

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Summer 2017

Vol 20:2

*How lovely is thy dwelling-place, O Lord of hosts, to me!
The tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant, Lord, they be!
Blest are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee praise.
Blest is the one whose strength thou art, in whose heart are thy ways.*

HYMN 4 v1 & 5 from Ps 85

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SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 25th June

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 30th July
at 12:15pm
Individual Cup

Cover photograph courtesy
of Stephen Blake

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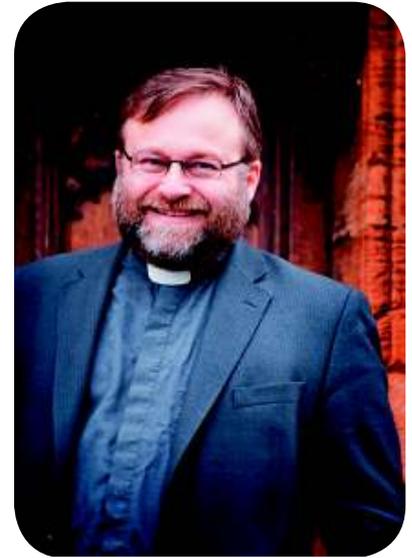
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The deadline for the Autumn 2017 issue is 2nd September 2017.

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VIEW FROM THE MANSE

Dear friends,



It is 7am and I am waving my family off to school. This has been the way of it since the Easter break, when Sarah started at Kelvinside Academy as music teacher. The kids have made the change with her, following many conversations and preparations. They are settling in – so far so good is the word. The commute is not as long as it might seem when viewed through Canadian eyes, all those long distances between places. Sarah drove between her hometown of Cobourg and Toronto throughout her undergrad years, a journey of about one and a half hours. This in her father's Volvo, a real pre-makeover tank. It means two hours for me each morning to apply myself to written tasks before the more 'public' aspects of the day begin. With Alvin it must be said, but he's no trouble.

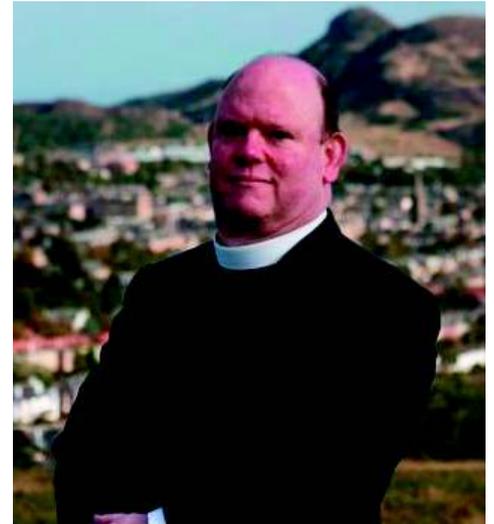
I write on the eve of the General Assembly. Jim Francis has a commission this year and is staying at the manse; Johnny Paton also has a commission and will stay with Tom Brown, our Elder commissioner. The train should be fun each day. Reading the reports (the 'blue book'), two items look set to detain us, among others. The first is a Joint Report of the World Mission Council and the Church and Society Council regarding the centenary of the Balfour Declaration (1917), seeking to engage the church in study, prayer and reflective witness toward a just peace between Israeli and Palestinian peoples. As I read it I think of our friends at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Reineh, who in hope and faith seek to further God's justice and peace in their life and work, and who help us register the urgency of the challenge, lest we view things like the Balfour Declaration as ancient history.

The second matter is the Report of the Theological Forum, which sets out 'An Approach to the Theology of Same-Sex Marriage,' asking that Assembly commend it as a resource for study and discussion. I first became aware of the report in April in Glasgow, when I saw the headline on the front page of the Herald: 'Kirk in landmark apology over gay discrimination.' It soon appeared on the Church of Scotland website, with an apology for the leak before the blue book went out. The Theological Forum says of itself that it works 'within the perspective of "Constrained Difference" seeking an area of allowable disagreement within the tradition of the Church as a whole while upholding its fundamental doctrines.'

In light of its work, the Forum will ask Assembly to instruct the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a study of matters to be addressed in any new ecclesiastical legislation, permitting Ministers and Deacons to officiate at same-sex marriage ceremonies, with a view to presenting a Report to next year's Assembly. Given the importance and sensitivity of the issue I expect the Barrier Act will be invoked, allowing and requiring Presbyteries to deliberate and vote.

By the time you read this we will know Assembly's response. For me, and many others with whom I have been in conversation, it is a question toward which the Church has been moving for some time, and calls for prayerful and respectful dialogue. None of us, or few at any rate, will dive in: we will need to listen for each other, as well as to each other. And for the voice of the Lord speaking to us today.

Moderating our sessions will be the (soon to be) Right Reverend Dr Derek Browning who, fresh from Assembly, will have visited us on Pentecost Sunday,



*Right Reverend
Dr Derek Browning*



Alison Murray

to help us celebrate the 775th anniversary of the consecration of St Michael's. I pray him the grace and wisdom of Christ, and this is my prayer for us all.

I also say a prayer of thanksgiving for all of God's servants, local and global, engaged in furthering the mission, ministry and service of Christ our Lord. If I may name two, I give thanks for the outstanding service of Alison Murray, a St Michael's elder, in the Office of the Principal Clerk of General Assembly over many years. Along the way she has supported sixteen Moderators as their personal assistant with 'tact and aplomb... and not a little firmness!' As the blue book's tribute states, we owe her an enormous debt of gratitude.

I also give thanks for the life and work of David Ferguson, mission partner in Japan with the Overseas Mission Fellowship, for his prayerful discipleship of Christ, faithful service in proclaiming and living the Word of God, and profound understanding of the things of the Lord. May God bless his family now and always.

Your friend,

SUNDAY CLUB

by Anne Sutherland

Sunday Club has been running for two years. It is open to all children aged 3-11 years; while this wide age range can present challenges for leaders in developing learning opportunities for all, it has been successful in fostering a true sense of church family. Older children actively nurture younger members, helping new people to feel cared for and sharing knowledge of what they have already learned.

What we do

Each week we hear a Bible story linked to a theme to help with our daily lives. The ministry team uses this theme, helping us achieve a joined-up approach to learning. In August we learned the story of Jacob's dream. Thinking about making time to praise God, we tried out real stones for pillows and discovered that surprisingly they weren't too uncomfortable! We heard about Joseph and his brothers, touching on themes like: favourites and jealousy (is it right for someone to have favourites and what can we do when we feel jealous?) using our gifts to do the right thing, and forgiving... family problems don't change much!



During Advent we had super fun making decorations and cards as we picked up the Advent themes of peace, hope and joy. More recently we have learned about Paul and his travels with themes of not being afraid of change and God always taking care of us, as in Paul's case even during an earthquake.

During the summer, Sunday Club changes in name only, the format remaining the same. Last year we learned about the Fruits of the Spirit and this year our theme is Super Heroes. Children can be dropped

off in the hall at 9.15am and picked up again at 10.40am. If you know of anyone who might want to join us, we will make them very welcome. Also if you would like to help as a leader, please get in touch.

What you could do... please

Please pray for all children in Sunday Club, that they will know how much they are loved by God and that in time they will have a true and lasting friendship with Jesus which will last their entire lives. And also please pray for the energy levels of the leaders to be sustained along with enthusiasm and inspiration. Thank you.

GIVING ONLINE

by Andrew Jones, Gift Aid Convenor

Have you heard? St Michael's has moved even further into the Internet age with two exciting new ways of giving in support of the church's work. The details are already out there, but in case you've not seen them, let me tell you the details:

Online Donations through the website

We've linked up with *Stewardship*, a Christian charity that offers fundraising services to churches across the country. Now at the foot of every page on the new St Michael's website – stmichaelsparish.org.uk – you will find a red 'support us at give.net' button. Clicking on this takes you to a give.net page where a donation to the church can be made. Our link-up with *Stewardship* means that they securely process all the debit and credit card transactions on our behalf, handle Gift Aid where appropriate, and send on the funds at regular intervals (less a small amount in respect of the card fees). As all the processing is carried out by *Stewardship* it is also possible for donations to be marked as anonymous, the funds are then remitted to the church (with Gift Aid if applicable) but no details of the donor are shared with anyone at St Michael's. And all of this even works on smartphones.



This new facility doesn't replace any of the existing giving arrangements, but is intended as an additional channel for those individuals and occasions when online card payments are more appropriate. We hope that it will attract the attention of visitors to the website, be of use to anyone who prefers to give by card, or wishes to donate without revealing their action to anyone in St Michael's – or even those who have their smart phone and card to hand but no cash on a Sunday morning when the collection comes round!

Shop Online (and support St Michael's at no extra cost)

Supporting the church online is not just about direct payment: for an entirely different way of giving to the church without paying anything extra, how about giving whilst you shop online? Through our new link with *easyfundraising*



whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be collecting free donations for the church.

Easyfundraising has over 3,000 shops and sites on board ready to donate, including Amazon, John Lewis, Aviva, thetrainline and Sainsbury's – and it doesn't cost you a penny extra!

It's as easy as a, b, c...

- a.** Head to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmichaelslinlithgow/> and join for free.
- b.** Every time you shop online, go to *easyfundraising* first to find the site you want and then to start shopping.
- c.** After you've checked out, that retailer will make a donation to the church at no extra cost to you whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and St Michael's will benefit from your purchases. Why not give it a try the next time you log on to go shopping?

As I've already mentioned, these new schemes are in addition to the existing giving arrangements, which continue as before. And please remember that your regular giving can be adjusted at any time, **in either** direction. If you'd like more details of either of the two new schemes, or about giving to the church in other ways (e.g. standing orders or freewill envelopes) please get in touch with me in confidence, by phone on 840914, email on andrew59jones@gmail.com, or look out for me in the church on a Sunday morning. As a well-known grocery enterprise represented in the town is fond of saying 'every little helps'.



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HOLIDAY CLUB 2017

by Russell Shields

Yo, ho, ho, it's time for some fun! Landlubbers are getting ready to set sail!

From Monday to Friday 14-18 August in Cross House the Linlithgow Churches Holiday Club will run a pirate-themed programme from 10am-12.30pm each day. Although the outlook may seem familiar, there are big changes to the club this year.

A Day at Sea:

The timing is as before, but what we do during that time will change. With adults finding it harder to help over the years, we're hoping to make it easier for everyone whilst keeping the fun. This year we're changing the format to spend more time in 'stations'. Each station will have a leader, freeing group leaders to focus on encouraging and helping the kids. So we will still have our usual songs, games, crafts, drama, challenges, story-telling, discussions and more. This year we hope that it will have even more fun – and friendships as well.

Young Pirates:

Everyone who has just finished P1-P7 is welcome to join the crew. We'll get to enjoy all of our favourite activities and make some friends. With the new format we'll still be providing a brilliant programme for each age group, similar to what we've done over the years in the Club and Xchange.



We try to make sure that we provide the best care for each child so please get in touch if you have any questions. If your child wants to join us then please register him/her in advance, so that we can provide the best club for everyone there. I've already had young people excitedly asking if Holiday Club is running again so why not come along and see the fun for yourself? **To contact us or to register your child to come then please read the information at the end of this article.**



Youth Leaders:

Another change is that we've expanded our leaders' age range to include people in S1! Now young people in S1-S2 can be runners and help the club work. Young people in S3-S6 play a hugely important a role as well. We've had some great leaders grow through this club and the energy and enthusiasm they bring is infectious. We really appreciate the involvement of all the young leaders; if you'd like to join the crew then please register so that we can provide everyone with what they need and get the team going. **To register a young leader please read the information at the end of this article.**

Adult Helpers:

The club cannot run without the generosity of people in the town and surrounding areas to give up their time and skills to help. We need you!

With the new format there will be less pressure on people in planning and on the day, so please sign up and help. There are loads of roles and all personalities, ages and skill sets are helpful. Unfortunately not all tasks have much involvement with the kids but all are essential to help them have fun and learn more about God. Please consider what help you can offer and get in touch. Some of the roles we have at the club include:

- Craft team
- Admin
- Group helpers
- Story telling
- Crèche for team children
- Team and kids' refreshments
- Prayer support
- AV
- Band
- Group leaders



Anyone over 18 involved in working with children must have a PVG with one of the churches; please let us know ASAP if you'd like to help as this can take some time. **To register as an adult helper please read the information at the end of this article.**

Family Day:

After last year's successful Family Day, we're planning to run another one following Holiday Club this year – on Saturday 19 August. For more details please keep an eye on our new Facebook Page, see below for details.

Registering and Information

To make it easier to keep information about this club up-to-date we've moved away from our website and are now running a Facebook Page and have a new email contact. For up-to-date information, registration forms or to discuss anything with the club managers please contact the Linlithgow Churches Holiday Club through the Facebook Page: **www.facebook.com/LCHCScotland** or on our new email address: **LCHCScotland@gmail.com**

We hope you can join us in August!

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BUSY BEES

by Mairi McFarlane and Jean Aitken



Each year Cheryl, our Associate Minister, gives the knitting group a project. Last year it was the beautiful poppy fall for Remembrance Sunday. It was a huge success and shared on Facebook as far as Australia, with over 850 'likes'. This year we have two projects. One is knitting soft toys to be sold to fund prayer cards; the other is linking up with the community via Burgh Beautiful.

After a break of two years, Burgh Beautiful (BB) is entering Linlithgow into the Beautiful Scotland competition, the theme of which is 'Birds, Bees and Trees'. Judging will take place in early August. BB hopes to involve as many community groups as possible, helping to make the local environment a pleasant one for residents and visitors.

Back in autumn 2016, a couple of BB's volunteers attended a 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' seminar/awards ceremony in Stirling (you may recall that Linlithgow won an 'outstanding' award for 3 of last year's flower beds in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' competition). There they were inspired by the work and ideas of other gardening teams throughout Scotland. When some of BB's volunteers learned about St Michael's knitting group, the Flock, they saw potential for collaboration and so, earlier this year, we were invited along to share thoughts.

As a result, as well as knitting toys for sale at Christmas, several members of the talented Flock team are busy generating knitted/crocheted plant pots complete with flowers, busy bees and ladybirds. We plan to display these works of art in the windows of retail units along the High Street, illustrating continuity and demonstrating support for this year's competition theme. Shopkeepers have already been shown samples of the Flock's work and are all extremely happy to be involved. Indeed a few shopkeepers intend to create a themed window display featuring the group's handiwork. Look out for evidence of this 'joined up' effort in the High Street from June onwards.



This is an excellent example of the Church's outreach and community involvement which will raise its profile, not to mention a further demonstration of the knitting group's imaginative and creative abilities!



Have a look at BB's website (www.lct.org.uk/burgh_beautiful) and Facebook page for photos and further updates relating to the Flock's creations, as preparations intensify over the coming months to make our town even more beautiful. Also visit St Michael's own website, www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk.

REGENT MOTORS

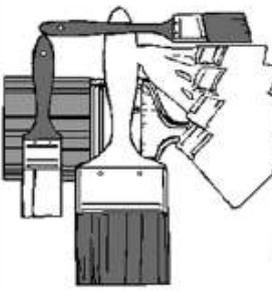


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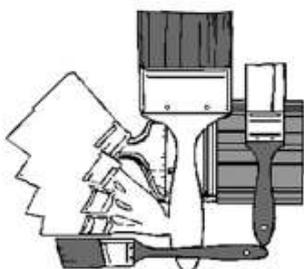
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UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT



Under the spotlight this time is one of our Safeguarding officers, Alison Tunnicliffe.

Describe your new role in Safeguarding at St Michael's in three words.

Protection for all.

When you are not keeping us right with safeguarding and going about your elder duties, what is your day job? I carry out action research with teachers to improve the education of children growing up in disadvantage.

How long have you been coming to St Michael's? 8 years.

What is your first memory of St Michael's? When we were buying our house the solicitor told us that she had heard there was an excellent toddler group in St Michael's so I phoned up and got a place. I went to toddlers for a few weeks, then when I went to my first Sunday service it was lovely to see the familiar friendly faces of the helpers.

You are now an elder at St Michael's. What do you enjoy most about being an elder? Visiting the people in my district.

You share your safeguarding role with your husband Andy. Name three things you and Andy have in common, apart from your two lovely children. We love the countryside. We like to cook. We both find ourselves hilarious.

Where did you meet your husband Andy? We both worked in the petroleum engineering department at Heriot-Watt. He would pop into my office 'on his way' to the sweetie machine (two floors below me). I fell for his smile and the mischievous twinkle in his eye.

Apart from your children, for what in your life do you feel most grateful? Good health of those I love.

What would constitute a 'perfect' day for you? At the moment life is busy, so a simple day that includes a walk in the country, a book, an open fire and a cuddle sounds lovely.

If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability, what would it be? To fly.

What is your most treasured childhood memory? Spending time in Galloway with my grandparents. Lots of home baking, fresh air and guid music.

Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest? Jesus.

Would you like to be famous? In what way? Not while I'm alive, but maybe after I'm gone for writing a great book.

You've been involved in our music group music@stmikes. When did you last sing to yourself? And what were you singing? There are always songs and tunes in my head and sometimes they escape. You'd have to ask my family which notes have escaped most recently.

Do you have an all-time favourite hymn? If so, what is it and why? 'Be still for the presence of the Lord'. Lovely tune and reverential words.

Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? I'd love to camp under the northern lights.

What three websites do you visit most often? Google, Twitter, fitbit.

What is the greatest accomplishment of your life? Successfully switching careers from research chemist to education researcher after a seven-year career break.

What do you value most in a friendship? Loyalty.

You have to spend a month on a desert island. Name three items (not people) you would have to take with you. Violin, Bible and an axe.

Do you have a favourite verse or passage from the Bible? What is it and why?

'Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord' (1 Thess. 4:17). I was able to give comfort to someone by showing them this verse, and I myself am delighted by these words.

And last but not least tell us your favourite knock knock joke.

Knock knock
Who's there?
Boo
Boo who?
Aw, don't cry.



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STEADFAST

— COMMITTED OR UNCHANGING?

by Jamie McIntosh

What do you think of when someone mentions Boys' Brigade? An old-fashioned group that's stuck in the dark ages... or an organisation that has continually developed over 133 years? I like to think the latter, but I am biased!

How do we continually develop? In January 2016 we launched our Facebook page. At first, this was to improve how we communicate with parents/guardians – no more notes lost at the bottom of a bag! But it's become so much more. Let me tell you.

Content – we post photos of what Boys have done, we share information, every week we have a Bible verse of encouragement. Whatever the content, it must have a link to Boys' Brigade.

Security – five of our leaders are the only ones with access to post on our page. They manage our account, replying to messages and ensuring no-one posts offensive comments.

Analysis – you might think you write a short blurb, stick up a photo, and loads of people will 'like' it, but there's more to it. That's where Facebook Insights come in. When is the best time to post? Which hashtags are popular? What content interests people? There is a lot to learn.

So what are the results?

Growth – in 18 months we've grown to 150 likes. That's 150 people who have said they 'like' our page and want to be notified every time we add something.

Good practice – in three months we grew from 12 to 27 leaders. This was picked up by Boys' Brigade UK and shared as a recruitment success story.

Recruitment – this is the first year we used Facebook as a recruitment tool, letting people know we had spaces available. We recruited 12 Anchor Boys – our biggest intake for years.

Trending – who would have guessed that a photo of former Captain Ken Mackenzie dancing at our Display would be our most popular post of 2016? It was only beaten a few months ago when the Anchor Boys had a trip to the farm – cute fluffy animals clinched the deal.

2nd Linlithgow Boys' Brigade continually develops – changing uniform, changing programme, joining Facebook – to stay fresh and relevant. But one thing that never changes is our steadfast faith: 'an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast' (Hebrews 6: 19).

Check out facebook.com/linlithgowbb and 'like' our page. Thank you.



BRIDES OF ST MICHAEL'S 11TH AND 12TH MARCH 2017



Over 900 people came to view the 90 dresses on display and then enjoyed refreshments in the Kirk Hall.



The oldest dress (in the centre on the right) dated from 1950.



The church flower group decorated the church to fit the theme.

Photographs courtesy of Stephen Blake.





There were a few family groups – dresses of mothers and daughters like the two on the left.

One dress had been made into a christening robe.



The Ministry Team's wedding photographs were displayed on the piano.



PUB THEOLOGY

St Michael's at The Four Marys.

Starting Wednesday 27th September 2017, 7.30pm

Pub theology has been a huge success in the USA and Stewart and Cheryl are keen to try it here. Increasingly, in the States, people are rediscovering the pub as a safe, open space where they can explore philosophy, faith, and deep questions of meaning, where they can express their own doubts and questions, learn from others, and engage with other people who all think differently.

In our increasingly fractured society, these spaces are not only welcome, but needed. So we are inviting people of Linlithgow to come and bring their questions, pull up a chair, order a beer and maybe a pub meal and join us.

The format is simple: live music with Sarah and Ashleigh, beer, food if you are hungry, conversation, and God. All you need to bring is an interest in engaging with people of varying perspectives and life experiences. Our hope is that we will all be able to share your own thoughts while learning something new along the way. Further info from Stewart, Cheryl or Anne Sutherland.



A TRIBUTE TO DAVID FERGUSON

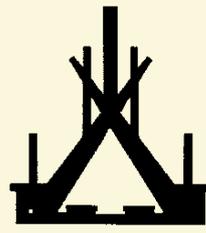
From Lorna Ferguson's May Prayer Bulletin.

As you may already know, David was called Home on the evening of 25th April. His funeral and cremation took place in Japan on 28th and 29th.

The funeral service was everything we had hoped for. It was a service of worship, a good remembrance of David, and where the gospel and goodness of God were clearly proclaimed. Daniel spoke at the Japanese service about his memories of his Dad and some of the things he had learned from him. I heard later that at church on Sunday the men were discussing what Daniel had said and were challenged to ask what sort of fathers they are being to their families.

John 12:24 says, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' May we see much fruit from David's life and testimony.

We remember in prayer Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair and the rest of the family, especially those in Linlithgow.



BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

April

Collin John Henry Allan, Dovecot Park

May

Alexis Karen Wrighton, Dyce
Andrew John Shields, Burghmuir Court



WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

April

Emma Catterall to David McIntosh



May

Fiona Bell to Andrew Blundell
Rona Hogg to Lee Hamilton
Navenka Sedgwick to Max Cubbins
Jennifer McCluskey to Thomas Harper

REGISTER



FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

April

James Rankine, Riccarton Road
John Barrett, Falkirk
Jean Mackay, Manse Road
Ken Schofield, Falkirk
David Roy, Kettil'stoun Mains



May

Maureen Nicol, Perth
William Harrison, Rockville Grove

NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

Anna Grindlay, Baron's Hill Avenue
Michael Watt, Oatlands Park
Doreen Eaglesham, Grange View



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

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

9th September Linlithgow Folk Festival Craft Fair

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

25th June	6.30pm	Linlithgow Ladies Choir
26th August	7.30pm	Antonine Ensemble
16th September	7.30pm	Scottish Chamber Orchestra
29th September	7.30pm	Hart Male Voice Choir

OTHER EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

1st, 2nd July	Spectacular Jousting at Linlithgow Palace
14th – 18th August	Landlubbers Holiday Club
19th August	Holiday Club Family Day
28th October	Messy Church

NEED A ROOM FOR YOUR EVENT?

Looking for a venue for a children's party?

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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.

music@stmikes

have progressed from 2016 into 2017 by continuing to explore more creative ways of worship and being part of St Michael's discovery of different ways of 'doing' church. We have focussed more on being part of the 'everyday' worship life of St Michael's by taking part in evening services rather than organising big events. We've also gained a sister – drama@stmikes, born from 'The Seed Must Die' under the direction of Anita France, and we've been delighted to have musicians from the Sunday Club band join us too.



Why do we think it is important to be creative in worship? Mainly because God is creative and He made us in his image, giving us skills and opportunities to explore our own creativity. The bible is full of creativity too – art, dance, music, poetry, architecture – many God-ordained talents and skills used for his purposes.

Emma Skerratt¹ is a designer and illustrator who worked with the Bible Society on a colouring calendar for 2017. She says, 'I like to see my illustration of Bible verses as a form of worship. If I am reading my Bible and read a passage that really affects me, I'll want to illustrate it. I feel like visual imagery and art can really connect with certain people and translate the message of the Bible through it in a way that really touches people. I think it is so important to make sure the Bible is accessible to everyone and if that can be aided by using

current art/illustration trends to reach people – then that's such a good reason to do it!'

Taking the opportunity to be creative can allow a fuller expression of self and faith and can encourage and develop our understanding and experience with each other and with God. This was certainly true for the cast and crew involved in 'The Seed Must Die' production last year, and it was lovely to reunite and watch the DVD on Good Friday together this year. Everyone involved was moved as we created this telling of the final week of Jesus' mortal life and we were all drawn closer together.

Drama and other creative arts can be used to bridge the gap with those who

don't know Jesus. Non-Christians can easily be invited to a play or concert or join in with choirs or dramatic productions. Christian drama and music performed in public will draw a crowd, puppets reach out and connect with children from just a few months old to children of more than 100 years old and dance reaches people in ways that words cannot.

Being creative can be a way for us to express ourselves, and our faith. It involves the use of our imagination – to 'see' where God is moving and to follow him. When used as an act of worship, it can help create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. One of the most creative expressions available to us is prayer – it brings into being that which has not previously existed and so it has been an important component of all our evening gatherings.



We should always be aiming to make something beautiful for God – work that the Holy Spirit will inhabit. We see in Exodus 31 Bezalel and Oholiab, filled by the Spirit of God with wisdom, understanding, knowledge and all kinds of artistic skills to create a structure, the Temple, for God to inhabit. We benefit so much from their successors in our beautiful Church building and from the creative gifts of many members of our congregation who look after and enhance it.

We shouldn't expect being creative to be easy. We have to take ourselves seriously and commit time and energy to what we are trying to do. We need to be humble enough to learn from others and have the courage to step out of our cosy comfort zones. In our different evening gatherings² this year, we have explored prayer and pilgrimage, stood alongside prisoners of conscience and stirred our imaginations and emotions with drama, film, pictures and music.

Our final evening gathering before the summer will be on 21 May. If you have an interest in using the arts in worship and would like to join us regularly (or occasionally), please let us know. Speak to Alison or John Parkinson, Sarah Gillan, Russell Shields or send a message to the Church Office.



Here's a chance to be creative. The Evangelical Alliance is launching its first short story writing competition, and it's open to everyone. They are looking for the Bible stories we all know and love to be dramatically retold in just 1,000 words. Closing date is 4th June 2017. More information at:

<http://www.eauk.org/idea/could-your-short-story-be-printed-in-idea-magazine.cfm> – or speak to Alison Parkinson.

Article adapted from *Idea* THE MAGAZINE OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE May/June 2017 by Alison Parkinson.

¹ <http://emmaskerratt.co.uk>

² See the posters on music@stmikes notice board in Cross House.

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drama@stmikes

by Luke Davidson



Drama@stmikes is a group that, while the current members have only been involved for a year or so, stretches back to when the late Ranald Gauld was our Associate Minister. Anita France recently wrote an article detailing what could be considered the group's history, so I won't go too deeply into that aspect. Instead, I will be looking at what the group has been up to recently, and what it means to the young people who take part.

The most notable example of what we've done as a group would be the recent Fairtrade Night, held in Linlithgow Primary School. Alongside school choirs and a guitarist from Malawi, we performed two sketches; one written and directed by Anita, comparing Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade manufacturers, and one written and directed by yours truly, focussing on the buyer and showing how they decide the fate of the farmers and their communities. I believe that the group did a very good job (but of course, I'm biased). I must say that the best part of the performance was probably getting paid in cereal bars and rocky roads!

The second thing that comes to mind is the dramas that have accompanied the various Holiday and In Service Day clubs our church runs for P1-S3s. Over the years, I have been a businessman, however that was before it took place in St Michael's, a robot, an alien with breathing problems, a prince, an eccentric older man, and in the future it is believed that we will all be pirates. The drama has been incredibly popular with the younger ones, gaining us plenty of extra members along the way.



Drama - The Last Supper

Drama@stmikes is an organisation that is very beneficial, both for the church and for the young people taking part. Drama engages the audience, and gets the point across in a relatable and enjoyable way. It is also a pleasurable experience for those acting, as one member has claimed that it made him feel like he was helping the community, whilst another enjoys the atmosphere. It also helps those of us who are hoping to do drama as a career, as our school doesn't teach drama as a subject, and thus opportunities to act are spread pretty thin.

BE FAIR WITH FAIRTRADE

by Ian Fowell



'Fairtrade – that's all about coffee, tea, and chocolate, isn't it?'

'You see Fairtrade everywhere nowadays, so the farmers must be doing all right.'

'Fairtrade is always so expensive, much more than regular products.'

These are some of the commonly-held myths which people hold about Fairtrade. And *myths* are exactly what they are, for the reality is very different.

Yes, Fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate (and sugar, and biscuits, and bananas...) are readily available nowadays, but there's so much more than that! There's wine, gold, herbs & spices, quinoa, cosmetics, footballs, flowers – in fact over 5,000 products have been licensed to carry the Fairtrade Mark in the UK.

And yes, all the major supermarkets carry a wide range of Fairtrade goods, and many Linlithgow cafés serve Fairtrade drinks, but that doesn't mean the problem has been beaten. Smallholder farmers, who produce much of the food on our table, are facing new and greater challenges. Climate change means that weather patterns are changing and becoming much less predictable. Not only is there drought – and flood – but also the rains are coming later (or earlier) and the growing season is no longer reliable.

Further, producers are at the mercy of global commodity prices and multi-national companies. For example, the decision to produce sugar from British sugar beet instead of sugar cane helps support British farmers, but is bad news for growers of sugar cane. As Britain prepares to begin to negotiate its own trade agreements, to what extent will they encapsulate Fairtrade principles? Fairtrade products might cost a little more at times, but not always – when KitKat and Cadbury's Dairy Milk went wholly Fairtrade there was no change in price; also often cheaper goods can rely on exploitation and poor working conditions.

So how does Fairtrade help? Fairtrade pays producers an agreed guaranteed minimum price if prices drop unsustainably low, but still pays the full market rate when prices are high.



That means producers can plan for the long-term viability of their business, and can obtain finance to develop their business further. Fairtrade also returns part of the profits as a Fairtrade premium, which local communities decide how to spend for maximum benefit – perhaps healthcare, or education, or business improvements. Fairtrade also promotes equality and safe working practices.

St Michael's has had a long association with Fairtrade, and is a Fairtrade Church. This means it has agreed to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee, use other Fairtrade products whenever possible, and promote Fairtrade at events and in worship. The Church already supports Fairtrade in all those ways, and holds Fairtrade stalls in the Church and at events. But equally important is the support of individual members – that is **you** – so please try to pick up a Fairtrade item or two in your weekly shop.



Our Church Fairtrade representative, Kathryn Young, is stepping down in June after 12 years of service, so if you are interested in doing more for Fairtrade in St Michael's then please get in touch.

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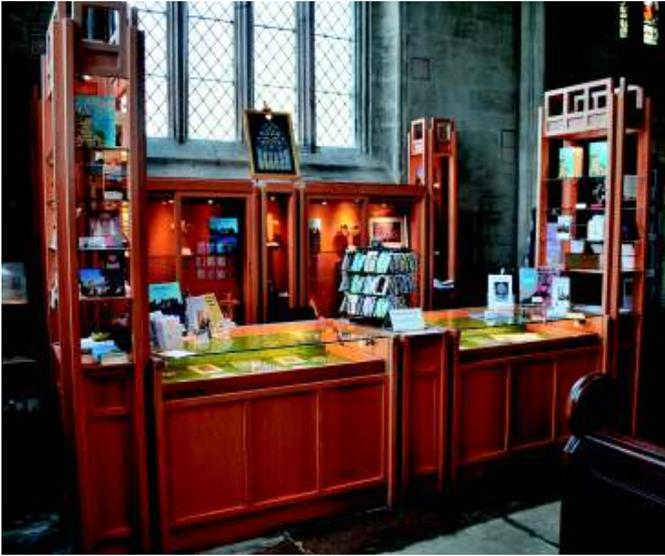
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THE CHURCH SHOP

by Pat Brough



The shop window attracted me. I entered the shop dragging a reluctant husband. After a look around, I purchased several items and was surprised to be the recipient of a paper bag, proclaiming the words 'Ely Cathedral Shop'. Later that day I discovered another shop within the Cathedral selling all the goods one would expect. Guide books, histories, CDs, DVDs, jewellery, postcards – anything that could be connected with the area and the Cathedral.

Many years ago, Churches and Cathedrals were merely places of worship but with the increase in tourism and the ever-rising cost of keeping the buildings watertight and secure, shops and cafés staffed by volunteers have developed within or close to religious centres. If a cathedral or church charges to visit the building, you can be sure that the shop is free. Occasionally the exit from the church is directly via the shop to encourage the visitor to spend, spend, spend.

The shop in St Michael's is a more modest venture. Not staffed and trusting to an honesty box, the shop has been positioned in the north-west corner for many years. Guidebooks and postcards are always available on the display case. Prayer cards and laminated cards are available on stands at either side of the shop. There are also cards with photographs of the eight needlework pictures depicting the history of the church over eight centuries.

More expensive items are kept in the display cases resting on an attractive green lining, such as a CD of French Organ Music recorded by Andrew Sutherland on the organ; there are some simple but attractive wooden crosses. Leaflets describing the Church windows are available, also information about various Church activities.

In the glass case behind the shop are some more expensive items, photographs of the Church, possible presents for a friend, more wooden crosses and wooden angels. Recently Jane and John Binnie have taken over the care of the shop, arranging and tidying the articles for sale and making it look attractive – after all that is what tempts the customer.

At Easter the display cases looked very colourful with a few eggs and yellow chickens scattered about. Thanks to their efforts Christmas should be interesting!



SOCIETY CELEBRATES

by Margaret Henderson

2017 is a significant year for the Society of Friends as it is 75 years since it was founded; there was good reason to celebrate when in February we received £2,500 from The Patron's Fund. This Fund was set up to acknowledge the work of charitable organisations for which Her Majesty The Queen acts as a Patron, on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Around £750,000 was available to distribute among nearly 300 charities and other organisations. The Fund received generous donations from individual donors, businesses, schools, community groups and the proceeds from The Patron's Lunch last June.

Sir Stuart Etherington, Chair of The Board of Trustees for The Patron's Fund, said:

'The Patron's Fund is very pleased to be able to support the Society of Friends of St Michael's with its valuable work. The Society of Friends is among hundreds of organisations for which The Queen acts as a Patron, which between them make a difference to causes and communities in the UK and throughout the Commonwealth.'

We are delighted to have the Queen as our Patron and, although we did not participate in the Patron's Lunch in the Mall, we had a wonderful afternoon in the Kirk Hall where we held our own celebration to mark this landmark birthday.

This gift will be used to offset the cost of the Boss for the West Porch trapdoor which the Society has commissioned from Mr John Donaldson who carved the Heads in Stirling Castle and the carving of HM the Queen on the pulpit. The Boss is to be dedicated at morning worship on 4th June.

We are delighted that Bruce Jamieson has agreed to produce a presentation on the role of St Michael's and the local community during WW1 with particular emphasis on the Battles of Arras and Passchendaele. Called 'Lest we forget', this is especially meaningful as the Society was formed during the dark days of WW2. As well as narrative, there will be music and songs provided by the Rugby Club Men's Choir and by Sarah Gillan. Appropriately this will be held on 10th and 11th November.

Our work continues as we develop the future focus of the Society with the aim of promoting our magnificent sanctuary and hopefully stimulating interest in others to join us. If you would like more information I would be delighted to hear from you.



JUST A MINUTE

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

100 years ago

Tues. 6th June 1917 [*At Linlithgow and within the Vestry*] In connection with the boiler for heating the church, a remit was made to the Heating Committee to invite estimates as to cost of a new boiler, and to report to next meeting. The Moderator and Mr. Miller were appointed to approach the Heritors with the view of ascertaining whether they would bear the cost of erecting a new boiler to take the place of the present one, which is so unsatisfactory.

26th June 1917 The Moderator reported that Mr. Miller and he had found that the matter of the renewal of the boiler for the heating of the church was one in regard to which the obligation lay with the Kirk Session as representing the Congregation. Mr Crichton explained in connection with the proposed new boiler for church heating, that on account of a time limit being insisted on, he had decided after consideration to accept the offer of Messrs McKenzie and Moncur for £111. The Session unanimously approved of what Mr Crichton had done. The construction of the Boiler to be proceeded with at once. Mr Crichton willingly undertook to make all necessary arrangements.

50 years ago

Tues. 16th May 1967 [*Election of Elders*] After further discussion concerning the desirability of augmenting the membership of the Kirk Session, it was agreed that seven new Elders should be elected. Thereafter, on the Moderator calling for nominations for prospective new Elders, the names of twelve gentlemen were proposed and seconded. A ballot vote was taken to determine order of preference, and the moderator was empowered to interview the first seven persons thus nominated and, in the event of any of these persons declining to be considered for election, to interview one or more of the other persons nominated, again in accordance with the agreed order of preference.

[*Assistant Minister Loan*] After hearing an explanation from the Moderator as to the circumstances which had made it essential for the new Assistant Minister, the Rev. Gillespie MacMillan to purchase a car, the Session resolved that a loan of £200 be made to Mr. MacMillan from the Congregational Reserve Fund. It was further agreed that, as Mr. MacMillan would be giving part-time service to St. Michael's for a period of approximately two months without salary, the loan would be interest free, and that it be repaid from stipend by ten monthly instalments of £20.

25 years ago

Tues. 19th May 1992 The Annual General Meeting of the Congregation took place after the 11am service on Sunday 10th May 1992. The meeting was poorly attended, with only 17 members present. It may well be prudent to look again at the approach to holding these meetings in order to attract more members, eg evening meeting, social, etc.

[Church Opening] Volunteers were invited to assist in manning the church during Sunday afternoon between 2pm and 4pm.

[STV Service] Scottish Television would record three services, midweek, on two evenings, during the first fortnight in July. Members of Session were invited to encourage people from all round the town to attend these services.

[Kirkin' of District Council] The Kirkin' of the Town Council would take place in the church on Sunday 31st May 1992 and as hosts a large presence of Elders should attend the 11am service.



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BEING LADY PROVOST

by Vicki Carlin



This is my husband's final year as Provost of the Deacons' Court and I was asked to write about the experience of being the Provost's wife.

The first official record of Riding the Marches was made in 1541, but the practice is thought to date back to the 12th century. Checking the Marches (or boundaries) was important because the council could collect taxes from those who lived in, or wished to travel through, the town. The Provost was

always the leader of the council, until 1974 when regionalisation meant that Linlithgow was no longer a county town. Luckily, some 'wise men' wanted to keep the tradition going and so permission was sought to establish the Court of the Deacons of the Ancient and Royal Burgh of Linlithgow whose main task would be the organising of the town's Annual Marches. The new Deacons Court, which has no political influence, established a new order to elect the Provost.

So what does being Provost's wife mean for me? The main task is to pin Jim into the Provost's chain on every occasion it is required! Occasionally, I get to stand beside him, but mostly I have to stand behind him.

Soon after Jim was appointed as Provost in November 2014, our first official invitation arrived – dinner at Brae Court to celebrate the anniversary of their opening. Along with Cheryl, we enjoyed a lovely meal followed by entertainment. Cheryl encouraged us to dance with some of the tenants and I found a dance partner – eventually – but Jim had no such difficulty. Two ladies (one aged 91 and the other 94) were soon arguing over whose turn it was to dance with Jim!

The main events in the Deacons Court Calendar include a Burns Supper, a Prize Bingo night at the Rose Club, the Street Fair in May, a wine tasting evening, a quiz night, a sportsman's dinner, a golf day, the Eve of Marches Dance and the Annual Ball. My challenge is to organise a Fashion Show the week before Marches Day. All these events are very enjoyable, open to anyone who wishes to apply for tickets, and all raise money to fund the day itself.



We are invited to many local events such as the Reed Band concerts and dinners to celebrate special occasions such as centenaries. There has also been a tradition of attending other special days, such as the Bo'ness Fair, Lanimer Day in Lanark and recently the revival of Riding the Marches in Edinburgh and Stirling. We have also been invited to the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood. This year, I have been invited to crown the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Children's Gala Day Queen. I'm nearly as excited as Queen Elect Ruby!

Of course, the busiest time of year is in June during the Civic Festival. There are events on every day, from the Eve of Marches dance to the Gala Day. I stock the fridge with cold meats and salads at the beginning of June and we eat when we have time.

Marches Day is of course, the main event. We are up at 4.30am and dressed, ready to welcome the flutes and drummer who have been waking up the town from 5am onwards. There is usually a crowd of around 250 and after the speeches, they all want refreshments – for some that is a whisky, but for most it is orange juice or water as it is a long day! Next comes the town piper and drummer. When they have departed, Jim and I quickly get changed for the rest of the day. The Reed Band arrives at 7.30am and plays a selection of tunes, ending with 'The Sands of Arisaig', one of Jim's favourites.



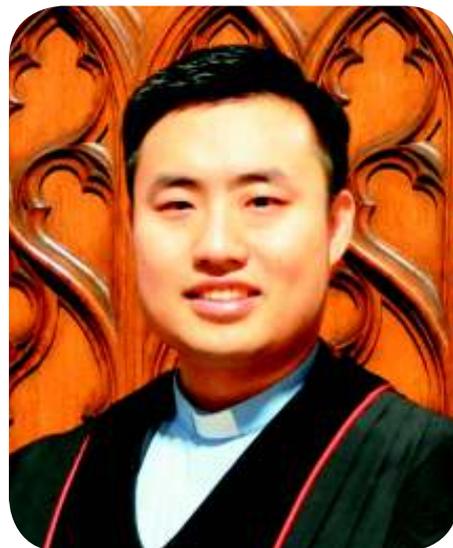
Then we head to the Burgh Halls for breakfast and speeches afterwards. We gather to fraternise at the Palace before heading back to the cross to 'fence the court'. There, I present the trophies for the winning floats and tableaux in the procession. Jim then gets into a landau and I climb onto a trailer, for what is a highlight of the day – riding through the town which is full of happy, smiling, waving people, all enjoying a unique day.

After speeches at the Bridge Inn, Linlithgow's westernmost point, we return to the Cross and I meet up with friends for lunch. At 3.45pm, I leave to host a drinks party, traditionally for the ladies, in the Burgh Halls, to welcome back the men (and women) who have been checking the boundaries at Blackness, Linlithgow's port. The final procession at 5pm winds its way three times round the cross, and is followed by more speeches to celebrate the fact that Linlithgow's boundaries are safe for another year. A fabulous day! Long live the Marches!

THE CELESTIAL CITY

by Rev Dr JunSoo Park

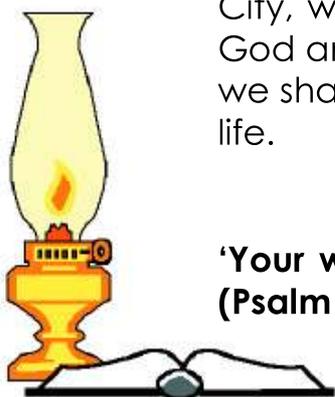
One of the most popular pieces of literature in East Asia is Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* – a historical novel set in the turbulent years towards the end of the Han dynasty and the Three Kingdoms period in Chinese history. The story dramatises the lives of feudal lords such as Cao Cao, who relied on military tactics based on Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, and Liu Bei who sought benevolence government by the man of virtue based on Confucius' teachings in attempting to replace the Han dynasty or restore it. Their purpose in life was to tackle political chaos by the unification of China to achieve happiness in this world.



Its literary influence in the region can be compared to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* on religious English literature. However, their direction points are significantly different. *The Pilgrim's Progress* tells the story of Christian's spiritual journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. The City of Destruction symbolises the entire world with no hope of salvation. Convinced that the city is about to be blasted by the wrath of God, Christian flees and sets out alone on a pilgrimage with the Bible and a great burden filled with his sins.

On his way, Christian is diverted by the secular ethics of Mr Worldly Wiseman into seeking deliverance from his burden through the Law, supposedly with the help of a Mr Legality and his son Civility in the village of Morality which seems to be a good place to raise a family with neighbours living by the Ten Commandments. He urges Christian to lead a practical, happy existence without Christ. Refusing, Christian is sheltered by Goodwill, who tells Christian to stop by the Interpreter's home, where Christian learns many lessons about faith. Walking along the wall of Salvation, Christian sees Christ's tomb and cross. At this vision, his burden falls to the ground.

After various hardships, Christian finally reaches the Celestial City, where he enjoys eternal life in the happy company of God and the Heavenly Host. For Bunyan the Bible shows how we shall live to get safely to the Celestial City, the purpose of life.



**'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path'
(Psalm 119:105).**

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