

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church



August 2021
Vol 24:2

*For where two or three are gathered
together in my name, there am I in
the midst of them.* MATTHEW 18:20 KJV

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday 29th August

and

Weekly Services

As Covid restrictions change, arrangements for these services also have to adapt. Places are currently limited and must be booked via:
<https://stmichaelschurchservices.eventbrite.co.uk>
Or leave a message on 01506 200838

Services are also usually live-streamed on the website and on Facebook and are available later on YouTube or listen by phoning 01506 306036

Look out for announcements of times and current arrangements in the regular newsletters, the local press and on social media.

Cover: Courtesy of Stephen Blake

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor
Myra Lawson
myralawson144@btinternet.com
Tel: (01506) 842634

Advertising
Vicki Carlin
vickicarlin6@googlemail.com
Tel: (01506) 845927

Maureen Blake
sandmblake@btinternet.com
Tel: (01506) 822603

Pat Brough
arbrough@talktalk.net
Tel: (01506) 842497

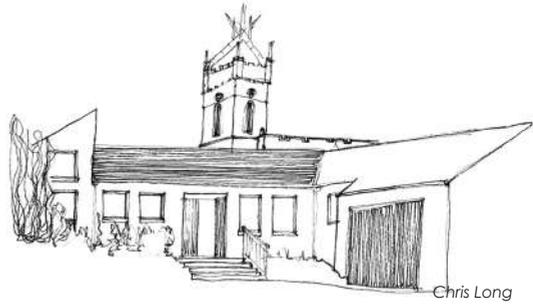
Anita France
anitafrance2@hotmail.com
Tel: (01506) 847195

Gordon Wardall
gordon.debbie@outlook.com
(01506) 840862

Gordon Young
gordon.young538@gmail.com
Tel: (01506) 844347

The deadline for the November 2021 issue is 2nd October 2021.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser

In June, we returned to regular Sunday worship in the Sanctuary for the first time in fifteen months. Yet while standing to worship together after so long was a joyous experience, in the weeks after our return, I found myself asking – ‘What exactly do we stand for? Is it just the routine of churchgoing in a beautiful building? Is it just the activity of hymn singing followed by a cup of tea afterwards, or is there something more?’ Because if that is all the Church stood for, while its members might rejoice at the resumption of public worship, I’m not sure that our neighbours would have much to shout about.

But the Church stands for a lot more than just hymn singing:

We stand for a transformed world

If the Covid pandemic hadn’t made the point clear enough, our world is far from perfect. Loneliness, inequality and rising mental health problems at home are matched by the climate crisis and chronic human rights abuses throughout the world. Human beings can send robots to Mars and build bombs that can wipe out cities in an instant, but mastering human nature is a far harder task.

We stand for Jesus Christ

In the midst of our confusion and suffering, God has not been idle. In Christ, God took our nature upon himself, and showed us how to live a perfected life, one free of regret, despair, and loneliness. He doesn’t offer this new life only to the rich, or the famous, or the beautiful or the gifted, but to anyone who hears his voice, and wants to lead a different kind of life.

We stand for unconditional worth

Our worth is not conditional on our success or popularity or happiness, but is *unconditional*. God loves us no matter who we are, what we have done, or



what we have suffered. In baptism, the Church declares God's acceptance of each person, and their adoption as a child of God. In this new life, you no longer have to prove your worth through work or appearances, but receive it unconditionally from the Father.

We stand for justice and forgiveness

Because each person is loved by God, the Church stands for the eradication of poverty, inequality, and all forms of injustice, anything that would deny the full dignity of others. Yet we also stand for forgiveness and reconciliation. All of us are imperfect, and, for that reason, we should strive to forgive and love our enemies, and seek their forgiveness in turn. Forgiveness is one of the most powerful experiences a person can have, and one that is made possible through the power of Christ.

We stand for community

Our society strives for ever-greater affluence and independence. Yet Christ teaches us that true fulfilment is only found in community, where we take turns to serve and be served, forgive and be forgiven, and rally around our shared worship of the goodness, and truth, and beauty of God. At St Michael's, we celebrate our triumphs and share our losses, not living in splendid isolation but in community.

We stand for service

Christ came not only to serve the Church, however, but all people. For that reason, we at St Michael's seek the transformation not only of ourselves but of Linlithgow and beyond. Through bereavement counselling, emotional support, fundraising, donated foods and goods, and community development, the members of St Michael's are actively engaged in turning this fallen world into the world God knows it can be, and each of us hopes it will be.

We stand for you

St Michael's is not a closed fellowship of believers, but a living community of real people seeking life together. We can't fulfil God's mission to Linlithgow and the world alone, however. We need *you* to help us bring about a new creation.

So if you want to stand with us, and join one of our ministries or the community of St Michael's itself, get in touch with me at info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk.

May God bless you, our town, and our world.

Liam



Farewell, Trish

In Appreciation

In the late summer, Trish Archibald will be leaving us as she goes off to study for the Ministry. Trish will be greatly missed, and we all wish her every blessing as she embarks on a new phase in her career. Below are some comments from three of the people who have worked closely with Trish during her time with us at St Michael's.



Rona Molloy: We will miss Trish so much at Sunday Club! She has the widest smile and the most gentle, kind voice I've ever known. Every week, she manages to convey big, powerful messages, like 'Jesus loves you', in a way that is simple and accessible to all the children. Her sense of fun is always evident, both in person, and – for so many months – on screen. As volunteer leaders, we have been incredibly well supported by Trish. Her relationship with everyone is encouraging and nurturing, giving those who want to, the chance to tell stories, act, make music and contribute in any way that shares the good news of the Bible.



Alison Murray: What has Trish brought to Seedlings? Care, warmth, enthusiasm, networking, leadership and welcome. And the spotty bag bulging with visual aids to hold everyone's attention at story time! **What has Seedlings brought to St Michael's?** A Thursday form of church for anyone under school age, along with parents, grandparents and childminders. One highlight was the joy

of seeing a Seedlings family come forward for baptism. Trish's contribution to Seedlings has been outstanding and the team of helpers wish her every blessing in her next phase of service. We predict that new Seedlings will appear in other congregations where Trish goes.

Paul Davidson: The thing about Trish and youth work is that she understands what is important for children of that age. For late primary/early secondary school age kids it's vital for them to form and build friendships with others at church. Nobody (least of all teenagers) wants to go somewhere where they have no friends. So initiatives like taking them out on a Friday night for chips and a run around the Peel are perfect for that – it's just a bit of fun, and a chance to build those friendships which will hopefully keep them at St Michael's. Trish gets that.

HOW LOVELY IS THY DWELLING PLACE! (BACK IN THE BUILDING)

by Alison Miller

Psalm 84 – 'How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh cry out for the living God.' This psalm has been set to music in so many ways, the words will connect with many of us. While we know that 'the church is not the building, the church is the people' to quote another hymn, there is something very special about gathering together in St Michael's church.



Watching church services online has been a great bonus during lockdown, and has been a wonderful way to continue weekly worship. A huge thank you to all those who have made those services happen.

I asked a few people about what they are looking forward to when we are back in the building. The most common response was not about the beautiful building, or about music, but about being together again, worshipping with other people.

Here are some of the responses:

'Worshipping together is so important. By all means let's harness some of the technology learning that's come along as required but let's not lose the human side of things.' *Stephen Marshall*

'So many things I could list: Walking up the hill and encountering other worshippers; sharing in worship with more than little

square images; gauging more accurately when people say they are 'fine'; saying the Grace without it sounding like Babel; an opportunity for thanksgiving that my family has stayed well.' *Alison Murray*

'I'm looking forward to being ALTOGETHER with my Christian family again!' *Trish Archibald*

'Most of all I think I miss singing in a group. I love singing – old favourite hymns and learning new ones. Hearing music all around you and being part of that is a wonderful feeling. I miss the buzz of being part of a group all there for the same purpose of worshipping God – the energy that comes when people meet and chat and greet each other.' *Ann Mellon*

'...it's impossible to replace the special feeling involved in meeting to worship, the sense of participation.' *Bill Hourston*

'As a choir member, I am looking forward to singing together again rather than recording on my own at home or singing muted during Zoom choir practices. I will be very excited about being back in the building... when restrictions allow a more normal type of service with singing and when masks are no longer required.' *Norma Costley*

'I look forward to being with each other as we worship together... being able to support and encourage each other... singing together, ideally without masks in the way! Yes, we can worship God anywhere, even on Zoom, but there's something special about setting time aside to be together as God's family while we hear His word and sing our praises.' *Alan Miller*

'I look forward to the joy of meeting many people face-to-face who I haven't seen for many months. It will be great to appreciate the special atmosphere and the wonderful architecture in 3-D. Zoom choir practices are fine, but you can't beat personal contact.' *Myra Lawson*

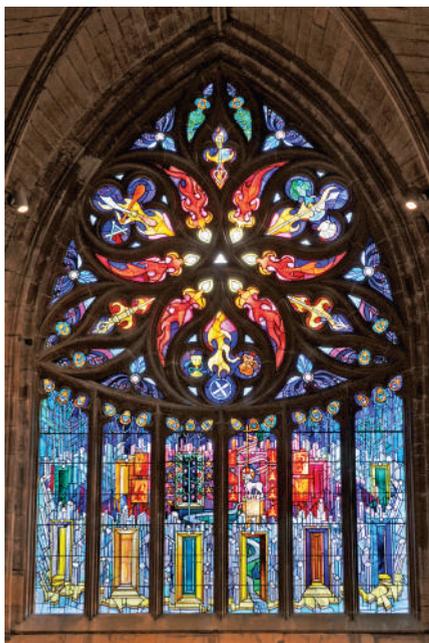
'It's such a beautiful building to worship in.'
Bill Jones after his first service in St Michael's Church.

'I am looking forward in faith to the joy of worshipping God together in His sanctuary.' *John Reid*

As for me, while I love singing, and miss it a lot, I have realised that a good picture/ words/ music reflection can give me time to think about the words in a meaningful way. This can be deeply moving. I look forward to being together; perhaps welcoming some new folk to St Michael's; and to exploring new ways of worship in our beautiful building.

By the time you are reading this there will have been quite a few services in the church building where we are allowed to sing (with masks on), which will please a lot of people. Although some restrictions are likely to remain a while longer, we shall move forward in faith, with hope.

I look forward to seeing you there!



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WEDNESDAY PRAYERS DURING LOCKDOWN

by Ruth Middleton

In the early 2000s, the Pastoral Care Team set up the Queen's Aisle as a quiet place for private prayer, to light a candle and, if wished, leave a prayer request in the box on the communion table. 12.30 -13.00 on Wednesdays was laid aside as a time of quiet prayer and contemplation, open to all, when the prayer requests were responded to. Over the years, there has been a nucleus of regular attenders, while others have come as their needs required. Since the pandemic closed the church and Wednesday Prayers had to stop, the prompt initiative of one group member enabled a regular group of 10-12 to meet on Zoom. While the how and when are still unknown, thought turns to a return to the church, but only when the time is right. So while we wait, here are some thoughts from the group on how we've coped:-

'I feel very blessed that due to the Zoom initiative, we have found an acceptable substitute for meeting in person, and one that also enables those living remotely to join us.'

'The church was closed but we were able to continue praying for others, and each other, sharing our doubts, worries, hopes and fears. Passages of Bible, literature and poetry that had sustained and uplifted each of us at different times were shared.'

'Although I missed the peace and beauty of the church, meeting on Zoom has allowed us to pray for others in a different way. Normally we would have mostly anonymous prayer requests each week. The people named or unnamed we have prayed for on Zoom were known to at least one of us, so we might hear progress too. We heard that they felt comforted by our prayers.'

'I think we all look on the continuation of prayers on Zoom through this difficult time as a positive achievement. We hope to continue on Zoom as long as is needed...'

'Wednesday Prayers has been the most important time in my week in getting through lockdown. There is often a reluctance to leave the Zoom session. Two things have occurred to me – the great importance of the church family and how much we mean to each other, and that all our prayers are important to God, even though we think our own prayers are less important and hard to voice.'

The stresses of Zoom and Wednesday Prayers.

'Will the Zoom link work this week? If not, is it my fault? Can I fix the problem? Why has the screen frozen? I can't always hear... Can I find a quiet place in the house where I'll not be disturbed? Will DHS call, or the phone ring? Will the cat wake up and noisily demand his lunch? If he does can I find the mute button in time.... ?' Anon.

TIME FOR ACTION!

by Alan Miller



While it might be reassuring to have things go back to the way they were pre-2020, we know in our heart of hearts that's not how it works. Society is changing, we are changing, and God is calling us to share his love in new ways.

Our 2030 Vision for St Michael's was summarised in the February Crosswind – a vision of a historic community of faith responding to the needs of a changing society with welcome, welfare, wonder and worship, all expressed in an accessible, flexible and beautiful sanctuary and in Cross House transformed into a vibrant community centre. It's a challenging, but

inspirational, vision. But how do we start?

Kirk Session has now approved a 3-Year Action Plan. This will take us one-third of the way to 2030, though we're aiming to pack plenty of work into that time! The Plan is built around 6 central aims that focus on worship, growing in faith, enhancing our service to all our neighbours in need, transforming Cross House into a community hub, safeguarding the fabric of the Sanctuary and enhancing the experience for all who visit it.

The real meat of the Plan is in the objectives – more concrete descriptions of what we'll be doing to progress the aims. We've set ourselves to achieve many of these by the end of 2021: for instance, to generate new forms of church and to review the times and styles of our services in the Sanctuary. We'll be invited to grow in our experience of prayer and Bible study, including through small groups.

Turning to our buildings, by the end of 2021 we want to have plans for a transformed Cross House approved, and a good start made on what will be a major fundraising drive. Fundraising will also support the various works needed on the fabric of the Sanctuary: the Crown of Thorns requires major refurbishment, but we also have to sort out long-standing drainage problems around the church building and repair timbers in the roof space.

However, St Michael's is a living centre of worship and witness, not a period piece! Hence the final aim, to enhance the experience for all who worship in or visit the Sanctuary. The early stages of work on this aim will involve installing technological means to give and 'QR' codes to help visitors access the story of faith, and more generally finding ways to tell the story of our faith through the fabric of the building.

By the end of 2023, our aspirations are to:

- have a range of new and accessible forms of worship in the Sanctuary, Cross House and around the community
- offer a comprehensive programme of faith growth that every member can access
- complete the transformation of Cross House and have a multi-agency community hub established in it
- complete the urgent works on the Sanctuary (including the Crown of Thorns), with funding in place for other essential fabric works
- gain agreement to replace the pews with high-quality flexible seating
- and to develop and promote the Sanctuary as a venue for events and visitors.

This is a challenging agenda, but who said that being a Christian would be easy?

There will also be some changes in our leadership as we move into this phase. I'm delighted that John Reid will take over from me as Session Clerk in September. Change can be very destabilising, so John's passion for helping people to stay engaged and motivated will be invaluable. I will move onto leading our fundraising strategy (and don't worry, you'll hear plenty more about that in the coming months!).



St Michael's Crown of Thorns spire has been a potent symbol of Jesus' love and risen power since its installation in 1964. As we move into a new phase of our life together, it's appropriate that we use the Crown in a new logo. You'll see it popping up in various colours, but here is the core image. We will each have our own interpretations, but to me the circle is an extension of the message of salvation – and the circle is always open to new people. WE gather around the crucified Lord, but as we do, we face out to the community.



**ST.
MICHAEL'S**
Parish church

We need to keep reminding ourselves that God continually calls us to share with Him in His work. This is not about developing 'our' church – because it isn't 'our' church. It's about us as a community of forgiven people, expressing our faith through what we do and through the opportunities our buildings give us so that we can indeed welcome people, meet their welfare needs, help open their eyes to the wonder of God's love and share worship with them.

WE ARE LISTENING

by Tom Brown



Many will be aware that for some years now we have had a Pastoral Visitors service at St Michael's. A team of dedicated and trained visitors have regularly supported a number of people in the congregation who have needed pastoral support including emotional support, befriending and practical help on occasions. Those receiving the service have for the most part (but not exclusively) been elderly and often housebound or limited in what they are able to do independently.

Even prior to the Covid 19 pandemic we have had a vision of extending this service in a variety of ways, and indeed preliminary discussions about this took place in 2019 between the Ministry Team and the Pastoral Care Team to this end. The vision included a notion that we

should extend our pastoral care outreach beyond those who are church members and indeed to those of any age and those who are not necessarily housebound but who have a need for emotional support and befriending.

Our experience of the Linlithgow Coronavirus Support Group gave impetus to this. This initiative demonstrated a willingness across a range of groups in the town (church groups and many others) to work together in the interests of the community.

To this end we are now proposing to launch a Listening Service available to all in the community. The differences and similarities between this service and our own Pastoral Visitors service are summarised in the table opposite. The major difference is that this new service will be available to all in the community (not only St Michael's members) and that volunteers who deliver the service need not be St Michael's members or indeed members of any church (though members of other churches will be made most welcome). Requirements of volunteers will be the same as those for our pastoral visitors, ie they will require disclosure/PVG checks, will require training, (which we will provide) and will require to be interviewed by a member of the Ministry Team and a member of the Pastoral Care Team.

We have already recruited a number of volunteers who have met all these requirements. Some of these (but not all) are members of our Pastoral Care Team who are willing to do this in addition to their pastoral care duties.

The listening service will be for all, irrespective of beliefs, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity. Support will be free, confidential and non-judgemental. We will deliver this service in different ways. We can meet people for a coffee, we can go for a walk, we can talk over the telephone or by Zoom and eventually we should be able to meet people at our community hub in Cross House.

As with our Pastoral Visitors service we will not accept referrals to this service by proxy, ie anyone wishing to use this service will have to request it themselves. We will not accept referrals at the request of others who 'think' they need the service. Exceptions will only be made to this when someone clearly does not have the capacity to consent to the service, eg some (but not all) people with dementia. If you wish to know more about this service or wish to become a volunteer please phone me (Tom Brown) on 01506 842508. For anyone wishing to volunteer full training and support will be provided.



We hope the service will launch in the late summer or early autumn and this will be advertised both on Church media eg website, Facebook, intimations and more widely within the town.

I am sure you will agree this initiative is part of our response to the command to love our neighbour as ourselves and we ask for your prayers for its success.

PASTORAL VISITORS SERVICE AND LISTENING SERVICE

	Pastoral Care Service	Listeners service
Availability	St Michael's Parish Church members only	Anyone in the community
Volunteers delivering service	St Michael's Parish Church members	Anyone (subject to conditions stated above)
Service delivery	Largely by home visiting or telephone	Numerous methods (see above)
Support and training	Provided by St Michael's Parish Church Pastoral care Team	Provided by St Michael's Parish Church Pastoral care Team

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NEW ELDER



On Sunday, 16th May, a service was held within the church to ordain Mukami McCrum as an Elder and she was admitted to the Kirk Session of St Michael's Parish Church.

Mukami has a great deal of experience of international affairs within the Church of Scotland and is a trustee of Christian Aid.

NEW MEMBER

Our new member, Jill McVie, who lives in Australia introduces herself to the congregation:

I'd like to send very warm wishes from Australia to the St. Michael's community. It's wonderful to be able to participate in the recorded services from so far away. I'm originally from Linlithgow and watching those beautiful images of the church and town makes me feel like I'm back home!

I appreciate the warm welcome from the church. It was a new experience for everyone, I think, to hold a membership service via Zoom! Liam has been supportive, kind and inspirational. I'm very grateful to him for making this possible.

In the not too far distant future, I hope to be at a service in-person on my next visit to Linlithgow.

Warm wishes,

Jill



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by Lorraine Orr

Photography Church was launched at the end of April this year with the aim of connecting people with church and spirituality within their local context.

The purpose of Photography church is to enable people to connect with God through nature and their own surroundings. It is intentionally aimed at mixed groups – anyone from anywhere can join in and at their own leisure. We currently have a fortnightly theme where we inspire people to think deeply about a certain topic, phrase, verse or word.

This is an ideal space for people to engage creatively and actively within God's creation. We can learn from each other and be in awe of other people's perspectives.

It has been lovely to encourage people to engage in their own spiritual journey during a time when we cannot all be together.

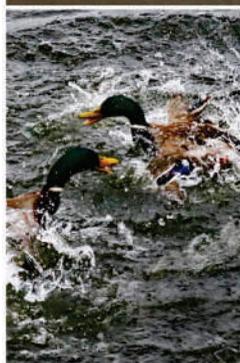


Sometimes we often separate 'worship' from 'every day' life. I am looking to change something that could be classed as a leisure activity into something that is a spiritual practice. Hopefully Photography Church will rejuvenate your local walks, your holidays and your average Saturday afternoons. This is church. A church without walls.

We have had our first set of Photography Church walking groups. It has been lovely to meet in a small group and chat over the theme, what it means to us as individuals and listen to how people have connected or reconnected with God in their own space.

Are you into photography? Do you want to engage creatively with a fortnightly theme? Why not join us and explore the spirituality and beauty on your doorstep? You can see a selection of our photographs on the centre pages.

For more information, please contact Lorraine Orr on: lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk or find us on Facebook at Photography Church Linlithgow



We have covered various topics so far in Photography Church; they have ranged from light to joy to growth!

Water

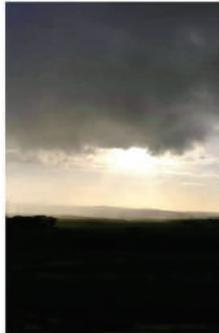
Growth

Wow what a thought provoking topic. I've grown up. I've grown in size 😊😊 I've grown and nurtured a new talent (knitting)... I'm allowing my grey hair to grow in without worrying about covering it up. But the best bit about my own personal growth is the ability to realise that sometimes being the 'grown up' isn't the most important thing. I loved the innocence of childhood and the fun/sun days that were my youth. So as a grown up I love acting like I was my inner 5 year old again. And having fun... that's the most 'free-ing' growth for me (dress up as a super hero and run around having fun, I thoroughly recommend it). 👍

Mags Small



Growth



Light



Parish Register

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life



April

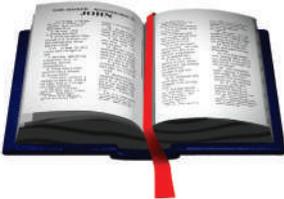
Fraser (Clark) Finlay, Preston Crescent
Maureen Darrell, Preston Crescent
Elizabeth Gray, Avon Drive

May

Mary (May) Shedden, Clarendon Road

June

James (Seamus) Ross, Braehead Road
Bernard (Benny) McAfee, Belsyde Court
Jessie (Jess) Blair, Kettil'stoun Grove



July

William Henderson, Bo'ness
Ann Swan, Bailielands

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

April

Leo Loggie, Larbert



WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

June

Lynn Mulholland to Stewart Forsyth

July

Sarah Anderson to Mark Tighe
Ailsa Mackie to Josh Beaumont



Dates for your Diary

Coffee Morning 10am to 12 noon in the Kirk Hall

Saturday 18th Sept Linlithgow Reed Band (TBC)



EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

Linlithgow Arts Guild Concerts for Summer Days

Wednesday 11th August	12 noon	Violin/Piano at noon – violin and piano duo
Wednesday 25th August	2pm	Saanjh, Indian songs & stories after lunch – musical scenes of an Indian woman's journey through dusk, with songs, piano and tabla

OTHER EVENTS

11th - 12th September: Digital Doors Open Day

WEBSITES

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.

Thank you, St Michael's

by Regina Nurney



After many years of being a 'hobbyist', using my creative skills to make teddy bears and dolls with very little direction, I re-entered the world of education. I began at the very bottom with an NQ course with minimum understanding of the education system in Scotland. I did not expect that this one step into a creative industries course would become a journey towards a degree in the art and design sector.

With the exception of my husband and our children I did not think many people would take a serious interest in what I was doing and what my course entailed. I was very wrong. As the 9.30am service ended and our coffee time began, many smiling faces would approach me and ask what I was creating that week, that month, that term. Each face was keen to see photographs on my phone of what shaking masterpieces were developing each step of the way.

Each doubt that filled my heart and sadness that I felt my pieces were not good enough or disasters, was met with words of encouragement and often real admiration, and appreciation of every piece I put before them. Genuine questions were asked about the processes and the media I was using and why I had taken that approach within my work.

The people of St Michael's poured out from within themselves all the encouragement and love that a family would hopefully give to someone on this journey of discovery and development. And even buying copies of my children's book when I published it.

Some of St Michael's community also aided in the fundraising and editing of the book, and for that I will be eternally grateful.

St Michael's itself also helped me. At the end of my NC I was struggling with a particular topic with the theme of architecture. I could not even draw a straight line, and therefore I could not draw the buildings placed before me. No photograph or picture lent itself to any of the media I was trying to use. I was feeling very despondent with the whole scene and feared I was going to fail that section.



I sat in church on Sunday morning and while others around me were singing joyfully along with the hymns, I was lost in my own personal contemplation. Then the sun came cascading through the south windows of the church and there before me was my inspiration.

We were in full flow of the Festival of Christmas Trees and under one of the windows behind the pulpit was a simply decorated tree. It lay, bathed in sunlight, at the base of one of the sweeping arches that flow up to the ceiling of St Michael's, holding a delicate angel at the top.



That was it, that was it. I had my subject, and I had my final piece for this unit. I was blessed with inspiration and passion once again by St Michael's.

My heart began to sing along with the congregation at last. And I did pass that unit and that year. And also that year I had my artwork printed as Christmas cards, so that I could share my joy for that piece of artwork given to me by not just the family of St Michael's but St Michael's itself.

The greatest trials and tribulations of this course came in the following years. The beginning of my HND levels I had a fall, and the damage was life changing to the point where I was left with limited abilities for at least four months.

By Christmas of the first year, even though I was maintaining my level of work, I thought seriously of withdrawing from the course. Once again, I turned to my family at St Michael's for advice on the hard choice I had to make.

Once again, the smiling faces around the coffee break hugged me tight, held my hand, offered prayer, and told me to follow my heart. They told me they would be there for me every step of the way and with that lifting spirit I ploughed on. Every tear I shed, every scream of frustration, and every tantrum I cast as I went through the next three years was met with love, compassion, encouragement, and prayer from the family I have found at St Michael's church.

Thank you, St Michael's, thank you for all you have given me and done for me over the past five years. For that I dedicate my BA Art and Design degree, not just to my husband Alec and our children but to you my family, my St Michael's family.

CROWN OF THORNS

by Brian Lightbody

Our iconic 'Crown of Thorns', atop the bell tower of the church, has over the years become the most recognisable symbol of Linlithgow. Sadly, it is now showing its age and is in need of significant repair.

Originally the bell tower had a medieval stone crown similar to St Giles in Edinburgh but that had to be removed in 1821 as it had become precarious and its weight was in danger of destabilising the entire tower. The church remained without a steeple and with a truncated unbalanced appearance for the next 140 years until, in the 1960s, the Rev Dr David Steel led a campaign to erect a new one. He approached Sir Basil Spence, the architect of Coventry Cathedral and probably the best-known architect in the country at the time, to advise the church. After visiting the church and looking at the structure of the tower his advice was that any new spire should be of lightweight construction and of unashamedly modern design.

One of the most renowned sculptors of the day, Geoffrey Clarke, was invited to submit a proposal, having already designed the spire and much of the stained glass at Coventry. He produced a model of the design we see today – a visual reference to the original medieval crown but inspired by Christ's crown of thorns on the cross, the only crown our Lord ever wore.

Hugely controversial at the time and opposed by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, Dr Steel garnered strong support from leading architects and from the Royal Society for the Fine Arts who had an official role in advising the various authorities on works to important historic buildings. He also sought support from Professor Sir Nicholas Pevsner of Cambridge University, the famous architectural historian, who praised it as one of the most convincing examples anywhere of marrying a modern form to a historic building.

With this level of support for the design, the funds were raised and the crown was completed in 1964.

Unfortunately, deterioration and corrosion of the fixings of the aluminium cladding panels over the years have allowed water ingress and this has led to significant areas of rot in the laminated timber structure. If we do not deal with this, the crown will soon be in a dangerous state. It has therefore been agreed by the Kirk Session that we must repair it.

We will need to erect a complex scaffold and working platform on the bell tower and a temporary steel support structure to take the eight tonne weight of the crown to allow the rotten timber sections to be cut out and new preservative treated timber spliced in. We will also need to remove all the cladding to determine the full extent of the damage and fit new cladding panels with a more substantial and weatherproof fixing method than before.

The precise cladding type has still to be decided. Originally it was gold anodised aluminium which has now weathered to silver and there is an opportunity to return it to the colour the designer intended but in a more durable colour-fast alloy. A new gold Crown of Thorns would certainly be striking, and of course all our remedial proposals will need the approval of Historic Environment Scotland.



Given the complexity of the repairs, the access, temporary support and the scaffolding required, the work will be time consuming and expensive – an estimated total cost of £260,000. We hope to obtain a Heritage Repair Grant from Historic Environment Scotland for 50% of the cost but this will leave us a challenge to fund the remainder. Further grant assistance may also be available but innovative local fund raising and church funding will also be necessary and a fundraising team has been set up to progress this. We hope to carry out the work in Spring 2022.



GUILD MATTERS

by Margaret Henderson

Although we may not have been able to meet for sixteen months, the work of The Guild has continued. Session 2020-21 has seen us complete the strategy of One Journey, Many Roads and I do not think that any one of us would have imagined that this session would have taken us on the journey that it has. However, Guild members are a strong breed and we have been able to complete the journey in a very positive way. We may not have been able to host any fundraising events but nevertheless a remarkable sum of money has been raised for current projects; you will be able to read about this later in the article.

Whenever I speak to one of our members, I am asked when Guild meetings will resume. Although I am not able to guarantee anything as yet, I am able to say preparations are underway to resume meetings in September when we will be at the beginning of a new three-year strategy, Look Forward in Faith.

Here in St Michael's, we will remember the very successful Stewardship Campaign of the same title which was held over twenty years ago when over one thousand members of the congregation met in the Academy over three evenings and were challenged not only to consider their financial giving but the active role they could contribute to the mission of St Michael's. The ladies of the Guild do exactly that as they meet fortnightly to hear about the work of various charities locally and nationally and promise to support them in prayer and in practical ways.

I am sure many of us will have found comfort in our faith as we have learned to cope with the pandemic and looked forward to better days which lie ahead. Looking forward in faith is something that comes naturally to us as Guild members and as Christians. We look forward to starting our new session stronger than ever and with confidence in the One who brings us safely through all our difficult times.

The theme for session 2021-2022 is Lights and Bushels. As Christians we are called to walk in the light. Jesus himself said that He is the Light of The World and as His followers we are called to be a light for others. 'The Light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1:5). In what has been a time of darkness for so many people, this theme will remind us that we are not defeated by the pandemic, but we are sustained by the Lord who walks beside us every step of the way.

I look forward to this next session as we share friendship and fellowship. Our meetings may have to be a little different, but I am sure we will return stronger and eager to shine light into the world.

Guild Projects 2021-22

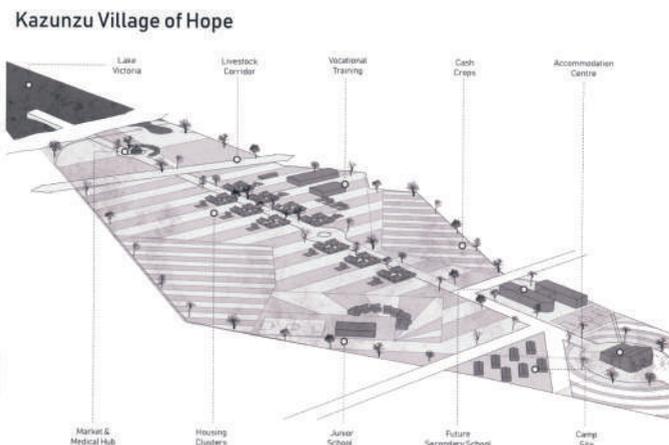
by Maureen Blake, Project Partner

Every three years as the Guild embarks on a new theme, six new projects are selected by the National Executive for local branches to support. Over the past three years £540,000 was raised for the projects, despite the impact of lockdowns and restrictions on meeting in person.

Some Guilds choose just one of the projects to support over the three years whilst others support several. St Michael's Guild features two each session and all six will have received contributions from us by the end of the period.

As we hope to be able to meet and run a near normal programme this session, we are including two of these new projects. Because of continuing uncertainty surrounding Covid restrictions, we decided that in the first half of the Session we would support an organisation with very local roots – the Vine Trust. Founded in Bo'ness in 1985 to provide famine relief in Ethiopia, the work of this charity has expanded across the world and the Guild is raising funds to complete the construction of a model village on the shores of Lake Victoria in Tanzania. The congregation of the Kirk of Calder raised £85,000

towards the start of construction (another local connection!) and eight of the planned forty homes have been completed. The communities around Lake Victoria have one of the highest incidences of HIV/Aids infections in the world so the village will include clinic, schools and community hub along with farming



land, a fish farm and vocational training facilities. Each home is large enough to enable families to foster some of the many orphans. The hope is that all residents, especially the women, will have access to good health care, health education, a removal of the stigma attached to HIV/Aids and opportunities to earn a sustainable living. It is hoped that this village will serve as a template for similar communities around the lake's shores.

After the New Year we will highlight the work of a small charity called Starchild – Finding the light in every child. This organisation seeks to support children with additional needs and their families in Uganda. But more of this in a future Crosswind!

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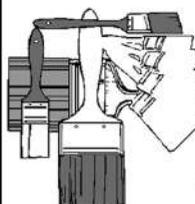
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Linlithgow EH49 7ND

Tel: 01506 671 177

Mobile: 07971 237 810

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Johnny Alves

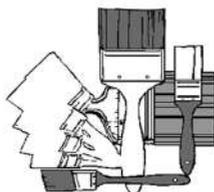
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SEPA REGISTERED

BUDGET MANAGEMENT PLAN

by Anne Law



The Co-ordinating Team was asked to consider an Income Recovery Plan for St Michael's in light of the large reduction in income during 2020 due to the closure of the church and the loss of a number of income streams. The budget deficit at the end of 2020 was £5,825, considerably less than feared at the half year and achieved because of a reduction in property expenditure due to the closure of our buildings and the continuing remarkable level of standing order giving.

A budget in deficit of £28,482 has been forecast for 2021, due to the continuing uncertainties around how we might emerge from Covid. We have been deliberately very conservative in our approach due to the uncertainty of the ongoing Covid-19 situation. We hope this will be a worst-case scenario.

In June as I write we are open once again for worship, and indeed perhaps we may even see visitors later in the year. We have forecast a zero budget for Cross House and weddings, and we know already that there will be income from both sources. Opening the church to visitors would result in income from the Fabric Box and also the shop but we have decided to anticipate nothing and hope for a more favourable outcome.

The Stewardship Team monitors income and expenditure monthly, analysing differences between budget and actual figures in respect of both sides of the balance sheet. We will reforecast potentially at the end of the summer to establish how realistic the budget figures are, depending on whether life has started to return to pre-Covid normal.

The first 6 months of the year show a hugely better than forecast position (Surplus) of £19,542. A deficit of £28,482 would be untenable. If that figure were indeed to start to look like reality, we may have to take some difficult decisions. The Stewardship Team however would prefer to consider how we might increase income, rather than how we might cut costs. Could you for example consider using the EasyFundRaising scheme where you can raise donations for good causes when you shop online? Please have a look if you can.

We have also not spent nearly as much as anticipated on property maintenance and repairs. However, our income to date has been remarkable and a huge thank you is due to all members who continue to give so generously. Your giving funds the work of the Church of Scotland locally and nationally. Thank you so much for your continuing support.

LINLITHGOW CHURCH FORUM

by Paul Goldfinch



This summer the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church gave us the St Andrew Declaration. In it, they pledged to work ever more closely together and forgave each other for past disagreements. Further, senior representatives of the two churches stressed that both churches wished to reach out similarly to other partner churches in Scotland.

It was a small but historic moment, perhaps our biggest ecumenical step since the 1987 Swanwick Declaration, when a wider circle of churches pledged to be pilgrims together. One derivative from Swanwick was material for ecumenical Lent discussion groups. We had such a group here in Linlithgow. And at the end of Lent many of our Linlithgow members felt that they wanted to continue meeting together. There we have it: the Linlithgow Church Forum was inaugurated.

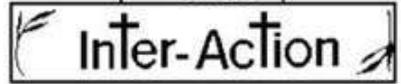
Set up as a lay group to encourage the churches locally to be working together, or at least thinking of each other, Forum comprises up to two people from each of the six participating churches – six, because from the earliest days St Michael's Parish Church has had a separate allowance for the Springfield congregation. The other churches involved are – alphabetically – St John's, St Michael's Catholic Church, St Ninian's Craigmalen and St Peter's. St Michael's Parish Church currently has 3 members of Linlithgow Church Forum: Jaqueline Coyle, Fiona Duke, Barbara Thomson.

Covid has rather changed things, for most of our events involve people meeting – not good news over the last eighteen months! But, besides the web site (www.linlithgowchurches.org.uk), two things have continued – the 24 hours of prayer for Peace One Day in September (volunteers sign for which half-hour or more they'll be covering, and then pray wherever they wish), and the weekly prayer sheet for our Linlithgow Christians (most easily down-loaded from www.stpeterslinlithgow.co.uk/linlithgow/lithgow_prayer.pdf).

So, what does Forum do? We encourage as best we can the provision of any and all ecumenical activities, wherever they originate, and we ourselves organise a number of events during the year.



Linlithgow Churches
Working Together



The first part of that encouragement means collecting relevant information from our churches and then recirculating it (preferably looking well ahead) – ‘Inter-Action’ – for use by those individuals who organise our intimations, pew sheets, websites and magazines. Perhaps we may be able by September to restart activities and services to share, allowing Inter-Action to restart too. But we also actively encourage the offering of joint services of worship, rotating round the churches: when Forum was first starting, Linlithgow had no pattern of joint worship.

A month before Christmas, there’s now an Advent Carol Service (organised by that year’s host church), and of course we have the cycle of ecumenical worship throughout Holy Week. Perhaps in 2022 we’ll again be able to manage the Easter service on Cockleroy?

Forum organises the January service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, using material from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Our service rotates round the churches, with accompanying pulpit swapping. CTBI provide services for each day of the week: perhaps the time has come when Linlithgow’s churches might choose to make use of more of that material?

March brings us to the World Day of Prayer (still in many parts of the world, the *Women’s Day of Prayer*). Here again we use material supplied from afar – though 2022 sees us using material prepared by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Holy Week services have already been mentioned, but for the last several years in Linlithgow we have also had an Easter card distributed to each household. It is an open invitation to our Easter services. Last year, Covid interfered, but late in the day we were able to prepare a poster for display in at least a small range of our local shops and cafés.

Next in the calendar are two social events. We’ve had an Inter-Church Dinner for many years, most recently at the Rugby Club, which has provided a good and well-mixed evening. But, it has to be admitted, we’ve not been very successful in attracting younger attendees, so for 2021 we had planned a late summer barbecue, at Beecraigs. Great idea, but, once again a Covid victim; we’re hoping there’ll be a 2022 barbecue – though if so it’s sadly looking very unlikely to be at Beecraigs. We’ll see.

And that brings us back to Peace One Day and the start of the year.

But let us not forget that there are other ecumenical things going on in Linlithgow – for example, Christmas and Easter sessions for school pupils, work with Eco-Congregations Scotland and, latest, the intended Community Audit.

When we pull together, we are certainly stronger – and we are usually cheerier, presenting to the world around us a more appealing vision of Christianity. And that is mission, to draw people in – a task to which we are all called.

GRAVE-ROBBING IN LINLITHGOW

by Bruce Jamieson

Above the tomb of the Earls of Linlithgow in St Michael's Kirkyard is this metal, coffin-shaped object – a mortsafe, used to prevent robbers from getting access to a newly buried body. It once had a metal collar through which strong spikes were driven into the ground.

In the 18th and early 19th century development of medical schools in Scotland saw a huge demand for bodies on which to practise anatomy. The only cadavers legally available were those of executed criminals – and until the end of the 18th century there were plenty of those with some 250 crimes carrying the death penalty. However, by 1815, juries became unwilling to find people guilty of offences such as shop lifting, pickpocketing, rustling a sheep, stealing anything worth over 12 pence or poaching a rabbit.

Shortage of corpses created an illegal profession – grave-robbing, securing bodies for sale by digging up a recent burial. Many students were turning away from Scottish medical schools to study anatomy overseas, so authorities turned a blind eye to how anatomical specimens were procured.

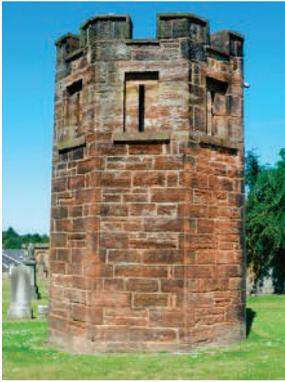


The first recorded instance of grave-robbing in Linlithgow was when two 'Resurrectionists' were spotted making their way from St Michael's Kirkyard across the Peel carrying the body of Benjamin Jamieson. Before they could be apprehended, they loaded it onto a cart on Blackness Road, and headed towards Dr Robert Knox's anatomy theatre in Edinburgh.

To try to prevent this sort of thing happening, Linlithgow Provost John Boyd and the Reverend James Dobie of St Michael's created the 'Linlithgow Mortsafe Society'. This group erected a watchtower in the kirkyard and appointed watchmen to keep awake all night after a burial. Unfortunately records abound with complaints of caretakers falling asleep on the job or getting drunk – or even being bribed by those anxious to obtain bodies.

Dr Robert Knox

In 'The Scotsman' for February 28th, 1824 two men from Nova Scotia complained of their treatment in Linlithgow. With night falling, they decided to visit the Palace and on their way noticed the gate to St Michael's Cemetery was open. On entering, they were pounced upon by 'a rabble of several persons who stated themselves to be a guard over a recent burial'. The couple were accused of being grave-robbers and 'assaulted in a most abusive manner'.



St Michael's watchtower has gone. This one is in Dalkeith Cemefery.

The Canadian couple were marched off to the house of the town's Chief Magistrate, Provost Boyd (now the Star and Garter) where they were cross examined, and their luggage searched. A mob of baying locals had gathered outside, and it took two hours of persuasion by the Provost before they dispersed, and the wronged couple walked free. Another time, a cart was intercepted in the High Street and three bodies 'resurrected' from Larbert Kirkyard discovered. The robbers were arrested, and the ringleader transported to Australia.

I used to ask those attending my ghost walks, 'Who are the most famous grave-robbers in history?' The usual reply I received was 'Burke and Hare' – but there is no evidence that these two ever obtained their bodies this way. They may have got inspiration for their body-selling deeds while working as navvies on the Union Canal.

And, of course, the canal offered another means of smuggling bodies into Edinburgh. One story told is that of a barge being examined at Linlithgow's canal basin for such hidden bodies. Nothing was found and the barge went on its way – with a very silent, fully dressed bargee, sitting deathly still at the front of the boat.

But William Burke and William Hare never robbed from graves – they murdered at least 16 people. Eventually their crimes were discovered and Hare turned King's evidence, leaving Burke to take the full rap; he was hanged in Edinburgh in 1828. Later, his corpse was publicly dissected by Professor Alexander Monro in the anatomy theatre of the university's Old College. Following the judge's wishes, Burke's skeleton was given to the Anatomical Museum of the Edinburgh Medical School. It is now on display, along with a book bound with his tanned skin, at Surgeons' Hall Museum in Hill Square.

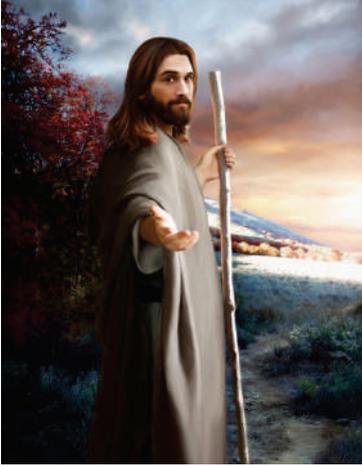


The fallout from the case was the Anatomy Act of 1832 which gave medics legal access to corpses unclaimed after death, in particular those dying in prison or the poorhouse. Furthermore, a person could donate their next of kin's corpse in exchange for an eventual burial at the expense of the recipient. Under the Act, those intending to practise anatomy had to obtain a licence from the Home Secretary and be subject to inspection.

The days of the grave-robbers was over – and Linlithgow Mortsafe Society wound up – its protective cage now just an object of curiosity.

FOLLOW ME!

by Rev Thom Riddell



'Come Follow Me'
by Brent Borup

The last three General Assemblies have highlighted the calling of the first disciples as recorded by Matthew: 'And he [Jesus] said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.' [Matthew 4: 19-20]

As we begin to return to some sense of normal life and take up challenges posed by the decision of this year's Assembly to reduce significantly the number of ministries it can fund, we must consider what the call to discipleship means. The invitation of Jesus to his disciples, and to us, is to follow him. Honestly, that is probably too much for us. We would much rather believe than follow – it's a lot easier. We talk happily about our faith but hesitate to put it into action.

We can sit at home, or in a bible study group, and believe lots of things. The virgin birth, walking on water, feeding the 5,000, the crucifixion, the resurrection. No problem – easy while in our comfort zone.

But Jesus says, 'Follow me', and we are reluctant to follow because it means getting up and doing something. It requires leaving. Leaving comfort, perhaps family and friends, jobs and hobbies. Followers in the New Testament left all those things behind. Following can be costly and can hurt.

Still Jesus says to follow. We may not like where it leads us. He has a reputation for mixing with those whom society ignores and tries to avoid. Following might be dangerous. Again, Jesus says, 'Drop everything. Take up your cross. Follow me.' This will mean different things for each of us. As we emerge from this time of pandemic restrictions, we might have to reconsider our priorities; how committed we are to living out our faith in the choices we make, and the service we offer for the work of God's kingdom.

Following Jesus is risky, but the reward is living life in all its fullness. Living as God wants us to live, sharing in the work of the kingdom, and enabling others to hear his call to new life in Christ.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for those you have called to follow you across the years and for those who have had the courage to respond in faith. Help us to be ready to respond when your call comes to us; to commit ourselves to your service and to walk the way of the Cross. AMEN

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Ministry

Minister

Rev Dr Liam Fraser
tel: (01506) 842195

Auxiliary Minister

Rev Thom Riddell
tel: (01506) 843251

Pioneer & Outreach Worker

Lorraine Orr
email: lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk

Church Office

Val Wood
Office closed at present so contact by
e-mail: info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk
or leave a message on
tel: (01506) 842188

Office Bearers

Session Clerk

Alan Miller
tel: (01506) 844992

Giff Aid Convener

Andrew Jones
tel: (01506) 840914

Organist & Coordinator of Music

Alison Hastie
email: alisonhastie1@gmail.com

Roll Keeper

Alan Bennie
tel: (01506) 848166

Organisations

The Guild

Margaret Henderson
tel: (01506) 844787

Parent and Toddlers

Margaret Henderson
tel: (01506) 844787

Sunday Club Leadership Team

Rona Molloy
tel: 07745 957326
Sunday Club (3-11yrs)
Bible Class (12-14yrs)

Boys' Brigade

Lisa Callaghan
tel: 07894106425

Safeguarding

Alison Murray
tel: (01506) 840407
Andy Tunnicliffe
tel: 07961521919

Bereavement Support Group

Sheila Rae
tel: (01506) 847538

Events Co-ordinator

Stephen Blake
tel: (01506) 822603

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