

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Autumn 2017

Vol 20:3

LEST
WE
FORGET



This is my commandment, that you love one another as I loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. JOHN 15: 12-13

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SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 29th October

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 November
at 12:15pm
Individual Cup

Cover photograph courtesy
of Stephen Blake

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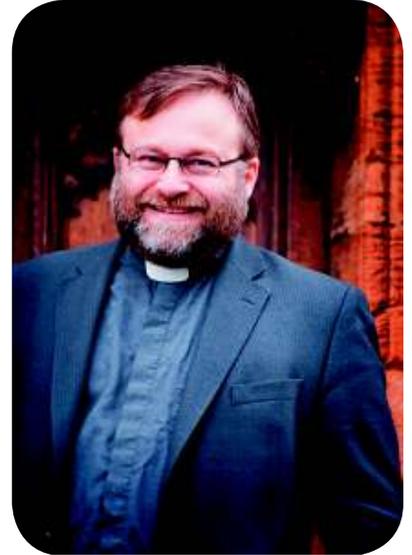
The deadline for the Winter 2017 issue is 4th November 2017.

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VIEW FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

It has been our great joy these past weeks to witness the Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments (capital letters for these things) of not one but two of our members at St Michael's: Ali Pandian on 4 September and Derek Henderson on 24 September. In this century, St Michael's has hosted the ordinations of Jim Francis (2002), Mark Davidson (2005) and Cheryl McKellar-Young (2013), but I do not know when last two of our members will have been Ordained in the same month, if ever.



At the heart of the Service of Ordination in the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of Presbytery with members and guests gather around the person being ordained, who is by now kneeling, and lay hands (lightly!) on their head or shoulder. Or on the heads and shoulders of those closest if many are present. A rare and sacred moment, with all the congregation joined in prayer, opening to the Spirit. Suddenly, following many words, the world comes down to that one space, divine and human, and to one action, an act of touching. Of communing. Of care, charge and challenge. The Moderator then says the prayer of Ordination:



Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this your servant, (Ali/Derek), whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by the laying on of hands, ordain and appoint to the Office of the Holy Ministry within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, committing to her/him authority to minister your Word and Sacraments, and to share in the government of your Church.

It is a mouthful, you might agree, and a life-full. So, when one 'extends the right hand of fellowship' following the prayer, it is done with words of blessing and encouragement. In both Ali's and Derek's case the moment, already hugely significant, was made more moving by family ties and the timing of things.

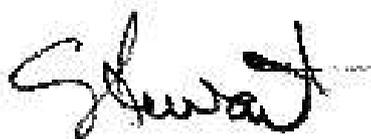
Ali's father, the Very Rev Alan McDonald, a former Moderator of the Church of Scotland, held her hand throughout the prayer. Following it, we all stepped back to allow Alan to be the first, following the Moderator, to greet Ali after the moment of her Ordination. Her mother Judith and grandfather were present, as were her husband David's parents, up from Birmingham, and his brother Richard. One of the joys was seeing the smiles on David's face, one of our elders, and on the faces of Ali and David's two young daughters, Maisie and Isla. At the appointed time, they brought forward symbols of ministry to their Mum – a bible, a quach and communion plate and cup – when called forward by the Moderator, Scott Marshall. Ali had done her probationary year with Scott in Winchburgh, and it was his last act as Moderator. We installed the new Moderator the following evening.

Given that Ali's ministry will be as a healthcare chaplain with NHS Lanarkshire, one symbol of her ministry will be, not a stole or cassock, but the plastic apron required when visiting patients. A polythene pinny, pink and practical, was thus introduced during the sermon. This at the point when we considered the implications for ministry today of Jesus, knowing that all things had been given into his hands, and that he was from God and going to God, wrapping a towel around his waist, taking his disciples' feet in his hands and washing them (John 13: 3–4). Ali had given me her summary of this. 'Jesus knelt down and just got on with it,' which I was happy to quote.

Derek was ordained a Minister on the eve of the 40th anniversary of his ordination as an elder, a date Presbytery happily agreed to! At twenty-seven, he was one of the first elders admitted to the Kirk Session by Ian Paterson; he has served as Session Clerk and Presbytery elder, fulfilling his ministry with a care and wisdom that earned him the respect and trust of his fellow elders, and their friendship. Exceptionally, he pursued his studies in the core disciplines – biblical studies, theology, ecclesiastical history and pastoral care – even while concluding his career in planning with Edinburgh City Council, all of this with his usual grace. Margaret has shared his dedication to St Michael's every step of the way, in eldership and parenthood. Indeed, four generations of his family shared in the moment, from his four grandsons, children of Lindsay and Ross and Ruth and Andrew, to his mother Margaret. And one could imagine his father David, himself an elder at St Michael's for over 60 years, proudly looking down.

Ali and Derek – two shining moments in their lives, and ours. For in the service of ordination the congregation is called and charged to encourage and support its ministers in life and work. And to explore God's call in their own lives to serve others in Christ's name. That call is a living thing. To those of you who have heard the call, I say: be of good cheer. To others perhaps wrestling with it, I say: don't be shy.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stewart', with a flourish at the end.

INTERESTING TIMES...

by Anne Law

In 1966 Robert F Kennedy delivered a speech including the following : 'There is a Chinese curse – *May he live in interesting times*. Like it or not we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but also more open to the creative energy of mankind than any other time in history'.

Fast forward in time to 2017 and the same statement probably still applies, even, or especially, in the Church of Scotland. We read in the recently published Scottish Church Census that almost 400,000 people attend church in our country, which is 7.2% of the Scottish population, down from the 17% of the nation who attending in 1984. We must also remember that more people attend church every week than go to the cinema or to football matches, and more Scottish people are church members than belong to a political party. So churches remain an important and relevant part of Scottish life.



In February 2017 the Rev Dr Doug Gay, Principal of Trinity College in Glasgow University, delivered the Chalmers Lectures. Doug presented three lectures at St Giles Cathedral on his ideas of the future of ministry, money and mission in the Church of Scotland. The lectures, well worth watching, are available on the Church of Scotland website.

To quote Dr Gay: 'There have been important conversations about reform within the Church of Scotland since the year 2000 and some significant reports and proposals – some have led to change, others set aside. But given the scale of the challenges we are facing, I do not think we have yet done enough'.

He talks about decline in numbers of ministers, as well as members. For example, less than 5% of the 780 ministers in the church are under the age of 40 and 76% are over the age of 50

Doug believes that reform is necessary within the church for the mission of the church and that there are five marks of mission:

- to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- to teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- to respond to human need by loving service.
- to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Interesting times indeed...

by Fiona Duke



In February this year the International Team of Kirk Session presented its report on the work they were involved in. We put before Kirk Session three suggested key areas we should consider for the coming year. Our three suggested areas were;

1. Engaging with Holy Family Church, Reineh and how St Michael's could improve communications
2. Memorandum of Understanding with Eunpha Church, South Korea
3. Raising awareness of the Persecuted Church.

In many ways these are interlinked but after the Kirk Session's discussions it was clear that we should concentrate on improving our understanding of the persecuted Christian Church. This would help us to better understand the issues reported in the world church and a more particular understanding of the situation of our twinned congregation, The Holy Family Church, Reineh – a Christian Arab congregation within Israel. The



Holy Family Church has always said that the most important thing we can do for them is to stand with them in prayer. To pray for them requires us to have knowledge of their culture and of their situation. This very much links with raising awareness of the persecuted church in the world.

The team felt we could usefully share information on the persecuted church, and our understanding of the situation facing Reineh Church, with the wider congregation. Persecuted Christians are found in almost all countries of the world so we decided to look at three organisations that particularly work in the Holy Land and Middle East. So over the next three issues of Crosswind one of the team is presenting a summary of the work of each of these organisations, their role supporting persecuted Christians worldwide and especially in the Holy Land and Middle East. I am starting by presenting the work of Barnabas Fund which works in most parts of the world.

The Barnabas Fund statement of faith emphasises that as Christians we are called to address both religious and secular ideologies that deny full religious liberty to Christian minorities – while continuing to show God's love to all people. They also believe that Christians should treat all people of all faiths with love and compassion, even those who seek to persecute them. They emphasise the role of prayer to change people's lives and situations.

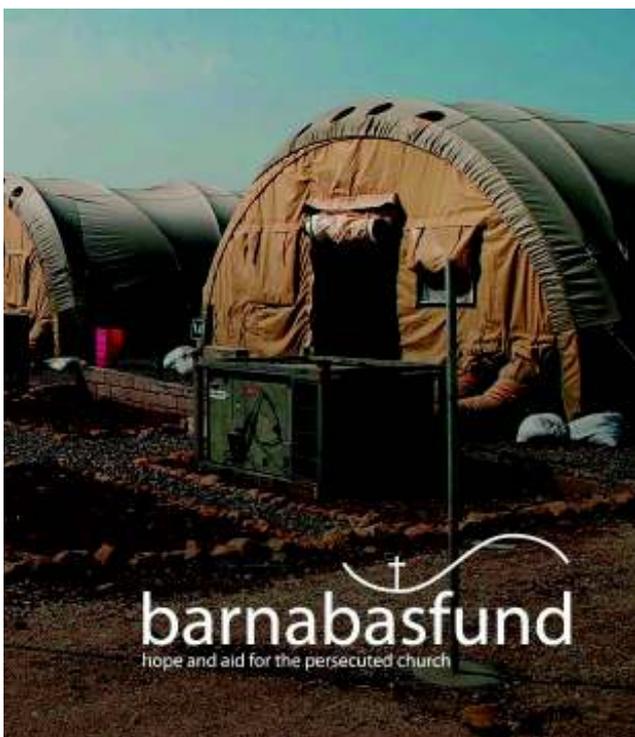
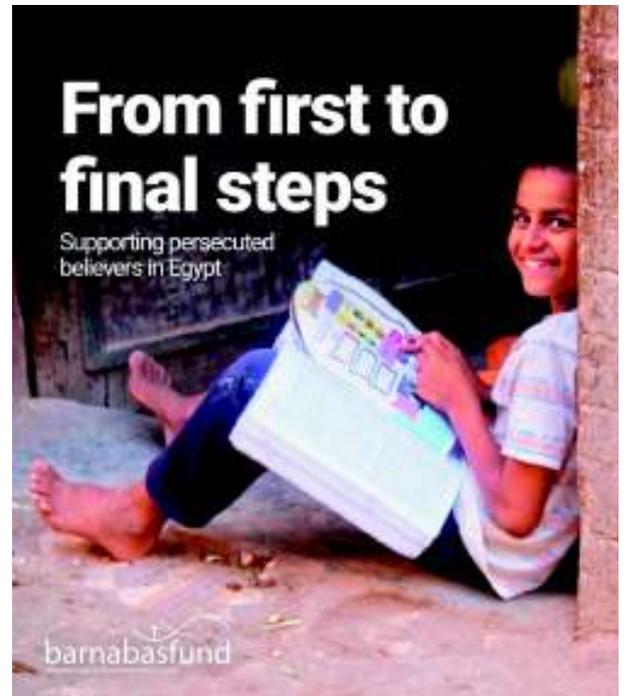
They seek to meet both practical and spiritual needs of those who are persecuted through the encouragement, strengthening and enabling of the local Church and Christian communities rather than setting up their own buildings and structures. They also work by tackling persecution at its roots by making known aspects of the Islamic faith and other ideologies that give rise to injustice and the oppression of non-believers.

They work by directing aid only to Christians, although the benefits may not be exclusively for them. The majority of money is aimed at Christians living in Muslim environments – the money they receive comes from Christians through Christians to Christians.

Examples of how this works in the Holy Land is the channelling of money from Barnabas Fund to Christian organisations in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza (eg the Christian school in Bethlehem) for specific projects; eg by

donating funds for food and basic needs including health needs, as Christians are often not recipients of money from other organisations. Other countries where Barnabas Fund works in the Middle East include Jordan, Syria and Egypt.

So what can we do, here in St Michael's? We can support them in prayer, find out more about the work of Barnabas Fund, and perhaps support them with a donation. Further information about Barnabas Fund can be found at www.barnabasfund.org They also have an excellent booklet *Praying for the Persecuted Church* highlighting the situation in all the countries in which they work which can be obtained by direct request to Barnabas Fund.



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PUB THEOLOGY

by Rev Cheryl McKellar-Young



What is Pub Theology? Well it's another new and, we pray, exciting initiative which St Michael's is bringing to Linlithgow as we work towards becoming a 'WELL' church – welcoming – evangelising – learning and loving.

Pub Theology is all about taking the Good News of Jesus out of the church, straight down the Kirkgate and back into everyday spaces and places.

Well, what more can I tell you... We will gather round a table at The Four Marys for open and honest conversations about things that matter, with people you know and others you don't. Everyone is welcome as are all perspectives. You can come along even if you don't go to church or don't want to! The more diverse the perspectives, the more meaningful we hope the conversations will be!

Pub Theology already takes place in the USA, with discussion topics like – ourselves and what has encouraged us recently, as we think about life and the state of the world? Do we agree that 'not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced' (James Baldwin)? Or the findings of a North American study that most Canadians think religion does more harm than good. Are they wrong? What does the word 'religion' mean to you here in Linlithgow?

The format is really simple: a pint of beer, a glass of wine or a soft drink, maybe you will order some pub food, then conversation, and God. Sarah Gillan is bringing her fiddle so we will have music to start and end our evening.

So, invite some friends who don't come to church, who don't 'do God', order a pint and pull up a chair. Or if you are at home on your own, why not come along? Around pub tables, we can bring our different religious traditions, philosophical perspectives and life experiences while learning something new along the way.

Do come and join us! Look on our website and around Linlithgow for our bright Pub Theology flyers.

Pub Theology will take place at The Four Marys on a Wednesday evening at 7pm. Our first evening took place on September 20th and there will be another before Christmas. We look forward to seeing you!



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MECHANICAL REPAIRS, DIAGNOSTICS AND SERVICE

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

by Jane Brown

Every year our church welcomes new couples on the occasion of their marriage. Every year our church welcomes and baptises new babies and their extended family. Every year our church welcomes new members. That is a lot of people. Some may already be members, some associated with the church through family and town – and others just simply like our church and want to celebrate their special day there.

But how do we get to know these people better? With this question in mind, Cheryl, our Associate Minister, approached me to ask if I would lead and coordinate a new and exciting venture – to give all those new to our church a point of contact when they walk through our doors. So as a new elder I've got a special project to fulfil.

Can you remember the first time you walked through our wonderful church doors, a little daunted and worrying where to sit? Did someone smile and welcome you? With God's guidance we would like to make coming to church a little easier for new people, so they can get to know us and realise what a living vibrant church we have here at St Michael's.

'So, Jane, how is this going to work?' I hear you all ask. Well, after a few brainstorming sessions, time of prayer and meetings over coffee and cake, Cheryl asked me first of all to design a logo. I felt drawn to the idea of a heart logo. I included everything I wanted to say to the people making contact with our church for weddings, baptisms or membership, with 'getting to know you' as the central message.

This heart logo will be on a personalised 'Connect' Card, given at the first meeting with the ministry team at, for example, Vestry Hour. This card will invite the couple/family/new member to 'connect' with one of our ten designated church couples.

My task is to pair up our designated church Connect couples with those who have just received the invitation. The Connect couples will then contact them, meet them and sit alongside them in church. A cup of tea after the service is a great way for everyone to get to know each other, be introduced to more people and to hear about everything happening within our church family throughout the week. We have designated Connect couples for both 9.30 and 11am services.

Details of this new initiative were finalised over this summer and Connect-getting to know you launched in September. Please support this new project in your prayers. I leave you with words of scripture – *Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.* Hebrews 13:2



UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Under the spotlight this time is the Convenor of the Kirk Session's Business Team, Peter Russell.

Describe your role as Business Convenor at St Michael's in three words. Money, staff, buildings.

How long have you been coming to St Michael's? Since 2005. Prior to that I went to St Ninian's-Craigmailen.

Before retiring, what did you do? I was a Director in the Scottish Government.

What is your first memory of St Michael's? Acting in the church as part of a local inter-church drama group, Revelation.

You are married to Patricia and now have five lovely grown up children, but where did you meet Patricia? At a party.

Apart from your wife and children, for what in your life do you feel most grateful? My late parents and my health.

A film you could watch again and again? Cool and Crazy (It's about a male voice choir from Finnmark in the far north of Norway).

You have to spend a month on a desert island. Name three items (not people) you would have to take with you. A knife, matches and a saw.

If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability, what would it be? To pick up the right remote control first time.

What is your most treasured memory? The power cut during our wedding reception.

If you were to be the main character of a book of fiction who would you want to be? Kim

Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest? Alexander McCall Smith

Do you have an all time favourite hymn? If so what is it and why? Be Thou my vision. As I was entering adult life it seemed to set a right aspiration.

Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it? No. I lack the imagination.



What three websites do you visit most often? BBC News and BBC Weather are way ahead of the rest.

What is the greatest accomplishment of your life? Professionally, getting a partnership agreement between management and unions in the Scottish Prison Service signed and working. Personally, mastering with my strictly limited talent the first bass parts of some of my choir's repertoire.

What do you value most in a friendship? Tolerance and level-headedness.

Who are your top three favourite music artists? Or what music is on your favourite playlist? Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings; Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; Gerry Rafferty.

Do you have a favourite verse or passage from the Bible? What is it and why? "God was in Christ reconciling the whole world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5: 19)...Taken with 1 John 4:7-11 "...God is love....and showed his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him....If this is how God loved us, then we should love one another", I find an inspiring and challenging encapsulation of what we believe.

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

Knock knock. Who's there?

Isabel. Isabel who?

Isabel necessary on a bike?

My mother was called Isobel so this appealed to her.



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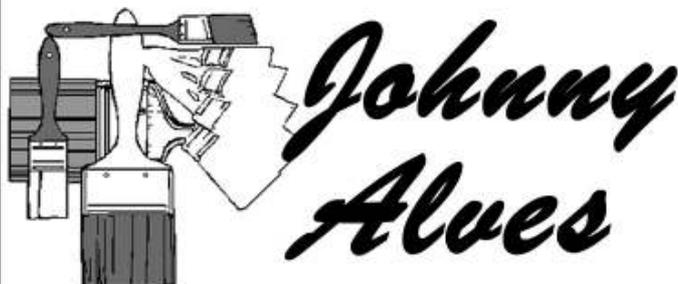
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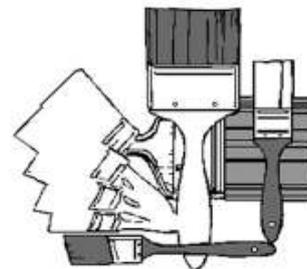
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THE BOYS' BRIGADE

QUEEN'S BADGE

by Lewis Forsyth



Queen's Men 2017: (from left) Craig Atkinson, Grant Hunter, Gregor Stewart, Lewis Forsyth, Ross Tulloch, Stewart McCorrison, Alexander Gordon and Jamie Currie.

I joined 2nd Linlithgow Boys' Brigade aged 5 and was recently one of 8 boys from the Company to receive the Queen's Badge, the organisation's highest award. To gain this, we had to cover four sections of work; volunteering within the church, volunteering outwith the company, a physical activity and the development of a skill. For my volunteering I helped out in the St Michael's Sunday Club in the Bible Class section on Sunday mornings. For outside the company I worked in the West Lothian Foodbank warehouse, based in Livingston and coordinated by Marshall Green. This volunteering was mainly comprised

of sorting donations of food and other essentials by date, to make it easier to package and distribute to the recipients. For my physical section I attended the Linlithgow running club which I had been involved with for a number of years. For the development of a skill I took weekly guitar lessons and practised at home.

As well as completing these four sections we attended a leadership course at Carronvale House, Scottish headquarters of the BB. This training was designed to equip us with valuable skills for our volunteering as well as help us to develop overall abilities such as leadership, communication and teamwork. We also attended a residential completion weekend course at Carronvale House which involved many team games and challenges as well as interesting talks by people associated with the Boys' Brigade, some of whom had themselves achieved the Queen's Badge.

Although the work for the Queen's Badge is done over 2 years we had to complete other badges throughout the years, including our President's Badge, to make us eligible to go for our Queen's Badge.

We would all like to thank the officers from all sections – from the Anchor Boys, Junior Section and the Company Section – who gave time over many years to help us get to that stage.

I would encourage all BB boys to aim for this award; it looks very impressive on your CV or University application, and also gives you a better understanding of activities within the community.

WHAT'S THE PROPERTY TEAM BEEN UP TO?

by Jim Rae

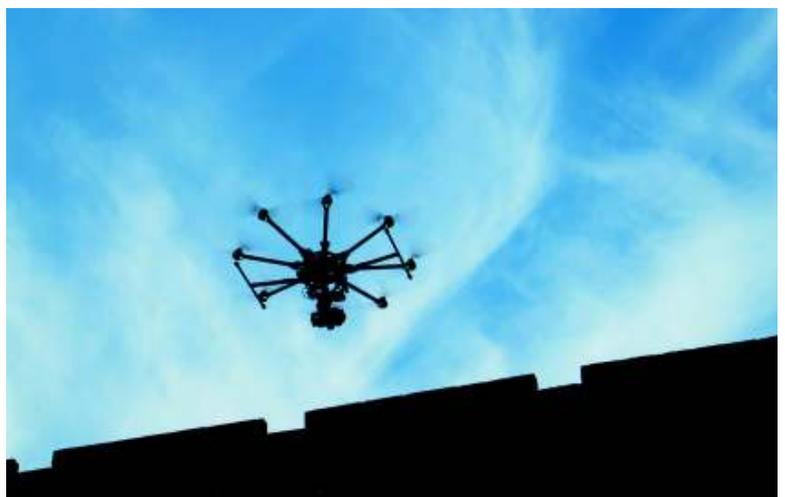
As autumn approaches with its prospects of lower temperatures and more wet days, the Property Team continues to work on the maintenance and improvement of our buildings.



Discussions with our architects, Pollock Hammond, have been ongoing and they are currently investigating further options for providing modern facilities for user organisations, both internal and external, within Cross House. Building services consultants are soon to be appointed to carry out a feasibility study on improving the heating and electrical services and they will make recommendations relating to energy efficiency which will result in a lower carbon footprint for our buildings. The Property Team has completed a survey regarding the refurbishment of the windows in Cross House as many are now requiring paintwork, framework, glass and structural sill and lintel repairs. We are in the process of preparing tender documentation for pricing.

The refurbishment of the Kirkgate Flat was completed in June. Team members worked together to decorate the property to a high standard and contractors were appointed by a tender process to provide a new bathroom, repair plasterwork and install a new electrical distribution control unit as well as new domestic hot water generation equipment. It took approximately twelve weeks to complete the project.

The Church has been the focus of several exciting projects which will protect the fabric and preserve the building. A high level drone survey of all roof areas, rainwater gutters and drainage channels was carried out during May and provided clear images of stone and roof slates where remedial work is required. The survey also identified areas where vegetation and silt washed from the roof was



beginning to hamper the flow of rainwater into our underground drains and this will be dealt with during September by an appointed contractor.

The church drains on the north side have been surveyed by a CCTV unit that filmed the condition internally of our drainage pipework. Blockages were detected which prevented the drains from clearing quickly. A high pressure power wash, taking the best part of two days to complete, cleared the blockages and debris washed down from the roof. It is proposed that the south side drainage channel at the base of the church wall will be repaired and a new drain and connection installed to keep the south door entrance walkway clear of rainwater and possible ice formation in winter. The contractor in conjunction with West Lothian Council will provide a full report, including recommendations for improvement, in the next few weeks. Improved rainwater evacuation from stone roof gutters will also prevent dampness issues at high level in the fabric.



The Manse garden is in need of repair and nurturing back to its former glory. Unfortunately damage to the area has been caused by a colony of rabbits that has taken up residence there. There have been several gardening events, when volunteers have spent Saturday mornings pruning, weeding and leaf clearing, but the task is such that increased manpower is required to make headway in this venture. So, if you think that you can lend a hand we would be delighted to have your help. Watch the church intimations for the next scheduled attack on the weeds and please come and join us.

There are two new contracts that have been tendered and awarded which will run for two years and these are the electrical services maintenance contract for all properties and the window cleaning contract for Cross House.

By the time you read this, a film production company will have filmed a couple of scenes in St Michael's for a feature film. This experience proved exciting, but was hard work with a certain amount of apprehension thrown in for good measure. Meetings with the production crew, church walk arounds, internal Property Team meetings and additional Kirk Session meetings were all necessary to obtain agreement that satisfied all parties. These meetings were necessary in order to negotiate the removal and re-positioning of certain fixtures and fittings to suit the production. This has resulted in early morning starts and late night finishes for members of the congregation and Property Team who have given their time to monitor and assist in the process of ensuring that St Michael's Parish Church was kept safe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Property Team who have contributed to the varied and ongoing work programme. There is certainly never a dull moment!

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED TO SHOW VISITORS AROUND OUR CHURCH!

As well as being open daily to individual visitors, St Michael's Parish Church is also visited each year by a number of organised groups. These have arranged, via the church office, to be given conducted tours around the building. Some of these groups are from Primary Schools, both from Linlithgow and from further afield. The children are always accompanied by their own teachers and their helpers. Adults from other churches and Guilds or from outside organisations such as walking groups also book tours.



School groups naturally come during the school day but adults may come on an evening or at a weekend as well as through the week.

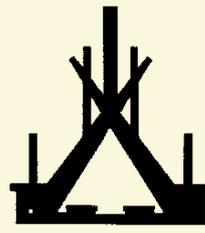
Usually, depending on the size of the group, several volunteers take a small number of people each and point out some of the interesting features of the church and share some of the stories associated with it.

Visitors, of all ages, enjoy seeing things which they might miss if they went round by themselves and appreciate the time that the volunteers spend with them.

The current pool of members willing to act as guides is dwindling as age and infirmity catches up with those who have been involved in this very enjoyable service for some time. Would YOU be willing to help occasionally in sharing your love of St Michael's with our visitors?

Even if you are only available to help occasionally, Irene McDougall, who organises these tours on our behalf, would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact her on 01506 843257.

PLEASE WILL YOU HELP?



WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

June

Nicola McCabe to Samuel Dale

July

Rhian Hogg to David Sutherland
Mallory Fearn to Martyn Carney
Stephanie Clark to John Hannah
Joanna Graham to Ross Forsyth
Olivia Herron to James Loggie



August

Catriona Mackenzie to Calum McClay
Lisa McArthur to Christopher Lawrie
Jackie Taylor to John Needham

September

Catriona Rogerson to Richard Broome
Nicola Mennim to Samuel Rollings



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

Hannah Fisher, Bathgate
Lewis Forsyth, Edinburgh Road



REGISTER



FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

June

Ann Walker, Kettilstoun Road
Agnes Clark, Philip Avenue
George Donald, Baillielands
Margaret Douglas, Water Yett
Ronnie Duncan, Falkirk



July

Lawrence Barclay, Taret
John Duncan, Braecourt
Dr Judy Gray, Royal Terrace

August

Iain Allan, Baron's Hill Avenue

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

June

Alexander Lewis Walker, Kettils'toun Mains



July

Nicole Scarlett Greig, Priory Road



August

Grayson Andrew Duncan, Preston Terrace
Harris Buchanan, Threemiletown
Alexander Eric McMillan, Bo'ness
Freddie Stewart Murdoch, Baillielands

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

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

28th October	Cancer Research
18th November	Friends of Girlguiding West Lothian
25th November	Advent Fair – The Guild (morning and afternoon)
2nd December	4 th West Lothian Scouts
13th January	Linlithgow Academy Hockey Team

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

5th November	2pm	Music Buds
10th/11th November	7.30pm	'Lest We Forget' - Bruce Jamieson
18th November	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild with RCS Voices
25th November	7.30pm	Linlithgow String Orchestra
2nd December	7.30pm	Glasgow Phoenix Choir
10th December	7.00pm	Linlithgow Reed Band Christmas Concert
15th December	7.00pm	NYCOS Concert

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 – Go to our new website to 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 – offers information covering many concerns. Wondering where to access support for yourself or another? Look at the website or phone 842646.

GUILD MATTERS

by Margaret Henderson



'BE BOLD, BE STRONG FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU!'



These words will sound familiar to many of you as the opening line of a children's chorus but are they just for children? The Guild doesn't believe so and has in fact been thinking in recent years of how its members can be bold and strong as they seek to serve God. After all, the Guild motto is 'Whose we are and whom we serve'. But how to be bold and strong with sensitivity is a challenge. Two years ago each Guild Branch considered how to do this 'In Peace', last year we went 'In Joy' and for this year 'Go in Love' will be our theme.

Our programme here in St Michael's will reflect this theme by considering what it means for us to go in love. We will be hearing how people we know are moved to meet those whom Society often shun and yet need our help to change and to recognise that they are valued. We will be considering what it means to give one's life to protect others of a different faith, as we learn about Jane Haining whose life and death have featured on the news recently.

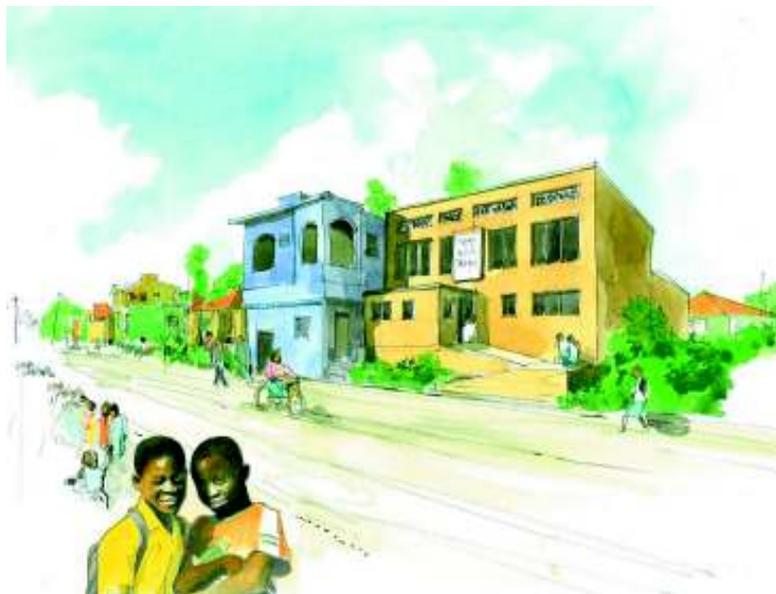
But there will be a lighter side to our meetings too when Sally Pattle shares her 'Love of a good book'. In December and January, we will welcome some local young folk to share their love of music, dance and fun with us – especially relevant as 2018 is the year of young people across Scotland. We look forward to spending an evening with the Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, in February; next there is a Valentine's Day special as we look again at the very successful Brides of St Michael's. One of our members will share her love of travelling, Sandra Thomson will tell us about her 'Love of Jute' and Bruce Jamieson finishes our programme for the year by telling us about his 'Love of Linlithgow Lore and Legend.'

However the Guild is not just about listening, but also about doing, about putting our words into action and this we do through support for projects. This Session we are supporting, at national level, **'Prospects – All Friends Together'**.

This encourages Churches to care for and to include disabled people in our services. The Guild nationally has already funded a second full-time employee and trained 12 volunteers to tell Guilds and other groups about this often neglected area of need and love.



At international level we will be supporting '**Mission International – Haiti Project.**' Haiti is almost the forgotten disaster with 80,000 people still living in tented accommodation. Funds raised are to help construct a school, church and community centre all of which will enable Adult Literacy, Community Development, Education, Income Generation, Skills Development and Medical Care among other things. The Project is almost a year ahead of schedule due to the Guild's support.



How do we support such projects? Apart from the obvious support that our prayer gives, we raise money by filling Smartie tubes with either 20 pence or £1 coins. The Harvest Lunch in October and teas, coffees and lunch at the Advent Fair are now annual events. In March we will host an Afternoon Tea when you can enjoy sandwiches, scones, cakes etc, while listening to some relaxing music. All are opportunities to enjoy friendship and fellowship whilst knowing that you are supporting people who need our help and love.

Locally we are showing our love for our neighbours by leaving posies of flowers in unexpected places for passers-by to take home and enjoy. **Lonely posies** is an initiative that some churches have adopted as a means of reaching out to others in the community to show that God loves and cares for them. Our posies will have a card attached which will have the Aaronic blessing on one side and on the other a simple message of love from St Michael's Parish Church Guild. So check out park benches, bus shelters and shop doorways and if you find a posy of flowers either take them home or give them to a neighbour.

Fellowship is very important and in June 50 members and friends enjoyed a wonderful day away at Pitlochry Theatre, having lunch at the theatre before enjoying the musical 'High Society'. Afterwards we travelled to Kenmore for a meal at the Kenmore Hotel. Hopefully we will have a similar outing next summer.

Worship, service and fellowship are central to the Guild and I would invite you to come along to the Kirk Hall one Monday evening to see for yourself what is happening. I guarantee you won't be disappointed!

WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS? WHY DON'T THEY GET A JOB? WELL...

by Marshall Green



The homeless man

He had a good job; he had a beautiful wife,
Depression hit him and destroyed his life.
Drugs took control when he started drinking,
Into a hole, he kept on sinking.

His wife left him, he was out in the cold,
He lost everything when addiction took hold.
Nowhere to turn, he was lost and alone,
Out in the street, no wife, no home.

Life had no purpose, he could only think why.
His only desire was to give up and die.
He got down on his knees and began to pray,
'Help me Jesus, show me the way.'

He heard someone calling from out of nowhere.
'Come with me for shelter and care,
Come with me for a meal and a bed,
A place that is warm, where you can rest your head.'

Who are those people who showed him the light?
Showed him some love and a bed for the night.
Those are the people, who cared so much,
Those are the people with the God-loving touch.

Who is the man that it all happened to?
It's one step away from happening to you.
So don't judge a man, who sleeps on the street,
He just needs a help to get back on his feet.

God bless the Care Shelter that helped him so much,
God bless those people with the God-loving touch.

An opportunity to help?

This year the shelter will run for 28 weeks again, between Monday 9 October 2017 and Sunday 22 April 2018. Bethany, in faith, is increasing capacity to 60/night for 12 weeks. On 6 occasions St Michael's will be providing a two course meal for between 45 and 60 from the streets of Edinburgh this winter. We will be looking for 6 teams of 6 to buy, prepare, cook, and serve on each of the following dates: Friday 3 November: Tuesday 5 December: Friday 29 December: Wed 7 February: Friday 9 March: Thursday 5 April.

Although many in St Michael's have been apprehensive about volunteering in the past, there are 3 trained Bethany staff present at all times and most, if not all, have found it both pleasurable and rewarding.

Please contact me on 07967112137 or mg011a6498@blueyonder.co.uk

STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS

by Anne Law



The Stewardship & Finance team is always challenged to find new approaches to stewardship now that we carry out an annual campaign – whether the use of our time, our talents or our treasure. 2017, as you will recall from earlier articles and the leaflet distributed in June, offered us all the opportunity to consider how we use our talents for God's church, our community and the wider world.

The proposal that the Stewardship & Finance Team sent to Kirk Session for approval this year included another few items, however. In this year of the 775th anniversary of the consecration of St Michael's we had discussed how we could commemorate the anniversary and also develop even closer links with the community we seek to serve. These ideas are currently being developed.

Firstly, we agreed that we would like to commission a banner for the anniversary and that is now in course. We intend to use one of the paintings produced at Trish Lightbody's art workshops – Katie Marshall's depiction of the crown of thorns. It is brightly coloured and very striking and we think a modern depiction of the crown. Furthermore, the painting was produced by one of our young people.

Secondly, we intend to commission a 'Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Unsung Heroes' award Quaich, which would be awarded to someone who volunteers in the town, and would also provide an opportunity to commemorate St Michael's 775th anniversary. Individuals would be nominated by their peers with judging carried out by a panel to include representation from both church and town. We plan to seek nominations in early 2018 and to present the Quaich for the first time around Marches time.

Thirdly, we would hope to stage a 'Freshers' Fayre' event in spring 2018 when we would ask local charities and good causes looking for volunteers to join church organisations in the Kirk Hall for a morning, to showcase what they do and 'advertise' for whatever volunteer skills they are looking for. We believe there could be interest from a number of local volunteer groups. We hope that local people and church members alike would come along to find out more about voluntary organisations in the town and sign up to offer time or skills.

More information will follow in Sunday intimation sheets.



AUDIO-VISUAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH

by Ivan Coyle

Have you been wondering why there have been two TV monitors positioned beside the front two pillars in the Church for most of August?

Well, for some time now, a small group has been looking at the possibility of replacing the large video screen used at the 9.30 service with something more permanent, flexible and more aesthetically pleasing. Two donations of money, which have been received by the Church to improve the audio-visual experience in St Michael's, have allowed us to explore what options are available.

The use of the large screen, laptop, camera and projector is well established at the 9.30am service in St Michael's. Hymn words, notices and live video are projected on to the screen. The system is operated by a number of volunteers who set up this equipment every week. This takes time and involves a large number of cables and connections. Although this type of worship is popular with some, we are aware that others aren't quite so keen on it, particularly because of the size of the screen



The installation of smaller screens would reduce the visual impact the large screen has on the building. The permanent screens would then be available for use at both services and could also be used as part of our Open Church.

One of the big problems with St Michael's is its size. People can have difficulty seeing what is going on, for example when there is a baptism or when Sunday Club has activities at the front of the Church – or even the breaking of bread at Communion. The installation of cameras along with the permanent screens would make more areas of the Church visually accessible.

With this in mind the group has visited various churches where permanent audio visual equipment has been installed. It has been interesting to see how churches have used their systems, not only for enhancing their worship experience on a Sunday but also as a form of outreach by streaming their services on the internet. This, for some churches, has opened up a whole new form of 'church membership'. In fact the Church of Scotland is keen to encourage churches to get involved with social media and increase online inter-action and has appointed The Very Rev Albert Bogle as the Church of Scotland's first ever digital minister. He will use his new role to create an online Kirk congregation, made up of people who may never set foot in a 'real world' church.



St Michael's has been forward-thinking and during the Empowered Project an ethernet system was installed in the Church with cameras/monitors/streaming in mind. This means that there is an infrastructure already in place to support this project.

The plan for St Michael's is, of course, not that straightforward. Our Church is a historic building of great importance and we, as trustees, are charged with looking after it. We therefore have to consult with the Committee on Church Art and Architecture (CARTA) who must be consulted when it comes to audio visual systems. Our ideas have been received favourably, and we are now at the stage of fine-tuning some details which will make the plans acceptable to both parties. The trial of the TV screens has enabled us to see how the monitors would look in situ and we have been encouraged by the extremely positive response they have received.

We are hopeful we are getting to the end of our deliberations and can finally give the green light to this exciting project which will give St Michael's a permanent, flexible resource which will not only enhance our worship but provide an improved facility for other events held in our Church.

'LEST WE FORGET'

– REMEMBERING ARRAS AND PASSCHENDAELE
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, NOVEMBER 10th and 11th, 2017

by the Friends of St Michael's



William Wright was a Bridgend boy, his father being the Headmaster of the local School close to the village. With his parents and two older sisters, William lived in the school-house, attending Linlithgow Academy, aged 12, in 1910 and passing his Intermediate Certificate in 1913. He then joined the shale oil firm of James Ross and Co as an apprentice engineer, attending Linlithgow Academy night classes in science and mathematics.

Shortly after gaining his engineering diploma in 1916, he volunteered to enlist in the army. He had just turned 18 and, like many of his friends, had heard Kitchener's call and set off to train in Aberdeen with the Gordon Highlanders. His engineering training enabled him to qualify as a machine gun instructor and, duly experienced, he was sent to the Western Front in July 1917 – moving with his regiment into position just outside Ypres, ready for 'The Big Push'. He survived the initial stages of the battle but on October 27th while taking part in the final assault on the village of Passchendaele (which was originally meant to have been taken in the first few days of the battle) William was killed. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated today on the Monument to the Missing at Thiepval.

He was one of 250,000 British casualties during the 14 weeks of fighting of what became known as the Battle of Passchendaele. And it was not the only military catastrophe of the year 1917. Earlier, in April and May, there was fought the Battle of Arras – an even greater tragedy for the young men of Scotland. Of the 120 battalions that went into action 44 were Scottish. During the two months of fighting, the average death toll among those battalions was 1516 personnel – per day! Among the fallen was George Pringle Smith. Born at 211 High Street, Linlithgow, he was the son of Robert – an engineer at the Avon Paper Works. George was a brilliant Linlithgow Academy scholar, winning several bursaries which enabled him to study Mathematics at Edinburgh University from where he graduated with a First Class Honours degree in June 1914. All set to continue his studies at Cambridge, George too answered his country's call and enlisted with an Edinburgh Territorial Battalion – eventually landing in France with the 11th Battalion, the Royal Scots in May 1915. He survived the dreadful fighting at Loos and the



Somme and, in 1917, took part in the opening attack on a German position outside Arras. However, on April 12th he was killed in action and later buried in Brown's Copse Cemetery – a quiet spot just outside Arras, visited in 2009 by a Linlithgow group, led by Bruce Jamieson.

Bruce will tell the stories of these two men – and many other Linlithgow casualties – in his presentation 'Lest We Forget' to be staged in St Michael's Church on the evenings of November 10th and 11th. It will follow the course of The Great War from 1914 up to the unveiling of the town's war memorial in the church in July 1922. The part played by St Michael's during and after the war will be highlighted – and a tribute paid to the church's 775th anniversary.



A great deal of research has gone into the new, specially prepared presentation. This was undertaken by Bruce, by the local World War One History Group, librarian Chris Morrison and students of Linlithgow Academy. The Linlithgowshire Gazette supplied valuable information including insights into the life and work of the church's minister during the war years, the Reverend Robert Coupar, who lost his son as a result of the conflict.

The illustrated presentation will be narrated by Bruce and local thespian, Thom Pollock. It will be brought to life by sound and light engineer John Barker and the St Michael's team of Phill Ratcliffe and Stephen Blake. The music will be provided by organist and accompanist Andrew Sutherland and songstress, Sarah Gillan. The Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice Choir will supply the soldiers' songs of the period. The voices of those that took part at the time will be provided by many members of the community whose contributions have been recorded for the event.

The Home Front will not be forgotten and Linlithgow life will be vividly recreated through the sights, sounds and smells of the time: the actions of the Provosts and Councils; the gas works, the explosives factory; zeppelin raids; war-time regulations, conscription and, in so many Linlithgow homes, the arrival of the dreaded black-edged telegrams.

JUST A MINUTE

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

100 years ago

Tues. 26th July 1917 [At Linlithgow and within the Vestry] The Moderator stated that he purposed having a Service of Intercession to mark the 3rd Anniversary of the declaration of War in the church on the forenoon of Sunday 5th Aug., and the Kirk Session resolved to have a retiring collection on that occasion on behalf of the Red Cross Society Scottish Branch.

A circular letter from the Royal Scots Association was produced in which an appeal was made for funds to assist prisoners of war in Germany. The matter was left over meantime on the understanding that a retiring collection be taken in its turn along with other similar appeals already before the Kirk Session.

Tues. 11th Sept. 1917 We are instructed by the Trustees of the late Miss Euphemia Walker, Ashley Hall, Linlithgow, to intimate to you that, by her general Trust dispositions and settlement, the late Miss Walker directed her Trustees to realise the whole residue of her means and estate and pay and make over the same in three equal parts to the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, Quarriers Home Bridge of Weir and Linlithgow Kirk Session for behof of Linlithgow Parish Church Sunday School.

50 years ago

Sun. 17th Sept. 1967 [Organist and Choirmaster] The Moderator intimated that in consequence of having received an appointment in Worcester, England, related to proposed further University studies, Mr. George Hay would be obliged to tender his resignation from the post of Organist and Choirmaster with effect from 22nd October 1967. The Session agreed that the Session Clerk should take immediate steps to advertise in the Scotsman and Glasgow Herald inviting applications, and that responsibility for filling the impending vacancy should be delegated to the Committee appointed in 1966 on the resignation of Mr. J. C. Fleming.

Tues. 19th Sept. 1967 [Sunday Schools] The Rev. Gillespie MacMillan, Assistant Minister, addressed the Session concerning suggestions for the forthcoming Sunday School Session. [There followed a whole raft of proposals including redividing the age groups, relocating when and where the different groups could more appropriately meet.]

The Session agreed (1) that the foregoing proposals be approved and that

the whole position be reviewed at the end of the 1967/68 session. (2) that arrangements be made for renting by the Sunday School of the Masonic Hall, Linlithgow, for one hour prior to morning service each Sunday from 1st October 1967 at a charge of £1.10/- per Sunday, and (3) that a donation be made to Sunday School accounts of the cost of books and equipment for use by teachers and pupils, estimated at £80.

25 years ago

Tues. 22nd Sept. 1992

* The Television Broadcast from St. Michael's would take place on Sunday 27th September 1992 and would be broadcast live throughout the United Kingdom network, thus receiving the necessary financing for this expensive operation.

* [Chogoria Appeal] Due to one or two generous donations, a cheque for £17,000 will be handed over at the televised service as an initial donation. Hopefully our donation for 1992 will reach £20,000.

*[New Window] The Kirk Session will be pleased and even relieved to know that the Friends of St. Michael's have received sufficient donations to enable them to fully recover the costs of the window, its installation, repairs to the stone tracery and the appeal costs themselves, and the Society is to be congratulated on the success of this project.



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burgh.halls@westlothian.gov.uk | www.linlithgowburghhalls.co.uk



MY FATHER, DAVID FERGUSON

*An edited version of Daniel Ferguson's tribute at
the memorial service*



I'm sure if Dad could have seen the congregation that day, he would have been embarrassed, but I am proud to see how many people his life impacted. The few months since Dad died sometimes feel like a life time ago, at other times like just yesterday. As the pain lessened, I've looked back on happy memories, hoping that, while we grieve and mourn, we can also laugh and enjoy the life Dad lived.

First and foremost, Dad was a humorous man – those of us who heard his jokes, might feel differently! But he spent his life trying to make people smile.

Dad often chose unusual clothes. Whether it was his 'Larry the Cucumber' T-shirt, his bright pink shirts, or his elephant ties, he often contrived to look like a bit of a fool. One Christmas I jokingly bought him rainbow-coloured hat and gloves, but the joke was on me when Dad insisted on wearing them all that winter. Occasionally he sported a kilt – normal wear in Scotland, but in Japan tartan skirts are worn by high school girls.

Dad often started conversations with complete strangers. If you ever see Japanese reaction when a foreigner suddenly speaks fluent Japanese to them – it's quite a sight, a mixture of shock and denial. When I was 14, Dad took me and Matthew on holiday to Italy. One night at dinner, we heard some Japanese from another table. Immediately, Dad introduced himself. 'My name is David. I live in Sapporo but I'm from Scotland, where Nakamura plays football!' Two days later he surprised some Japanese university students in Florence. Matthew and I headed away to avoid being involved. As a missionary, Dad pioneered 'Onsen Ministry'. 'Onsen' are Japanese public baths where people bathe naked together. So if you worry about introducing yourself, just imagine yourself doing it in a foreign language, unclothed, in a bath.

You might think that Dad was naturally outgoing – not so. He was people shy, uncomfortable as the centre of attention. So why go around shocking students in Italy? Or wear a kilt in a country where people could mistake it for a girl's school uniform?

The simple answer – Dad loved God. He knew that when someone asked why he wore a tartan skirt, it would lead to why he was in Japan – which was Jesus. Once the shock of his surprise Japanese had subsided, he would talk about his work in Japan – which was Jesus. Situations, although embarrassing for him, provided an opportunity to share about Jesus. Many will remember Dad's sermon about a shining cross on a hill – I have heard it over 20 times! Well in Japan Dad was willing to become a shining light on a hill – all because God asked him to. His love of God was bigger than any struggle he would face.

This shone out in the final year of his life. Dad's battle with cancer was tough, long, lonely and painful. He could have been negative and miserable – but he wasn't. Three weeks before he died, when even talking was difficult, I went to visit him. With a smile Dad told me a nurse had asked him about his faith. And he told me all he had shared with her. No bitterness, no anger, just smiling, because he had talked to someone about Jesus.

Dad's love of God and of others was always greater than his suffering. Amazingly, he never complained when we visited him; no matter how weak or tired he was, he put on a smile. He would talk and play games, and even crack his poor jokes with us. He gave every ounce of energy to make us smile – he was the one who helped us through a difficult year.

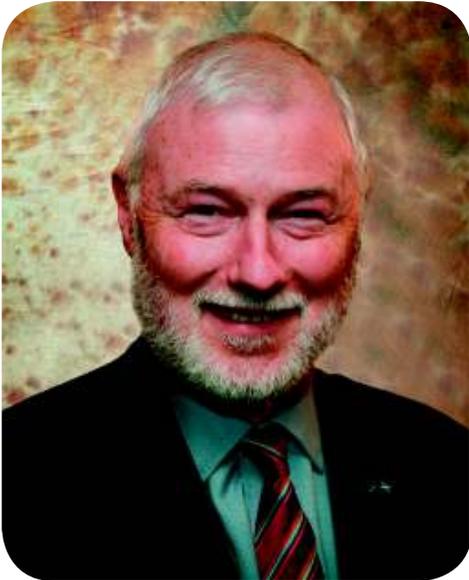
I used to think that a brave Dad would be big and strong, which Dad was neither! But through his life, and in particular his battle with cancer, Dad showed what true bravery is. True bravery means loving God and others so much that your own struggles wilt away; it is masking your pain to make your sons smile; it is leaving your comfortable life and moving to a strange new country. And yes, true bravery is leaving your comfort zone and scaring unsuspecting Japanese students in Italy, just so you could tell them about Jesus.

We can remember Dad, and mourn his passing. But he would also want us to feel challenged. Dad loved talking about passing the baton in a relay race. He has passed his baton for the last time, and we must run the race like he did, loving God and loving others, no matter the cost. And if we can do that, hopefully we'll leave people smiling, just like Dad did.

Copies of the full text of Daniel's tribute to his father can be obtained from the Church Office.

A DIFFERENT CHURCH?

by Rev Derek Henderson



In the summer, Margaret and I cruised on the Rhine and Danube. At one point, we passed a village where both church and local pub were in one building. Our guide explained that the only way into church was through the pub: one advantage being that, if after the service you needed refreshment, then the only way out of the church was back through the pub. Allegedly, in a recent advert for a minister, the church stipulated that candidates must be of a suitable character to be the licence-holder!

Perhaps a tall tale for tourists, but it reminded me of another time when we were visiting friends in France. There the church in the neighbouring village met in the local restaurant. It had no buildings of its own, but used a rota of venues. Arriving at church, you were greeted warmly by the members and by the aroma of freshly ground coffee, which accompanied the chat before the service. Once seated, the waiter took orders for lunch which you could stay for after the service – the coffee was free, but the lunch was not.

Nevertheless, the customers in the adjoining part of the restaurant could hear our prayers and singing as we worshipped, in a different way, within that community. We realised that for that fellowship of believers, being the church was rather different from our normal experience. But I have increasingly realised through my training for ministry, that worship takes many different forms, which are no less meaningful, and engages with communities in a variety of amazing ways. Together, we are the church. But, as we look at the stewardship of talents, are there ways in which we as individuals could use our talents and abilities differently in this community? Could we be a different church?

Prayer: *Lord God, we give you thanks for the opportunity to worship you in church, day by day, week by week, to offer you ourselves as we are, to bring our needs, and to offer you our prayers. We recognise that we also live in the wider world with its claims upon us and pray that you would strengthen us by your presence, and fulfil our need for you, in every aspect of our lives, as we seek to be your people, using our gifts and talents to share the good news, wherever we are. Amen.*

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Ministry

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Associate Minister

Rev Cheryl McKellar-Young
tel: 07590230121

Auxiliary Minister

Rev Thom Riddell
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Minister in Association

Rev Dr JunSoo Park
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Church Office

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Office Bearers

Session Clerk

Elma Birrell
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Gift Aid Convener

Andrew Jones
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