they could trust him to guide them through whatever new challenges they faced. In the same way, when we look back on challenging times in our lives, we can sometimes see how God has helped us, even when we didn't realise it at the time. We can trust Him through uncertain times because of what he has done for us previously and what we know about his character. He loves us and knows us perfectly, and wants what is best for us, during uncertain times – and indeed all times.



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