

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Winter 2016

Vol 19:4



*Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.
Praise ye the LORD.*

PSALM 150 v5

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SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 29th January

All-Age Communion at 9:30am.
Traditional Communion at 11am
in the church
3pm in the Kirk Hall
with common and individual cups

Weekly Services

9.30am First Morning Service
Crèche in Cross House

9.45am All-Age Worship
Term time in Springfield School

11.00am Second Service

6.30pm Evening Service
in Kirk Hall

Monthly Communion

Sunday 26th February
at 12:15pm
Individual Cup

Cover photograph: Alma Maria, 1490, one of the oldest bells still in use in Scotland, courtesy of Stephen Blake

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The deadline for the Spring 2017 issue is 4th March 2017.

St. Michael's Parish Church of Scotland is a Scottish Charity Reg. No. SC016185

VIEW FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

The e-mails are coming in thick and fast on one subject and one subject only: 'Brides of St Michael's.' Never mind it's election day in the United States as I write, it is the call that has gone out from Margaret Johnston and the Fellowship Team for brides to allow us to borrow their wedding dresses for an exhibition in St Michael's on March 11 & 12 that are lighting up the inbox. 'Were you married in St Michael's and do you still have your wedding dress?' asks Margaret in her post on Facebook. She is also looking for wedding photographs to exhibit.



Scores of replies have been rocking in from all over Scotland, the UK and abroad. They are full of fun, panic and true confessions. The prize for farthest afield (so far) goes to Debbie Horrocks in Soshanguve, South Africa, who decided to add the year of her wedding to her name in her reply. Perhaps the dresses will be displayed by decade. Bright energy all round.

It is a welcome tonic after the political stramash to which we have been subjected for months. Prompting the strangely encouraging if absurdist statement: presidents come and go, but wedding dresses live forever.

Sarah's dress, made for her by the redoubtable Jane Greathead of Cobourg, Ontario, family friend, is safely tucked away in a place she is not (yet) divulging. I remember it very fondly, of course, and her in it (!), with the toes of her shoes, red, poking out at the hem. Mind, she lifted her right foot to make sure I saw the shoes! (Prompting the memory that our first date had been to see the play *Zadie's Shoes* at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto.) For us grooms – supremely ignorant as we are of the entire saga of vision, design, fittings and fretting – the sight of our bride in her dress on the day is the big zing. I've seen grooms turn and look immediately the bride's entry music begins, grooms who wait a wee bit before turning, grooms who've asked to be given a sign that their bride has reached the red carpet, and grooms who do not turn to look at all but break into smiles in spite of themselves at her arrival. My guidance to all: it is a sight not to be missed!

So powerful is the wedding dress that it can withstand naff google searches like 'philosophy of the wedding dress' – which will get you countless photographs of wedding dresses and artful adverts offering a 'fresh perspective on today's bride' as 'a three-dimensional woman with a rich life.' Clever copy if you are in the business of selling wedding dresses.



And then there is the Everything but the Girl Bridal Boutique in Chichester, West Sussex, whose name meets its match in the Everything but the Groom Bridal Boutique in Langley, British Columbia. Spot the difference. Both sell wedding gowns. Answers on a postcard.

Margaret Johnston's own wedding dress will be on show in the 'Brides of St Michael's' exhibition.

Jesus, of whose wedding day there is no mention, leaving us none the wiser regarding his marital status, performed one of his most famous miracles at a wedding in Cana, Galilee, when he turned water into wine... more quickly than your average winemaker. The Rev Hanna Dally, Rector of Holy Family Episcopal Church in Reineh, Galilee, our twin, took us through the story when we visited a few years ago – Elma Birrell, Alan Miller and I. We were sat in the peace garden of the Roman Catholic Church in Cana itself. Hanna brought out the role of the servants in the miracle, who, not knowing how it was all going to turn out, obeyed Jesus and did the work anyway, the heavy lifting and fetching of water from its source to the urns. Participating in the miracle, furthering the celebration of the wedding guests. He helped us to inhabit the story, and thereby helped the story inhabit us, animating the transformative life of Christ within us.

Wedding dresses, whatever their style and vintage, are powerful personal symbols of the celebration of love and trust that brings people together in marriage. That is what makes them beautiful. That, and the women who wear them.

Your friend,

AM I BEING UNFAIR TO YOU?

by Barbara Thomson

From its roots in 19th-Century women's prayer groups in North America, World Day of Prayer has become an international, ecumenical, prayer movement with the motto: 'Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action'. Every year in more than 180 countries and in over 1000 languages and dialects, Christians – women and men – of many traditions and all ages, celebrate a common day of prayer on the first Friday in March, this year 3 March. While we are still asleep, services will begin in Tonga and New Zealand in the east and then continue over 24 hours to Samoa and Alaska in the west. The service here in Linlithgow is organised by the Linlithgow Churches' Forum and is being held this year in St Michael's RC Church at 7.30pm. There is also a service at 2.30pm in St Michael's Hospital.



Every year the worship service has a specific focus and theme. Economic Justice is the focus for this year's service which has been prepared by the women of the Philippines. Their theme is 'Am I being unfair to you?' based on passages from Matthew and Numbers. The writers will incorporate the particular needs of their country as well as the needs of the world into the service. Music and songs from the focus country are usually included (unless they are considered too challenging!). Readers from all Linlithgow churches take part; the speaker this year will be Rev Tim Tunley, Chaplain to Mission to Seafarers Scotland and friend of St Peter's. After the service there will be time for fellowship in Queen Margaret Hall over tea, coffee and biscuits.

Why don't you come along? By participating you will have joined Christians worldwide and locally, as well as being refreshed by a variation in worship and challenged by insights into another way of life. God wants us to have a prayer relationship with Him and this should include praying for our neighbours throughout the world, as well as for ourselves and those known to us. The World Day of Prayer logo incorporates this hope: the design comprises arrows converging from the four points of the compass, four figures kneeling in prayer, the Celtic Cross, and a circle, representing the world and our unity through all our diversity.

Please put the date in your diary:

Friday 3rd March 7.30pm St Michael's RC Church

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Our 'victim' this issue is Val Wood, our hard-working Church Secretary. How will Val respond to our questions?



Describe your job as church secretary in three words. That's easy. Varied, Interesting, Manic!

Before you came to be part of our admin team what did you do? I was a Legal PA in Edinburgh.

What's your first memory of St Michael's? The first time I came through to Linlithgow and saw the church I thought what an impressive building.

If you had an extra day in the week what would you fill it with? I'd like to attend a course on Scottish

history, particularly the Stuart kings which I studied at school.

What's your favourite knock knock joke?

Knock Knock

Who's there?

Peg!

Peg who?

Peg your pardon, I've got the wrong door!

You go to Italy a lot. What's your favourite Italian city and why? Lucca is a particular favourite – a lovely enchanting city and also a great location to use as a base. However, I would also like to visit Picinisco – a small mountain village east of Rome – where my mother-in-law's family come from.

Best book you've ever read? Not a particular favourite, but I do like crime fiction and thrillers, by authors such as Peter James, Ian Rankin and Quintin Jardine.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given? Manners cost nothing (or don't dunk your digestive biscuit in your tea for longer than 2 seconds!).

Tell us something we don't know about you! Well I used to be a bit of Punk Rocker, but only on a part-time basis, as I was still at school and my parents (quite rightly) didn't allow me to attend school with spikey hair and strange eye makeup! However, the Doc Martens were soon hung up in favour of the fashion of the 80's – big hair and even bigger earrings, not sure which image was worse.

The letters of your first and last name come at the end of the alphabet. If your name and surname began with C and D instead of a V and a W, what would you like to be called? Well certainly not Cruella Deville – how about Countess De'Val?

If you could go back in history and have dinner with anyone, who would you choose and where would you take them? Both sets of grandparents as sadly I never knew them and to be able to chat and learn from them would be a dream come true and a very special moment. I could say one of Edinburgh's finest hotels, but I'd rather gather round the kitchen table.

If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be? An artist, I would love to be able to sketch.

What radio station do you listen to and why? I like Absolute Radio, as it plays a lot of 80's music, always good to sing along to (and dance on occasion, usually whilst preparing a meal). I also like Radio 2 – definitely a sign of maturity these days.

What has surprised you most about the work of a church secretary? It is certainly varied, but I never thought it would also require me to be Bob the Builder, Fireman Sam, and on occasion, Sanitation Inspector – guaranteed never a dull moment.

What would constitute a 'perfect' day for you? Ending it with a smile in the satisfaction that all the day's little tasks are completed.

What do you value most in a friendship? Loyalty.

Your top three websites are...? All shoe websites, e-bay and TripAdvisor.

If you could try out any job for a day, what would you like to try? I'd love to be a Forensic Scientist, even just for a day.

What's the best decision you ever made? (apart from deciding to answer these questions!) That's easy! Best decision I made was marrying David.



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2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN AND CHALLENGES

by John Needham

Stewardship & Finance, as the name suggests, is not just about looking after our funds. However, as a follow up to our recent Stewardship of Treasure campaign this article does focus on the challenges we face as a congregation regarding finance. We want to share the successful outcome of the recent campaign. However, it is vital we also update you on some of the challenges we face together as a church.

Income

In terms of success, the 2016 Stewardship campaign has resulted in an increase in commitments from members totalling £26,176 (including Gift Aid). This was our first such appeal for increased regular giving since 2011 and we are extremely grateful to everyone who has contributed in any way. If you haven't managed to revise your giving there is still time to do so.

Whilst it is pleasing to see such an increase, our Ministry & Mission contribution will also increase in line with this additional income, leaving around £13,000 available to meet future expenses. The challenges we face are further evidenced by the fact that only 7.8% of members increased their contributions this time around and 50% of members only feel able to contribute less than £5 per week.

During the past year we have benefitted from legacies totalling almost £9,000. This is obviously a sensitive subject but we would pray that all members and adherents would consider making provision for a legacy if they make or amend their Will, such that we might continue to pursue specific projects to further our work at St Michael's.

Costs

Whilst we are fortunate to be the stewards of a magnificent church and halls complex we face significant costs in maintaining both. It is clear from the Table below that we will need to continue to raise additional funds to avoid the need to reduce our reserves for running expenses and projects.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 Forecast
Costs	323,335	333,819	346,204	352,356	338,973
Income	329,453	345,862	350,631	336,384	336,359
Surplus/(Deficit)	6,899	12,043	4,427	-15,972	-2,614
Project Funds Raised	N/A	67,305	279,819	35,403	32,000

We will pursue all possible sources of external funding (grants etc.) although many grants are conditional on significant contributions from 'own' funds. As such we intend to develop proposals for events in 2017 aimed at raising funds for specific purposes. Your support for these events is extremely important so watch out for details in due course.

In considering the challenges we have examined all income and costs carefully. Our other main sources of income from Cross House lets, weddings and donations in the church, will be managed carefully but are unlikely to generate sufficient regular income to cover future increases in regular and one-off expenses. On the cost side we have cut variable costs significantly but may have to go further. We have also engaged Margot Robertson from the Church of Scotland HQ so that we benefit from her experiences across the country. In the circumstances we will need to continue to review and challenge all spending whether that be for running costs, external activities we support or one off items.

Reducing Numbers

One of the greatest challenges we face is reducing membership numbers (regular donors have decreased in number by 37% since 2001) and the fact that the average age of our members is increasing (regular income from members has decreased by £3,000 pa in the past year as a result of donors passing away). Given this trend it is essential that we look to explore all avenues to increase participation from within and beyond our existing congregation. To that end it is heartening to see the success of the likes of 'Messy Church' and 'Seedlings' as examples of what can be achieved; however much more will be required to replace the membership and income we have lost.

2020 Vision

To end on an optimistic note, 2017 provides a fantastic opportunity to focus on the 775th anniversary of the founding of our church in Linlithgow. This anniversary represents a real chance for every member to reflect on our contributions of Time, Talents and Treasure towards delivery of our 2020 Vision.

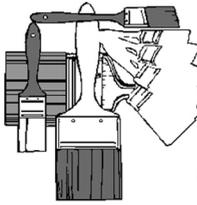


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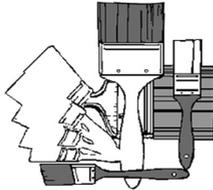


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DRAMA@STMIKES

by Anita France

I've been asked where drama@stmikes came from. The name obviously reflects music@stmikes but it all began in the time of Ian and Lorna Paterson, when the first drama group was born. Alan Miller and I were the organising force and small groups did sketches, especially encouraged by the late Rev Randal Gauld, but people got busy, some left and the whole thing died, quietly.

The re-birth began with Sarah Gillan's wonderful production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.' This brought people together, exploring the use of music and drama in worship, not just during the services. It also showed how much talent is available. Actors, singers, painters, costume designers and dressmakers, also people who willingly gave their time to heave scenery about, sell tickets, provide refreshment and other vital jobs often overlooked.

Inspired by this enthusiasm, Alan wrote a Nativity Pantomime, but chose to take a part rather than direct, leaving me as Director. At first I was terrified; it's a big step from directing a sketch to a two-act Panto but I received so much help and encouragement, and people were so enthusiastic that I soon started to enjoy myself (while still being terrified).

By then the organising group included Alison Miller and Alison and John Parkinson and we decided to do another major production in two years' time – 'The Seed Must Die' by Jenny Robertson performed at Easter 2016. Until then I hadn't realised the talent we have in our teenage and younger Church members. Who can forget Mary Magdalene belting out her songs, young disciples giving the parts so much energy and enthusiasm and last, but certainly not least, two younger children running down the aisle to Jesus and keeping certain Pharisees right during their dance.

Thus began drama@stmikes in its present form. Drama sketches during morning and evening services, not only acted but also directed by the youth group. In two years' time we hope to do another major production, but I'm not saying what it is yet. I will say it's a collaboration between music and drama@stmikes and we're all excited by it. You will find out more in another year's time.

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SUNSHINE SINGALONG

FOR MEMORY

by Norma Costley

*'When you're smiling, when you're smiling
The whole world smiles with you'*



Cheryl approached me at the beginning of this year to ask if I would like to be involved in The Sunshine Singalong, a new initiative which takes place on the second Thursday of every month from 12 noon until 13.30 in the Kirk Hall.

The aim of the group is to seek to improve the quality of life for people living with memory loss and their carers within our church family, in our

community and beyond through fellowship and music. No church connection is needed. Research has proven that the singing of favourite songs from the past can stimulate memory and even improve speech in those who are finding it harder to communicate. In addition, there is a feel-good factor when singing with others.

We start at 12 noon with a light finger lunch organised by the Fellowship Team. Sandwiches, sausage rolls and tray bakes are offered along with tea or coffee. We are also very grateful to Greggs who have agreed to provide an end-of-day donation each month. The colour scheme on the tables is red and yellow which not only helps create a bright, welcoming scene in the hall as people arrive, but these colours provide an important contrast to help identify plates and napkins. Lunch lasts around 40 minutes and is a perfect way for those attending to get to know one another. There is no charge for lunch but we are grateful for all the donations we receive.

Lunch is followed by approximately an hour of singing. We move from the tables into a circle and we sing a wide variety of songs – Scottish songs, songs from musicals, music hall songs, wartime songs, even Beatles songs and we are supported by the enthusiastic Sunshine



Singers and Angus Robertson on the piano. Marshall Green projects the words of the songs onto the wall which leaves us hands-free and able to follow the actions to 'The Hokey Cokey' and 'One finger, one thumb keep moving'!

There is a lot of smiling and fun at the Singalong! We manage to sing 14 or 15 well-known songs. I research and share a bit of information about each song as we catch our breath between one song and the next. Did you know for example, that Harry Lauder, famous for 'I love a lassie', was the highest paid performer in the world in 1911 and the first Scottish artist to sell one million records? Audience



participation is encouraged at all times and last month we were introduced by one of the group to actions for 'My Bonnie lies over the Ocean' which was lovely. For the chorus of 'She'll be coming round the mountain' we made a very joyful sound with a variety of percussion instruments. The most laughter is heard at 'One finger, one thumb' which speeds up with each verse, making it almost impossible for the Sunshine Singers to get the actions in the right order! Cheryl was given the task of producing the train noise with a toy train in 'The Runaway Train' with little success, so we will try and have more luck with someone else in charge next time!

This new initiative is open to all and those attending so far have enjoyed it. In November we welcomed the Thursday group from St Michael's Day Care to the Kirk Hall, and in January Linlithgow Care Home will join us too. Our numbers are growing rapidly, but there will always be room for you and the person you care for. If you feel you would benefit from joining us on the second Thursday of every month, we would be delighted to see you. If you know of anyone you think might benefit, please pass on our details to him or her or bring them along. You will see a red and yellow banner advertising the Singalong hanging from the windows of Cross House during the week when the Singalong takes place.

Living with memory loss is a frightening and isolating experience for both the person affected and their carers. We aim to provide a safe place once a month where people living with memory loss and their carers can socialise with others who share similar challenges.

If we can help those attending to engage in an activity which brings stimulation and pleasure, then we are showing as a church that we care. This is highlighted by the amazing response we have had from our large team of volunteer helpers, to whom Cheryl and I are very grateful. Cheryl offers pastoral support and care to families if needed and she plans to offer dementia sensitive services of worship in St Michael's in the near future.

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HELP NEEDED!

by Pat Brough

There are many ways of attracting volunteers. There was Lord Kitchener's extended arm which encouraged a generation to go to war. Then there is the 'you, you and you' method which gathers rather reluctant help.

At St Michael's we ask and hope that members will respond to help the Church they love.

Twenty-five years ago people were taking early retirement, others were made redundant. Some found they had some spare time and volunteered to help in and around Cross House and the Church. Unfortunately years later, backs, hips and knees are complaining painfully.

Help is needed urgently at the PA desk. It is important that everyone in Church can hear every word that is spoken and it is thanks to the operator of the PA system (in a very comfy chair) that this happens. No experience is required as training will be given. Approach the PA desk on Sunday following the service and you will be received with open arms.

Most of the decoration in Cross House is done by volunteers, and if you love painting, this is your opportunity to put your expertise to good use. The Manse garden is tended by unofficial gardeners and they would welcome some extra green-fingered assistance.

If you would like to be in contact with children there several opportunities – Sunday Club, Boys' and Girls' Brigades and also helping at the Parent and Toddlers Group on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Baking is a very useful talent at Church events and Coffee Mornings. February is the start of the Coffee Morning season and all baking is welcomed. Many volunteers are needed to make teas and coffees – in Cross House, in Church between services and on Thursdays following the Time of Stillness at 2pm.

The Open Church organisers would welcome new faces to help keep the Church open throughout the year. New individuals are always matched with an experienced volunteer.

The flower arrangers would be pleased to see new ladies (or gentlemen) joining their ranks, as would the Choir and even the Magazine Committee. Volunteering is a good way of getting to know new people and learn about the complex organisation that is St Michael's.

Some phone numbers you may need are on the inside back page of the magazine or contact the Church Office or Session Clerk, Elma Birrell, who will be able to help.



SOUL SURVIVOR 2016

by Morag Mayland



Have you ever sat calmly in the middle of a campsite while tents blow over in gale force winds? Or laughed with your friends over a pot of barbeque pulled chicken? Neither had I until Soul Survivor Scotland this year.

Soul Survivor is a Christian organisation running events for young people, youth leaders etc to grow closer to God and Jesus, and to discover more about themselves spiritually. Every summer they run at least five events in the UK to worship God, learn about Christian living, pray for one another and to just have fun! Each event lasts 5 days with 2 main meetings per day, as well as seminars and other great venues and activities. In Scotland we camped in tents while the main meeting was held in a massive circus tent.



I had been to a few Scripture Union camps but this was my first time at Soul Survivor, and I was concerned beforehand about the camping part. I hadn't been camping since I was nine years old, and that was in the dry Canadian summer – never before in Scotland. Many of my friends who do Duke of Edinburgh or had been camping before had told me horror stories of camping trips involving clothes drenched with rain and tents collapsing in the wind. My mum had checked the weather forecast, and it predicted gale force winds... oh boy!



Luckily our tents survived these winds and none of our clothes got drenched (much). In fact, it was probably one of the best moments of the summer holidays for me! The seminars were interesting and appealed to wider audiences (not always the case for some Church services) and the main meetings were always captivating and emotionally moving. I, personally, favoured one of the main speakers, Mike Pilavachi. He is a food lover, much like myself, and always entertained the audience as he spoke about God. But no one could forget his very attractive and charismatic companion, Andy Croft. Together they put on quite a show.



Besides the fascinating seminars and main meetings, the venues were awesome!! Soul Survivor Scotland was held at Lendrick Muir this year, making outdoor activities available. For example, we were camped right beside a Go-Karting track. The site also had a movie playing every night, so one night some of our group went to watch 'Inside Out'. It was great, if a bit chilly.

But the camp also held some slightly bigger activities. I went to my first ever Colour Chaos and Silent Disco at Soul Survivor. A Colour Chaos is, I think, inspired by colour festivals that take place in India. Basically, some of us put on a clean white t-shirt and headed to the big field outside of the circus tent. There we were given a packet of coloured powder and we all huddled with other groups. Then, after a countdown, we all opened our packets and flung the powder in the air. It was quite a sight, and an insane experience. At first, the sky was full of colour and the powder hung in the air for a bit, but then everything merged together, the powder fell back onto us and it was breathed in. We all came out of it completely covered in powder, some more vibrant than others. We were masterpieces even Picasso would be proud of.

The Silent Disco was another favourite. It was held in the circus tent and you were given a pair of wireless headphones on the way in. On the side of the headphones was a switch, so you could switch between DJs. No music was playing out loud, only in the headphones. So you had half of the tent dancing and singing to one DJ's choice of music, and the other half singing and dancing to the other DJ's complete opposite choice of music. It was quite a sight when you took off the headphones!

But other than the fantastic dance moves, I gained lots of amazing memories and friends. I managed to grow closer to my Church Youth Group and befriended the other Church group that we went with. If there's one way to grow closer to people, then I definitely believe it's through late night chats. Sitting in dim lighting, inside a gazebo with three layers on, and just chatting is probably my favourite part of the trip. Trips like these that bring people closer and make bonds stronger.

If the 2017 trip is just as good (or even better) than this trip to Soul Survivor, then nothing can stop me from going. Maybe I'll see you there!



BIBLE AT BREAKFAST

The Bible at Breakfast meets bi-monthly in the Adam Room of Cross House for a first-rate Saturday morning breakfast followed by an interactive study of a Biblical text that speaks to our lives today, exploring questions and sharing conversations. Our first ever session was on Valentine's Day 2016, when we looked at famous couples in the Bible. Future dates for Bible@Breakfast are planned for the second Saturday in March (11th) and May (13th) in 2017, at 9:30am.

All welcome!

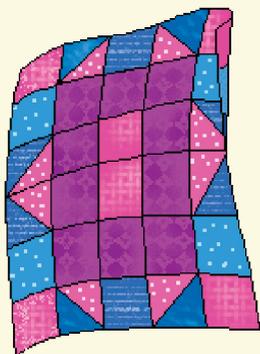
UNDERSTANDING TODAY

What is it to be a person of faith in the 21st century? We seek to understand our experience in a world marked by division, violence and uncertainty. Our first session, in October 2016, was with the Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Convenor of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland, on the theme of 'Responsibility of the church to the nation in a time of political change'. At our next sitting, on Saturday 10th December, Dr John Parkinson, a research scientist and elder, led us on 'Dialogues on purpose and meaning in the technological, scientific and digital age'. Future dates are planned for 11 February and 8 April 2017, at 9:30am in the Adam Room of Cross House. A light breakfast is served.

All Welcome!



PRAYER QUILTS



The idea of producing small Prayer Quilts in response to a specific request for a quilt for a particular individual has been developed in recent months by a small group of quilters. To recap – a small lap quilt is made and the layers joined by knots and, as each is tied, a prayer is said for the intended recipient, making it a very personal response to an individual need.

A small wall-hanging has been completed and hung in Room 1/5 to give an idea of what is possible, although each quilt requested would be individually designed and made.

If you know of anyone for whom such a quilt would be helpful, please contact the Pastoral Care Team Convenor, Sheila Rae, in the first instance for further information. (Tel: 01506 847538 or sheila.ruth.rae@gmail.com)



PARISH

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

November

Julia Emma Anne Young, Cauldhame
Archie John Burton, Armadale



WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one



October

Caroline Spalding to Thomas Nevill

NEW ELDERS

Serve one another in love

Jillian Allatt, Kingscavil
Jane Brown, Maidlands
Clare McLay, Bailielands
Alison Miller, Avalon Gardens
Andy Tunnicliffe, Deanburn Road



REGISTER

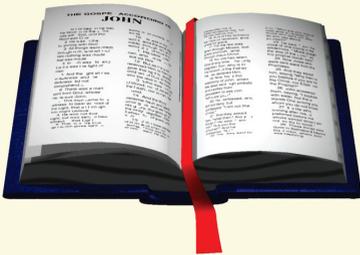


FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

October

Elizabeth (Betty) Smith, Clarendon Road
Hamish Duncan, Bo'ness
Agnes (Nan) Hay, Belsyde House
David Bell, Beechwood
Janetta Graham, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Linlithgow Bridge)
Elizabeth Gentleman, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Beechwood)



November

Heather Gordon (formerly Tod), Carse Knowe
Alistair Johnston, Edinburgh
Clive Davidson, Champany Inn

December

Elizabeth (Betty) Dilkes, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Kinloch View)
John Kerr, Wilcoxholm Farm

NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

Janice McBride, Springfield Grange
Muriel Wilson, Templar's Court
Lesley Currie, Brightons



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

All Saturdays from 10am to 12 noon in the Kirk Hall

14th January Linlithgow Academy Hockey Club
4th February Chogoria
25th February Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club
4th March Guild
11th March Friends of Girl Guiding
25th March 4th West Lothian Scouts



OTHER EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

19th	February	3pm	Girl Guides Thinking Day Service
26th	February	2pm	Music Buds performance
11/12th	March		Brides of St Michael's
29th	March	11am	Low Port School Easter Service

NEED A ROOM FOR YOUR EVENT?

Looking for a venue for a children's party?

Need a room for a meeting?

Have you thought of using the Kirk Hall or Adam Room or one of the smaller meeting rooms in Cross House? The rental rates are very reasonable.

Please contact the Church Office to discuss availability – phone 01506 842188 or email info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk.

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.

SUMMER SERVICES 2016: REVIEW

by Andrew Sutherland

During the later Summer services in St Michael's we circulated a questionnaire asking the congregation for their thoughts on their Summer worship experiences. Thank you to all who responded – we received 98 completed forms! The majority response was positive I am glad to say, with many constructive comments. We examined 6 areas of interest – Time of Service/Did the Service fit the Theme/Music/Length of Service/Fellowship experience/Screen and Anything Else. The results:

Time of Service

10:00 good	79	80.6%
Prefer 9:30	10	10.2%
Prefer 11:00	6	6.1%
Other times	3	3.1%
Total	98	100.0%

Music?

Good	77	78.6%
Bad	5	5.1%
Would like Family Band	12	12.2%
No comment	4	4.1%
Total	98	100.0%

Fellowship Experience over tea and coffee?

Enjoyed it	59	60.2%
Don't do it	7	7.1%
No comment or did not stay	32	32.7%
Total	98	100.0%

For you, did the Service fit the Theme?

Yes	93	94.9%
No	1	1.0%
Variable	3	3.1%
No comment	1	1.0%
Total	98	100.0%

Length of Service?

Good	78	93.9%
Longer	1	1.0%
Shorter	3	3.1%
No comment	2	2.0%
Total	98	100.0%

Screen

Good	51	52.0%
Don't like	10	10.2%
Indifferent	5	5.1%
Get TV screens	3	3.1%
No Comments	29	29.6%
Total	98	100.0%

Anything else?

2 services all the time	21	21.4%
Remain split in winter	7	7.1%
Liked a full church	20	20.4%
No extra comments	50	51.0%
Total	98	100.0%

Some quotes from the questionnaires – ‘A pleasure to worship in St Michael’s’; ‘Can our congregation sustain two services?’; ‘Drama great!’; ‘I like the buzz’; ‘Felt more like one church’ ‘Have really enjoyed worshipping over the Summer’; ‘full church = winning team’; ‘I would be very happy to see one service...’; ‘Summer experience of single service was a great success...’. The fellowship experience and the screen attracted a large number of enthusiastic comments.

Many who normally attend the 11am service commented that they particularly enjoyed coming into church with no coffee smell; and we actually got a mix of congregations which doesn’t happen between our two normal services when there is more pressure of time. It was described as ‘seeing how the other half lives’ and St Michael’s being ‘whole’, although parents with children at Sunday Club had to collect their children and couldn’t partake. (The presence of children for virtually all was positive.)

Concerning the screen there were also a lot of comments – pro and con. A particular positive for me was that it improves singing when people don’t have their heads in hymnbooks. Also some people find the hymn book heavy to hold, and people further back can actually see what is happening at the front of the Church when it is relayed via digital camera. Although there were words of praise for the operators and removers, a minority felt it a distraction when being moved; there seem to be issues about visibility depending on where you are sitting; and on some font colours.

A great response and while a very positive one on balance, it highlights the many different views held across the congregation, and the challenges involved in being together. At a time when demographics are extending the age range of our congregation I think times spent together are very valuable for both young and old – I am delighted to say that Kirk Session has approved the same format for next Summer.

Which seems a long, long distance away at the moment...

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WHAT MAKES SCOTLAND AND KOREA GREAT?

by Rev Dr JunSoo Park

With the enormous gulf between Christianity in the Judeo-European tradition and East Asian culture, indigenisation has been a dominant theme in East Asia. In China, many Western missionaries and Chinese Christians used the Confucian terminology or framework to articulate Christian theology as the goal of their endeavours. They approached Confucianism through friendship and open discussion, but their efforts were cut short by the Rites Controversy – the debate about the nature of ancestor worship.

The Opium War (1839-1842, 1858-1860) opened up the entire country by Protestant missionaries using gunboats and diplomatic pressure, but it did not necessarily open the Chinese mind. For Chinese, inheriting the Christian tradition means embracing a foreign culture and betraying Chinese cultural identity. In Japan, Jesuit priests such as Francis Xavier (1506–52) and Japanese Christians endeavoured to accommodate the language and customs of the mission field by employing Buddhist terminology. In contrast with China and Japan, Korean Christianity was recognised as a patriotic religion since it played pivotal roles in saving Korea.

In this context, ten primary school students at Eunpha Presbyterian Church were invited to St Michael's from 16-23 August 2016. Staying at Low Port Centre in Linlithgow, they participated in three major programmes. Firstly, every morning they attended Holiday Club at St Michael's, where they greatly enjoyed biblical plays, learning songs, and games in Linlithgow Peel. They presented a song they had learned, *Shine*, in Sunday morning services at St Michael's. Secondly, focusing on how the Scottish Reformation influenced the Scottish Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, every afternoon they explored Christian heritage in Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh.



Thanks to support of West Lothian Council, they also experienced kayaking on the Union Canal and visited Beecraigs Country Park and the Scottish Korean War Memorial. Thirdly, every evening they learned diverse topics such as geography of Scotland (Paul Birrell), Scottish culture and language (Mairi McFarlane), the disabled and social care in the UK (Anne and Bill Duncan), journalism in Scotland (Bob Ross) and journey through the church (John Fisher Jr). Through these programmes, students learned how Christian justice makes Scotland great. (Proverbs 14:34)

BETHANY NIGHT SHELTERS: LIVES CHANGED

by Marshall Green

Last winter 4 teams of 7 from St Michael's provided a 2-course meal for around 200 homeless of Edinburgh in the busiest in the 20 years since the Night Shelters began. This winter Bethany has increased both number of nights and capacity of the venues; with this in mind St.Michael's have done the first of 5 of 196 evenings this winter.

The following thank you was received from Bethany following our input last year:

'Thank you so much for what you have done this year - for your hard work cooking, for the use of your halls and for all you gave financially and materially. And thanks most of all for loving and showing kindness to those using the Care Shelter.

This year has seen 40% more demand than last which had been our busiest ever. On average you guys helped 48 people a night, making up to 9072 presentations in the year. Well done for making a massive impact on what is a terrible problem. The sleeping bags and blankets you donated mean that we already have enough for next year. Thank you!

Last year produced many amazing stories - names below are all pseudonyms:

Young Hamish was thrown out by his parents on Christmas Eve. He now has his own accommodation and job and has started a whole new life, attending church too! Rescued in the darkest of nights.

Grant is now in the Bethany Christian Centre four months sober, the longest since he was a teenager. Each day another reason to thank God.

Fred, also in the Centre, was so long on the street and so lost to alcohol that he had really no self-respect. He is now literally unrecognisable - full of joy, sober, clean, restored.

Life changed after life changed after life changed.

We the Shelter thank the Lord for what he has achieved through you.

I leave with two final pieces of writing - (a) by a Team Leader in early days and (b) a reflection on the very last night.

- (a) Having a week off and a lot of time to think and pray has made me write some thoughts. My first week of working changed me in a way that I couldn't have predicted. The people using our service treated each other with grace and compassion, for example giving up beds for one another

when we had limited space, giving their sleeping stuff to those without beds and telling people who couldn't get in where to find a good sleeping spot etc. When food was short people frequently said 'serve them before me' and disabled people were put at the front of the queue. People also stayed to help tidy although it was not necessary. It made me think - should we do church the way they did the Shelter? I couldn't stop praising God for all the fruits of the spirit shown in the Care Shelter in the darkest night.'

(b) from Cameron Black, Van and Shelter Manager:



On the last night the staff spent time together reminiscing and encouraging one another, rejoicing in what God had done this year. Embrace after embrace had been offered by the guests, expressing genuine appreciation for the loving care and support given by the staff.

'This is an amazing atmosphere' one guest commented.

People looked each into each other's eyes knowing that something very special was coming to an end. A group photo was taken with people making funny poses and smiling broadly - a real 'family' photograph. The guests produced a card 'For the best people we know' and there was a round of applause.

As for the future, two guys wanted to get into Bethany House and were hopeful when they heard they had spaces. Another guy who had begun stopping legal highs, was excited to be moving into the Centre when his Housing Assessment was complete. Stories of hope were the order of the day.

Through the guests chatting to the staff it was decided that to mark the last night of the Shelter the staff should pray. The Team Leader led a silent room in prayer, thanking God for each life in the room and for the Shelter, touching the hearts of all there. After lights-out the staff sat silently in the dark as guests slipped off into peaceful sleep. Something very special had been experienced by everyone there - people brought together by situations tumbling beyond their control. Thank you and God bless!

OUR FINAL LANDTRUST PROJECT

by Jim Rae

The national press reported recently that the Palace of Westminster, including the Elizabeth Tower which houses 'Big Ben', requires remedial fabric and building services renovation at an initial estimated cost of £4billion. Both Houses of Parliament will require alternative accommodation for at least four years. Our fabric problems with our Church properties do exist, but not to the same extent as these buildings in London. Buildings, no matter what their age, require constant attention. Failure to address problems results in further decay and increased costs to solve the issues. Low level fabric dampness is commonly found in historic buildings, and in our case the Kirkgate Flat entrance, Lighthouse and Room 1 within Cross House are thus affected. There is also an issue of dampness in the Ladies and Gents Toilets in Cross House, but this will be dealt with during the proposed refurbishment of this area at a later date.

Before the damp-proofing process could start, both the entrance to the Kirkgate and all of the Lighthouse walls to a height of two metres from floor level were stripped of plaster, revealing the random rubble stone wall construction. The walls were in a poor state and required a substantial amount of remedial work to be carried out to stabilise the crumbling lime mortar joints. The initial coat of sand, cement and water-proofing render was applied to provide a sound fixing base for the damp-proofing membrane to be fixed to, with further coats of render and plaster being applied to give a finished surface suitable for decoration. A damp-proof membrane was fitted into the wall below floor level containing the dampness.



Prior to work commencing in Room 1, the chimney required to be cleared of debris. It proved difficult to engage a chimney sweep who was willing to take on the cleaning and checking of the three-storey building flues, but eventually we managed to engage the services of JH Chimney and Roofing Services from Prestonpans, East Lothian. Joe Harte and his assistant, John, had previously worked on the chimneys at the House of the Binns and came highly recommended.

Thirty seven bags of tinder dry twigs, paper, plastic, vegetation, bird skeletons and loose stones were removed from the Room 1 chimney and six similar bags from the chimney in Room 5. Both flues had been capped many years ago but not cleared of debris at that time; this prevented free movement of air through the chimney which allowed dampness to take hold in the structure. The flues are now clear, capped at termination level and vented at low level within the rooms.



The decorative wooden panelling in Room 1 was removed in order to expose the stonework and fireplace opening. This wall was of sound construction, and the new damp-proofing membrane was securely fixed to it. New plasterboard, complete with a skim plaster finish, was installed to a height of one metre above the wooden panelling. It was decided to conceal fully the fireplace opening with a new timber panel finish, including a removable panel to assist flue inspection. A further ventilation louvre was fitted to allow the free movement of air through the flue. The project is complete including decoration and has achieved the required result.



The appointed damp-proofing contractor was Richardson & Starling, based in Livingston. We wish to thank their surveyor Roy Kirkpatrick for providing his expertise in guiding us through the project, and Richard, Jock and Peter for their craftsmanship in repairing and putting our building back together again.

At the time of writing this, Derek Rennie Joinery Services has been appointed to remove the fireplace and hearth in Room 5, plasterboard and apply a plaster skim finish, fit a ventilation louvre, new skirting and a removable inspection panel. The wall will be decorated and floor made good. This work will proceed when the Lighthouse and Room 1 renovations have been completed.

The objective of this project was to upgrade The Lighthouse, Kirkgate Flat entrance and Room 1 by eradicating dampness, thereby providing areas fit for purpose and decoratively acceptable for use by our congregation, external and end user organisations. We believe we have managed to achieve this.

JUST A MINUTE

Donald Burgess continues to dip into the pages of the Kirk Session minutes...

100 years ago

Tues. 12th Dec. 1916 [*Joint service of intercession*] In order to carry out the recommendation of the Commission of Assembly it was resolved to hold a united service of Intercession and Commemoration in the Parish Church on the afternoon of 21st Dec. at 3 o'clock and in further compliance with the recommendation of Assembly that the Collection be on behalf of the Scottish Branch of the Red Cross Society. It was agreed that no service be held in the Baird Hall in the evening.

[*Portrait of Dr. Niven*] The Moderator stated that he had received as a personal gift from the daughter of the late Very Reverend Dr. Niven (a former minister of this parish) an enlarged portrait of her father, and that he desired to hand over the same to the Kirk Session. The Kirk Session thanked the Moderator for his Kindness and resolved to write to Miss Niven and express their gratification at having obtained such an excellent portrait of her distinguished father for the walls of the Vestry.

50 years ago

Tues. 21st Feb. 1967 [*Assembly*] Intimation was made that Dr. Steel was to be a Commissioner at the General Assembly 1967. The Session unanimously agreed that Mr. David Cook, Sen., be Assembly Elder. Mr. Cook accepted.

The Moderator also reported that the 725th anniversary of St. Michael's Church would be observed on 21st May, that the Moderator of the General Assembly would preach at the morning service, and that the Kinneil Band would play at the evening service.

[*Assistant Minister*] A letter was submitted from Professor Blackie, Secretary of the Edinburgh Board of Practical Training, intimating that the Executive Committee of the Board had decided to designate Mr. Gilleasbuig Macmillan to serve his Probationary Year of training 1967 – 68 under Dr. Steel's supervision subject to the approval of Dr. Steel and of the Kirk Session of St. Michael's Church. The Clerk was instructed to reply that the Kirk Session welcomed the appointment. The date of Mr. Macmillan's appointment would be determined later.

25 years ago

Tues. 4th Feb. 1992 [Outreach] Approximately 40 videotapes go out from the Lighthouse every week. The distribution of Bible reading notes has increased from 3, 4 or 5, to 23, 24 or 25. Mrs. Marguerite Herd distributes recordings of Sunday Services to 14 homes. The Sunday School uses videotapes as part of their lessons and Mr. George Sheils also distributes videotapes and books at Springfield. Many people drop into the Lighthouse for a chat and for information on Christian matters. Improved accommodation is required for the Lighthouse in order to facilitate display of books and videotapes and more help is required in manning the facility. In spite of raising funds from the sale of plaster models, money is still required to purchase and replace videotapes. Kirk Session agreed to a sum of £200 and thanked Mr. Marshall Green and his colleagues for their efforts.

[Membership] Total membership as of 31 Dec. 1991 was 1710. The number of members who communicated at least once in the year was 1054, representing slightly over 61 per cent of the roll as at 31 Dec. and marginally less than last year's percentage.

(It is perhaps of interest to reflect that the total membership as of 31 December 2015 was noted as 1327 – quite a bit lower than 25 years ago. Also, though we continue to record numbers attending communion services, it is no longer possible to ascertain which members have attended at least one communion in the year. These observations may spur us on in progressing towards our 2020 Vision goal of attracting new people.)

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MECHANICAL REPAIRS, DIAGNOSTICS AND SERVICE

JUST FOR FUN!

compiled by Maureen Blake

Both newcomers to St Michael's and those who have been attending for a while can sometimes find it difficult to get to know other people in such a large congregation. It is easier in a small group and there are many opportunities to meet with just a few folk at a time. Here are four groups which although very different from each other are ideal ways of enjoying fellowship in a relaxed setting with no pressure.

The Badminton Club

The Badminton Club meets in the Kirk Hall each Tuesday evening from 7.30pm except when Kirk Session is meeting (usually the third Tuesday of the month). All ages and playing abilities are welcome. Those who are competitive will find like-minded players whilst those who prefer a more gentle approach will be equally accommodated and with plenty of laughs and light-hearted banter this is definitely activity 'just for fun'.



Between games and over refreshments there is chat and catching up on news. The core group of around 10 players will welcome anyone who would like to join them. If you would like more information then contact Irene Jenkins (842138).



'The Flock'

Venture into Room 1 in Cross House on the first Monday of every month and you will find a group of ladies round a table laughing, chatting and knitting. This is the Church Knitting Group known affectionately as 'The Flock'. When the group was initially set up by Cheryl she asked them to make a poppy fall to be used on Remembrance Sundays in our lovely church. Many of you will have seen this beautiful fall

which was dedicated at the 11am service on Sunday 9 October 2016. The fall was quite an achievement but other things happen too.

The ladies have produced some lovely articles such as shawls and other knitted items for those in hospital or house bound and children's knitwear. Cheryl organised a sale of these goods which raised money to fund the prayer cards in St Katherine's Aisle and more sales are planned. The Flock has become an integral part of the work of St Michael's where fun is had and God-given talents used. Contact Mairi McFarlane (843407) to find out more.

Thursday for Coffee

Each Thursday at 10am in Room 1 of Cross House tea, coffee and home baking is provided for anyone who would like to drop in. It is somewhere for folk to get together for a good blether and to meet up with friends! The regulars are sometimes joined by members of the church's Fabric Team who enjoy a coffee break away from the painting or other maintenance tasks that they are involved in – as do others with business in Cross House.



If you are in the town on a Thursday morning why not join them – it beats waiting for the bus home in a draughty bus shelter! Donations from attendees cover expenses and any money left over is given to good causes.

Of course, if teas and home baking are to be supplied then someone has to provide them! There is a rota of two people per week and volunteers sign up for whenever suits them. They bring a batch of baking (nothing too fancy – scones, a traybake or whatever they please), liaising with their partner so that each brings something different. Some ladies who have provided this service for many years have now retired, often now dropping in to enjoy the fellowship, and others are no longer able to help so new volunteers are always needed. If you would be willing to help with this valuable service please contact Jill Allatt (840680) who would be delighted to hear from you.



Chapters

Seven people who enjoy reading have come together to form a church book club which is open to everyone. Appropriately named 'Chapters', it meets on the first Thursday of each month from 3.15pm to 4.30pm in Cross House. At the first meeting after the summer the group discussed which books they would like to read over the following months and drew up a short list. Subsequently, each month, one book from this list is chosen for discussion at the next meeting.

At a normal meeting, the first part is devoted to discussion of that month's book. Then over a cuppa there is informal chat which can cover any topic under the sun. New members will be made very welcome so if you, too, enjoy reading speak to Cheryl or contact Sally Chambers (07732722146).

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

by Rev Ian Walker

Before I became a minister my wife, Shona, and I stayed in Mumbai for a few years. One of our abiding memories of India is of Diwali, the traditional festival of lights which greets the Hindu New Year.

At Diwali thousands of tiny lamps and candles are set alight. They float down the rivers; they light up every home and glow in every shop window. Traditionally the lamps are made in a small earthenware saucer, each with a few drops of linseed oil and a little cotton wick and I was amazed at how long these could burn.



My amazement lasted until I realised that somebody, with a small can of fresh oil, kept an eye on the lamps and if one started to flicker the saucer would be topped up and on it went.

We all need 'topping up' from time to time, don't we?

So if somebody offers a hand, don't be too proud to grasp it. If you're feeling low, don't be slow in asking a friend for help. If you see someone who looks as if he or she could use a little boost, don't be afraid to offer it.

The best news of all, of course, is that Jesus, the true light of the world, is always ready to give each of us a 'top up' so that our light continues to burn brightly.

In 2016 Diwali was celebrated on 30 October; just as we were preparing to celebrate All Saints, and, from then, right on through Advent and Christmas and up to Epiphany, we celebrate our festival of light; proclaiming that the real light of the world is Jesus and his coming brings light to its darkest corners.

As the Gospel of John puts it: 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.'

The light of Christ shines even in the darkest of places and his coming offers real possibilities of hope and peace in our homes, in our church and in our world.

A prayer from Subir Biswas, an Indian Christian.

Forgive us, Lord, when sometimes we think and act as if only we have devotion to you and to your children. We need the strength of each other to continue to serve all your creatures.

Thank you for giving us companions on the way.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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Associate Minister

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Youth Worker

Russell Shields
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Minister in Association

Rev Dr JunSoo Park
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