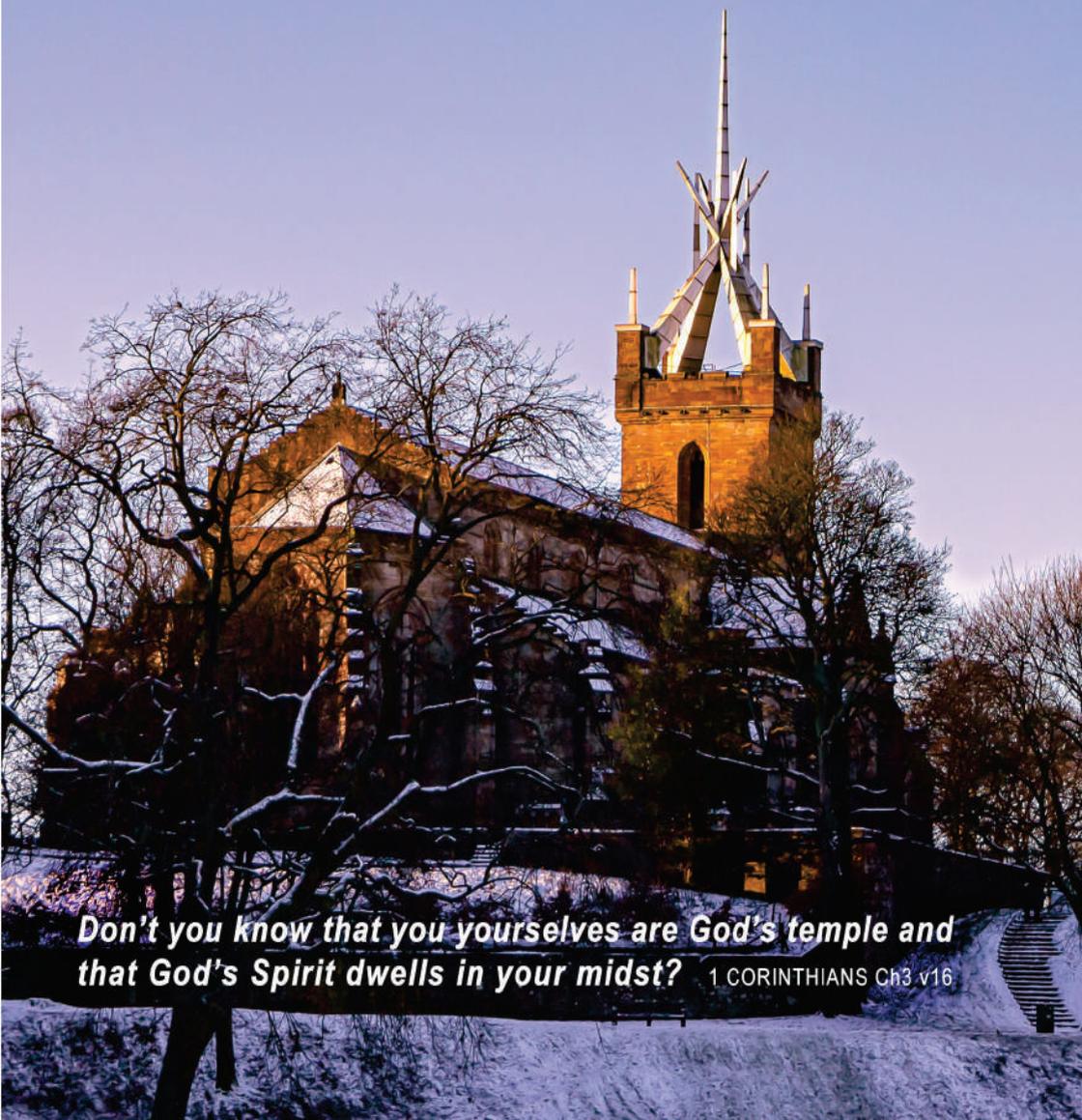


CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

February 2022
Vol 24:4



Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

1 CORINTHIANS CH3 v16

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday, 27th February

10am in the Kirk*

and

3pm in the Kirk Hall

***livestreamed on St Michael's web-site and Facebook**

Available to view later on YouTube or listen by phoning 01506 306036

Weekly Services

10am in the Kirk*

and

9.45am in Springfield School

***livestreamed on St Michael's website and Facebook**

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**Booking is helpful via
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01506 200838**

Cover: Courtesy of Martin Brown

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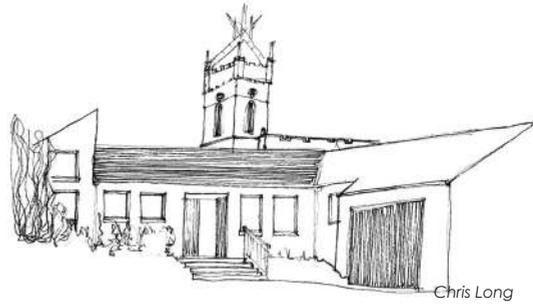
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The deadline for the May 2022 issue is 2nd April 2022.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser

In times past, people would navigate the coasts and seas by means of landmarks. Beaches, headlands, and shapes on the horizon would tell them that they were nearing their destination – or were instead hopelessly off course.

Although I am no ancient mariner, I use landmarks to navigate my way through life too, whether I be driving in the city or walking in and around Linlithgow. And being a minister, one of the landmarks I always look out for – perhaps needless to say – is churches, and in particular their towers and spires. I can't always tell you what a street is called – even in my home town of Edinburgh – but I will be able to tell you what kind of church it has on it!



Sad? Perhaps, by today's estimation. Yet church towers and spires remind me of a lot more than the boring services that some of us might have sat through as children. They remind me of God, and of the connection between our world and eternity. They lead me to remember that this world – with all its ups and downs, successes and failures – is *not* the last word. For there is another Word. A final Word. A Word whose name is Love.

That is some of what I think of when I see the tower and crown of St Michael's each day, and that same magic seems to be appreciated by others also. As anyone with a Facebook account knows, Linlithgow's online groups are full of pictures of St Michael's and its crown. Pictures at dawn; pictures at twilight; pictures in the blaze of summer and the chilling snow of winter. Many people, of course, will appreciate St Michael's for purely aesthetic or historical reasons, and might raise an eyebrow if I suggested their appreciation sometimes had a spiritual aspect to it.

Yet even among those whose faith is weak or non-existent, I suspect *there* is an appreciation for something more than just appearances. Part of the appeal of St Michael's is because it is a landmark, an anchor-point for people's lives. Fortunes may rise and fall, loved ones may flourish and then pass away, yet the tower of St Michael's remains. A symbol of certainty, of stability, and even,

sometimes, of eternity. Even if God is sensed only fleetingly in day-to-day life, buildings like St Michael's speak something of his steadfast love, and timeless presence.

Yet sadly, as the hymn reminds us, 'tower and temple fall to dust' and the tower and crown of St Michael's are beginning to falter. Water damage has resulted in the crown beginning to deteriorate, and unless something is done, the people of our town and beyond will have to get used to St Michael's famous crown disappearing forever.

That is part of what our new campaign, Aspire Linlithgow, is about, trying to maintain this beautiful building for another millennium, and ensure that it remains a presence in our life.

Yet the landmarks by which people navigate and make sense of their worlds change over time. People find new way-markers, new tools by which to navigate their way through life.

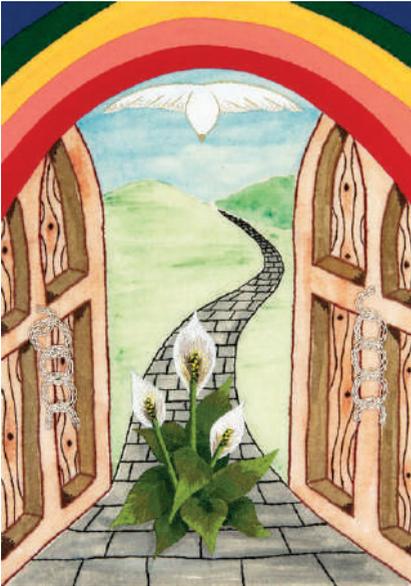
That is why Aspire Linlithgow is about more than maintaining a place of worship: it is about creating a *House for the Town*. Aspire Linlithgow is seeking grant funding and charitable donations for the renovation of Cross House into a centre for community and wellbeing. Rather than being for Church members alone, Cross House will become home to a number of community groups, who will work with us to create solutions to the problems that plague even a wealthy town like ours: loneliness, addiction, and poverty, amongst many others. Through the creation of a new social space in Cross House – or 'living room' for the town – and repurposing other parts of the centre, we will create the means whereby people will find the friendships, community, and skills by which to navigate their way through life.

A restored crown, and a House for the Town: landmarks to guide our way, and symbols of the love that God has for Linlithgow and for all.



I Know the Plans I Have for You

by Jaqueline Coyle



The World Day of Prayer service 2022 has been prepared by Christian women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Normally I would describe the geography of the country involved in the WDP but this time that is unnecessary. Instead, here is an insight into how the service is prepared and this year's theme.

An important characteristic of the World Day of Prayer is that it is woman-led. In some countries, WDP offers the only opportunity for women to express their concerns and to ask for prayer for issues relevant to them and their families. The preparation of the service and related materials began in November 2018 and was entrusted to a group of 31 women, aged from 20s-80s, selected by the National Committee. They were from different denominations and backgrounds, and many had little WDP experience.

The overarching theme of the service is HOPE – very appropriate for this time when the world is coming to terms with the ongoing risks of a pandemic and the looming climate crisis. The WDP theme appears like a balm of confidence in the hope of reducing the pain and suffering of many. It is an invitation to place our trust in God to take us forward to a healthier world. The programme is based on the letter Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylonia, in particular Jeremiah 29, 11 – 12: 'For I know the plans I have for you' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'.

This is relevant today as we hear stories from women who feel excluded, listen to the fear of a child refugee and learn how it was for those of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

The artwork for this year's theme, created by Angie Fox, uses a combination of embroidery, appliqué and metalwork to depict key words such as **Freedom**, (an open door to a pathway across an endless open vista); **Justice**, (broken chains) **God's Peace and Forgiveness**; (the dove of peace); and a peace lily breaking through the pavement. Overall, a rainbow representing everything from the story of Noah through to the modern day, a symbol of the overarching love of God.

The churches of Linlithgow will hold an evening of fellowship and prayer on **Friday 4 March**. Further details will be available soon.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY AT ST MICHAEL'S

by Steve Chaffee



I knew coming into post in mid-October that I would scarcely have time to get myself settled into St Michael's before the Christmas season. As you know, December is often an exceptionally busy month around churches, as most groups within wrap up their schedules (meaning Christmas parties!) and many invited groups (like schools) find their way into churches. As ministry can take many forms, so also can youth

ministry – arguably it's even more pluriform! So, I thought here I'd spell out at slightly greater length some of my aims moving forward – what my hope is for youth (and family!) ministry at St Michael's.

Youth ministry as most conceive of it is broadly American in shape. Its formative patterns emerged in the 70s, as mainline Protestant churches were faced with their youth leaving or seeking new and alternative forms of faith and spirituality. So youth were given their own space in church (often in youth rooms, with ping pong tables or the like) and hip young youth workers were brought in to recontextualise Christianity to this new generation. (Sound familiar?)

This pattern remains normative. Evangelical Christians in the 90s took this approach even further with movements like the Jesus Freaks and Christian music festivals. Adding to that a high emphasis on an experience of worship, it is unsurprising that this model of youth ministry was good at attracting people to Christianity, but never quite had staying power. When away at a weekend retreat at Lendrick Muir, for example, it's easy to enjoy the food, music, Bible studies, games, and more. But that becomes harder when you return home from the weekend retreat without a support network.

This is the model and kind of youth ministry within which I grew up. And I can see ways that this approach exists within Scotland – and ways that it doesn't! To my mind there are serious gaps amid its strengths. Yes, it makes the church attractive and relevant – but the scope of this form of youth ministry is limited to 'getting folk in the door', with few tools to enable further faith nurture, discipleship, or faith impact (whatever the

lingo is today!) Further, this form also misses out the intersection of youth and their families.

That's where my aims come in. I will devote my time to the flourishing of Sunday Club and Bible Class, chaplaincy to the schools, and getting to know parents through the Toddler group – but also to visiting families, running intergenerational events, and even the odd weekend retreat or two. That is plenty, I know, but this only defines the external form of the youth and family ministry.

The internal content must, if we are to call ourselves Christian, be oriented toward Jesus Christ. And this takes different shapes for the various groups. For Sunday Club, my job is to teach young people the rudiments – Bible stories and precepts from across scriptures. For Bible Class, my job is both to continue teaching the rudiments, but also to crack open the familiar stories for their unfamiliar lessons. For parents, my job is to help them discover new ways to talk and 'do' the faith in the home. In each of these steps (and others besides!) my job involves pressing into the mystery of God and the history of the church, which is both a blessing and a challenge (like a good hike that stretches your legs!).

Yet this is not my job alone. It is especially moving and comforting to me that our baptism liturgies always include the community vowing to help raise children and care for their families. While my post is an important one, it is vital that we understand this task as our work, not my work. It is a deep-seated conviction of mine that ministry is reciprocal. Whenever you volunteer at the church – that ministry shapes you as much as you shape it, by adding your unique strengths and methods. You and I get to do that together – how exciting (if also sometimes making your heart beat a bit faster!).

My most immediate goals include getting to visit the families (even if this means meeting you on your front step like in the early days of Covid!), linking up better with the local schools and, with help from you, seeing a return of the Youth Fellowship – and an intergenerational event or two before the summer. That, I think, will be plenty to keep me on my toes in the next while!



At a recent hike and overnight camp

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MUSIC NOTES

by *Bill Jones*



Our (Edinburgh) University friends, Alan and Alison Miller (of this parish), persuaded us to visit St Michael's upon our lockdown arrival in Linlithgow in September 2020 having moved after many years down south. Although the community was unfamiliar, it was not entirely new. In the early '90s I had spent some days recording in the church the complete sacred works of Robert Carver with Cappella Nova. When services resumed earlier in the year, it was good to be reminded what a wonderful building we have in Linlithgow. In the past 6 months we have grown to appreciate the variety of talents in the church family and, since I took up the post of Director of Music in November, the potential we have to develop some wonderful community music-making.

My musical journey began as a cathedral chorister at Llandaff Cathedral and I later spent a year as a lay clerk with St Michael's, Tenbury Wells, a specialist choir school (now sadly no more!) in Worcestershire and St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh and later in Lincoln and Canterbury. Hilary and I met whilst studying for our BMus degrees at Edinburgh University. During these formative years, I discovered a very lively jazz scene in Edinburgh and we also got involved with a Christian orchestra which taught us a great deal about leading church worship. As teachers we worked variously in Edinburgh schools before moving south. In 2007 I was appointed as headmaster of Spring Grove School (Wye, Kent) where, until last year, we both were in charge of a very happy family school and developed a lovely musical tradition.

It was great to return to Scotland and discover Linlithgow to be a lovely place to set up home. Here we have spent the last 16 months rekindling our music careers: Scottish Sinfonia concerts (Hilary), jazz gigs (Bill) and taking our singalongs into care homes (both of us) both online and live.

We have been encouraged by the response to the services leading up to and including Christmas and we now look forward to what we can achieve in 2022. There is no doubt that we have an enthusiastic and skilful set of singers and instrumentalists and we would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to join us (www.jolmusic.co.uk).

I am also looking for opportunities to involve children in our future music-making. Exciting prospects indeed!

PUTTING THE OLD TESTAMENT INTO CONTEXT

by Paul Davidson



Do you ever read a passage in the Old Testament and wonder why it is there? Maybe the pages of laws given to the Children of Israel in Leviticus, or the seemingly never-ending bloodshed in Judges? It can seem that the Old Testament belongs to a different faith than ours, it's so full of strict laws and death – a world away from the message of love and reconciliation that Jesus brings. But then we come across something like the beautiful love story of Ruth. The fascinating thing about Ruth's story is that it isn't just part of the Old Testament, she pops up at the very beginning of Matthew's Gospel, in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1: 5-6), where we find she is King David's great-grandmother.

I have been reading a book recently that looks at this kind of thing – the storylines that run

through the Old Testament into the New Testament. Appropriately enough, the book is called *Storylines* (published by David C Cook, authors Andy Croft and Mike Pilavachi). They did most of the teaching at *Soul Survivor*, and the book was written with that audience in mind.

There are six storylines investigated in the book, and they all help to throw the Old Testament into a new light. They are Jesus, Covenant, Presence, Kingdom, Salvation and Worship. The Jesus storyline is probably the one we might be most familiar with, especially the Messianic prophecies we hear at Christmas (eg, 'for unto us a child is born' in Isaiah 9:6, or 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah ...out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel' in Micah 5:2).

Let's look at one of the storylines in a bit more detail – that of the Covenant (other words for covenant are Testament and Promise). *Storylines* mentions that a covenant is not something dry, legal or boring, but rather a 'powerful agreement that enables a loving relationship to flourish.' It talks about three different types of covenant, two in the Old Testament and then a third one, from the New Testament.

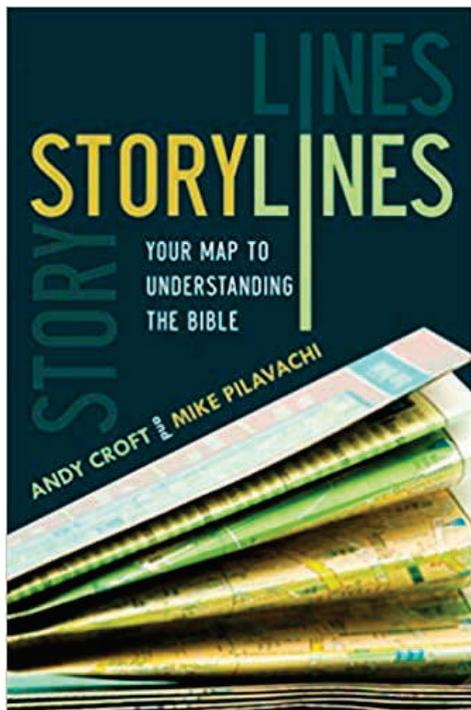
1. **Peace Treaty.** Back in Old Testament times, there were three aspects to a peace treaty (often laid out by a new king) – benefits to the people, their obligations towards the king (eg paying taxes, obeying his laws, not swapping him for another king), and the penalties applicable if the people didn't meet

their obligations (eg removal of the king's protection, or even punishment for rebellion). Part of God's covenant with Abram in Genesis 12 was that Abram (later called Abraham) would be blessed and made into a great nation. God honoured His side of this covenant for many years, bringing the Children of Israel out of Egypt and bringing them into the Promised Land. However, God's people continued to rebel against Him, and were eventually taken away from their Promised Land into exile in Babylon.

2. **Marriage.** The covenant we are probably most familiar with is that of the marriage vows. We know that to make a marriage work takes commitment on both sides, and that is also true of our relationship with God. It is heartbreaking when one partner breaks the marriage vows, and that is the metaphor used for the Children of Israel turning their backs on God and worshiping false gods. The illustration of faithful God and unfaithful Israel is given life by the prophet Hosea, who married an adulterous woman. His marriage to Gomer, and her unfaithfulness to him, was used to highlight exactly what Israel was doing in being unfaithful to God.

3. Which leads us to the New Covenant (or New Testament), which is more like that of a **Will**. As we have seen, people couldn't keep the terms of the old covenant, so the new covenant is one where Jesus has done all the work. And all we must do is believe in Him to collect the inheritance (Hebrews 9: 15-18 begins 'For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance').

This is just one of the examples where we can see the narrative of the Old Testament flowing into the New Testament. I would certainly recommend that you get a copy of Storylines and read it for yourself. It sheds a lot of light on some of the bits in the Bible which can seem a bit impenetrable.



[Funnily enough, a good place to start reading this book is Appendix A: The Bible in Twenty Pages. It's an excellent summary of the narrative of the Bible, from Creation right through to Revelation. It will help give context for many of the storylines talked about in the main body of the book.]

ANGUS ROBERTSON – 80 YEARS AN ORGANIST

by Helen Gait

R Angus Robertson resigned as Assistant Organist at St Michael's on 1st September 2021, 80 years to the day after his first appointment as organist in the then Methodist Church in Dunbar. He was aged 14 and still in short trousers! Angus was born and brought up in Dunbar, only son of Margaret and Bill Robertson, Ironmongers, and both musically talented. Angus started piano lessons when he was 8 and his piano teacher, Miss Crawford, encouraged him to learn to play the organ too. He continued playing even when he was at Edinburgh University.

In 1945 he was called up to the RAF and went to Padstow for 'square bashing'! He was always called Jock in the RAF (not PC nowadays?). He was allowed home every second weekend and so still played the organ for church services. In 1946-1948 he was posted to Singapore – no organ playing there!



On his return he completed his degree in Civil Engineering and in 1952 was appointed organist at Belhaven Parish Church and served there for 10 years, only being off twice, once because of flu and once more to go on honeymoon! In 1962 he moved to Edinburgh, because of business commitments. He met up with Mr Jimmy Douglas who was organist at Nicholson Square Methodist Church. He encouraged Angus and made him think about the music he was playing. He became relief organist at Salisbury and at Reid Memorial Church and St Mary's Haddington. This arrangement lasted for many years.

On retiring in 1988 he built a house by Linlithgow Loch and acted as supervisor and 'extra joiner'. He transferred to St Michael's and Rev Ian Paterson was quick to harness his abilities as an organist. One day whilst playing for a funeral at Bennie's Funeral Parlour he got an urgent phone call from Ian to ask him to come immediately to the church, as the young assistant organist had forgotten to attend, and the Bridal Party was waiting! Angus said he would come as quickly as possible ...with WEDDING MUSIC. Another time he was working in the garden when Ian made another frantic call. Angus said I will

get changed and come, to which Ian replied 'just come now, as you are'. He was then appointed as Voluntary Assistant Organist to Andrew Sutherland and there followed many years of cooperation and friendship, Angus playing for weekday weddings and funerals and Andrew playing at weekends.

In the late nineties Session was advised that the organ needed to be replaced. Several expensive options were put forward, but Ian Paterson was put in touch with Matthew Copley, an organ builder. He sourced a Willis organ to St Ethelburga's School in Harrogate. The school was closing, and the organ was sold to St Michael's. It was in thousands of pieces and was transported to St Michael's to be rebuilt. This took 6 months and Angus was there almost every day during the building. He developed a great attachment to the organ. On the first Sunday the completed organ was played by Andrew Sutherland and Angus played as a duet on the old organ.



Playing the organ in St Michael's has given Angus the privilege of being part of times of celebration in weddings and baptisms and in times of sadness in funerals and memorials. There has been a decline in the number of weddings in St Michael's as fashions change. He remembers one wedding where a mobile phone rang not once, but twice.

Angus has been blessed with good health and only Covid stopped him playing the organ. Fingers must be kept moving at 94, and the forced quarantine from the organ forced him to give up the organ. What achievement and satisfaction he has had from 80 years of organ playing.

During these years of 'retirement' Angus built two harpsichords and several lutes and recorders. He was St Michael's Events Coordinator for more than 10 years and baked bread and small loaves for Communion Services.

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THROUGH THE LENS OF A NEW SESSION CLERK

by John Reid

On 10 January 1965 I made a public confession of my faith and was admitted to the Communion of the Lord's Supper. This act took place in my first church, Townhead Parish Church, Coatbridge, at the tender age of sixteen

On 7 December 1969, now aged 21, I was ordained to the office of Eldership and admitted to that same congregation and Parish of Townhead, Coatbridge, having been asked the following questions:

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith?

Do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church; to uphold the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline thereof; and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs?

This sounded a bit of a challenge but, hey ho, I was young and believed I was called to do it. I recall on that day I was incredibly happy, as alongside me taking the same vows, was my dad aged sixty, who always believed that he was not good enough to fulfil the Elder's role, yet for me someone whom God had blessed in so many ways and a perfect role model for myself.

Well folks, 52 years on as an Elder I was invited by Liam at the Kirk Session meeting of 29 September 2021, to take the Session Clerk vow of office, and here I am having accepted and believing that God would want me to do this task.

Life for me as an Elder has been trying to fulfil my vows in as active a way as possible, whilst also doing my best to fulfil my role as a husband, dad, and granddad. I guess only my family can say whether I have fulfilled that role well.

The challenge over the past three months has been steep, however quite rewarding, in that we have been able to secure the services of a new youth worker, Steve Chaffee, an early year's worker, Fiona McCracken, and a Director of Music, Bill Jones. We have re-advertised for the post of Organist, and I pray that we will be blessed with a number of applicants.



The Church of Scotland is facing considerable change, and as we go forward in faith, St Michael's will respond to the changes in a positive and supportive way. Decisions have already been taken with regards to the Sanctuary and the need hopefully to restore the Crown of Thorns which needs repaired. We have embarked on an exciting project to potentially redesign Cross House and create a Community Hub. I am personally excited, if not a little frightened, but with God and your help I am confident we can succeed.

I invite you to consider how you could re-invigorate your vows and join us on our journey by offering your time and your talents. If this opportunity appeals to you, why not get in touch? A new Session Clerk needs all the help he can get, not only from **God** but **You**. I invite you to give some prayerful thought to my request for help.

God's Blessing



REGENT MOTORS

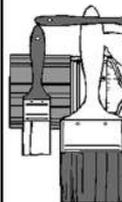


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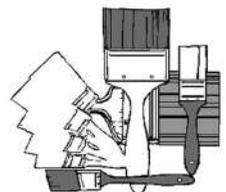
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Parish Register

BAPTISMS

One Lord, one faith, one Baptism

November
Iain Harrison, Bailiellands

December
Reece Cherrie, Highfield Avenue



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

by Profession of Faith

November

Brenda Bateman
Lorraine Dunsire
Iain Harrison
William Redmond



WEBSITES

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

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



FUNERALS

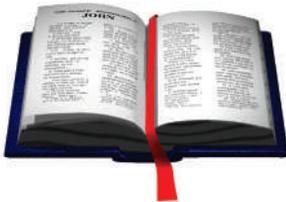
I am the resurrection and the life

October

Alan Feldwick, Maidlands

November

Thomas McKay, Whitecross
William McGaw, Merker Terrace
Hamish Ferguson, Springfield Road



December

Margaret Abbot, Edinburgh
Joyce McGurk, St Ninian's Road
Pamela Graham, Linlithgow Bridge
John (Jack) Parkinson, Templar's Court
Catherine (Irene) McMeechan, Priory Road
David Morrison, West Port Cottage
Irene Errington, Bailielands

January 2022

William Watson, Philpstoun
Ron Laing, Broxburn Care Home (formerly Madderfield Mews)
Joy MacIntyre, Clarendon Road
Marlene Grayston, Stirling
Ronald (Ron) Mackay, Manse Road

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one



October

Nicola Jarvis to Andrew Riddell

December

Elaine Inglis to Fraser Bennie



THE FRIENDS

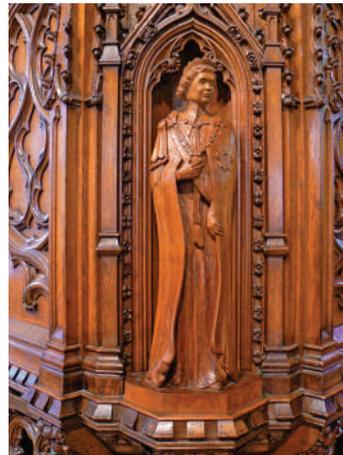
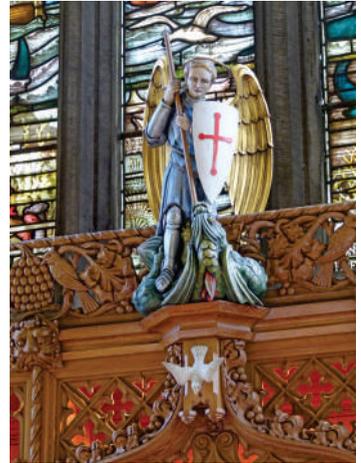
by Ken MacKenzie

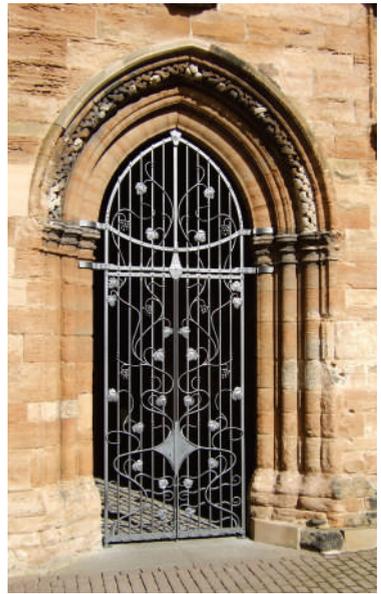
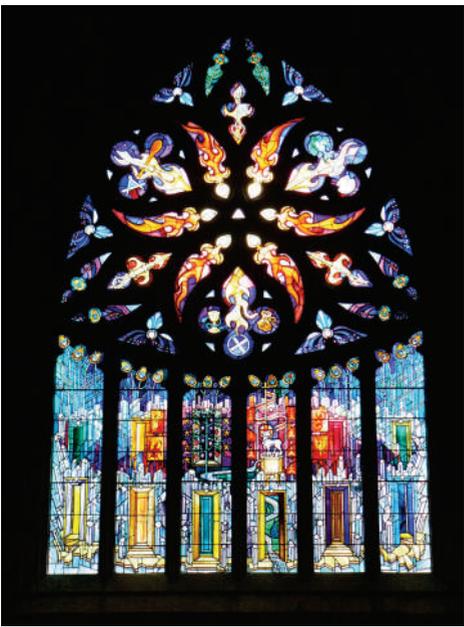
*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
Ecclesiastes 3 vs. 1-3*

On 31st December 2021 the Society of Friends of St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow (The Friends) ceased to be. The decision to wind up The Friends was ratified at its last AGM on 31st October 2021.

This decision had been contemplated for a while and, although great thought had been given as to how we could keep the society going, it was becoming obvious that this was not possible. This was a decision taken with sadness and a great feeling of loss especially as The Friends would have been 80 years old this year.

The Society of Friends was founded in 1942 during the dark days of World War 2. In the midst of a national crisis there was a need for Hope. The main object of The Friends was the care of the Church and its continued preservation and 'adornment' and 'beautifying its approaches and surroundings'. I think that it is fair to say that the Society has met these objectives over the years.





We are in the throes of another national crisis, the Covid Pandemic, and sadly this has accelerated the decline of The Friends. It had not caused it, as it was fairly obvious the Society was in decline for a few years before this. We were not gaining new members and sadly losing some long-standing friends. There were no new officials waiting in the wings and the current holders of office were coming to the end of their terms. It was also felt that The Friends had probably done as much as they could to enhance the building and the needs of the Church had overtaken the ability of The Friends to deliver. It is never nice to call a halt on something like The Friends and many a tear has been shed over this decision.



*Everything passes and vanishes:
Everything leaves its trace;
And often you see in a footprint
What you could not see in a face*
William Allingham 1824-1889

The footsteps of The Friends are to be seen in the Revelation Window, the South Gates and the new Boss at the West Door, for example. It will not be forgotten.

Farewell Old Friend!

Dates for your Diary

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

12th February	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild Broen (string) Ensemble
5th March	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild Sinfonia Chamber Players
27th May	7.30pm	Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir (with guests)



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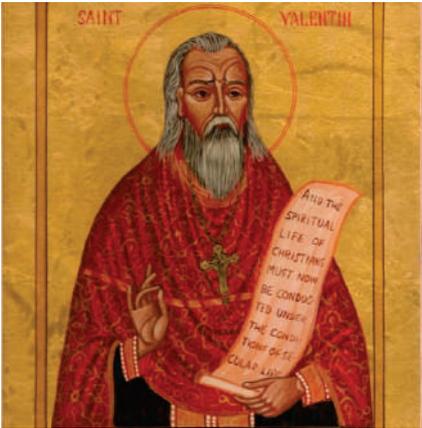
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St Valentine

by Vicki Carlin



Many of us know St Valentine as the Patron Saint of Love and we celebrate him on February 14th by giving and receiving Valentine cards and gifts. But who was he?

Valentine was born in the third century AD in Italy when it was part of the Roman Empire. The Romans worshipped a variety of gods and goddesses. They persecuted Christians in various ways, including stoning, imprisonment, torture and death.

Valentine, however, was Christian and became Bishop of Terni, in Umbria. He ministered to persecuted Christians whenever he could. He would secretly marry

soldiers to their sweethearts, which meant they could not join the conscripted army as it was thought that marriage would distract them during fighting.

Valentine himself was placed under house arrest by Judge Asterius, who had a blind, adopted daughter. One day, Asterius and Valentine were discussing Jesus when the judge tested Valentine. If Valentine could restore his daughter's sight, then he would do anything Valentine asked. Valentine prayed to God, placed his hands on the girl's eyes and her sight returned. As a result, the judge, his family and servants were all baptised and Valentine, along with other Christians, was set free.

Later, Valentine was arrested again for continuing to preach about Jesus. This time he was sent to the Emperor Claudius. When Valentine tried to convince Claudius to become a Christian, the Emperor insisted he give up his faith or face death. Valentine refused and was executed on 14th February 269AD.

Other stories lead to our celebration of St Valentine's Day. Valentine allegedly wrote a letter to Asterius' daughter signed 'from your Valentine' which may have begun the tradition of signing cards anonymously. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that birds chose their mates in the middle of February, and also that it was a good time for young people to find their partner: Tennyson wrote 'In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love'. St Valentine is also Patron Saint of engaged couples, happy marriages, beekeepers, epilepsy and healing.

There are, however, 11 different saints called Valentine. It is not known whether the St Valentine I have written about was one person or two and little is known about his life apart from the stories related above. Therefore, in 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed St Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, but the Church still recognises him as a saint.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RETIRING PROPERTY CONVENOR

by Jim Rae

After seven years serving as Property Team Convenor, I decided to stand down on 31st December 2021.

Retiring from my profession in early 2015, thoughts of a leisurely retirement soon disappeared thanks to Elma Birrell, then Session Clerk, persuading me to take on the Property Convenor role. My career experience allowed me to use transferable skills from my past employment and during these seven years, I have been ably assisted by volunteers who have given their skills and time.

Our property portfolio is diverse, consisting of two Grade A listed buildings, a modern Manse, a Kirk Hall and two flats. The maintenance requirements differ for each group and require different approaches. My objective was to improve the fabric condition of our properties by keeping on top of general maintenance while recognising that projects of a more technical nature also required addressing. Some of this work was tackled by team members, but the more complex projects required the engagement of consulting engineers and contractors.

A process to develop a more detailed annual budget was necessary to ensure that finance was available to cover maintenance and annual Health and Safety statutory requirement checks, covering gas boiler testing and certification, fire detection system compliance, fire extinguisher testing, lightning protection and emergency lighting system checks. A tracker system was successfully implemented to ensure that none of these annual checks was missed.

General maintenance is carried out on a daily identify and rectify basis, but there was a need to tackle some larger more complex projects, including the refurbishment of the church west doors and complete renovation of the Kirkgate flat. A two-phase refurbishment of the Manse required new double-glazed windows and kitchen, internal decoration, hardwood entrance flooring and new carpeting throughout the remainder of the house.

External funding for larger projects was obtained from the Landtrust allowing work to go ahead with the eradication of fabric dampness in Room 1, the



Kirkgate Room and entrance to the Kirkgate flat. New energy efficient LED lighting was installed in the Kirk Hall, with lead covering installed on the Vestry roof and rainwater gutters.

The Commonwealth War Grave Commission, together with West Lothian Council, provided funding for a much-needed refurbishment of the Linlithgow War Memorial, located in the Sanctuary.

As well as looking back, it is important to look to the future in relation to the 2030 Vision. The recent notification from the General Trustees requests that properties be Carbon Neutral by 2030 which will be a major challenge.

As the major projects began to demand more time to administer, the decision was taken to appoint project leaders from the Property Team. Brian Lightbody (Architect), has been controlling the Cross House project from concept stage which has recently been approved by Kirk Session and the Crown of Thorns project which we hope will start in Spring 2022. Robin Watson (Architect) is running Sanctuary projects including a new rainwater drainage scheme, stonework restoration and timber roof works. The future looks just as busy, exciting and interesting as the past did and I look forward to seeing the successful outcomes.

It has been a privilege to serve as Property Convenor and I take the opportunity to thank my team for all their support and willingness to take on such varied work. Thanks must also go to the Stewardship and Finance team who have always been extremely helpful.

There have been many lighter moments during the past seven years, such as finding a bride's veil on the church roof and dodging marauding seagulls during the nesting season. A more peaceful moment occurred when a robin, trapped within the church, allowed me to pick it up and escort it to freedom. Lastly, a team of police and forensic experts summoned me to the cemetery as a bone had been found, probably excavated by the resident rabbits, and they wondered if a terrible crime had been committed. The evidence was photographed and sent by mobile phone to a forensic lab in Dundee for a dating assessment. To lighten the moment, the police team invited all present to estimate the age of the discovered bone. Guesses ranged from 80 years to 150 years old. My assessment of 130 years astounded the team of experts when I was proved correct. 'How did you know this?', they asked, and I casually replied that I calculated the age from the inscription on the gravestone!

Things never stay the same forever and, although I am standing down from the Property Convenor role, I will remain a member of the team and look forward to continued involvement.



ASPIRE LINLITHGOW!

by Alan Miller

Never mind New Year resolutions (possibly forgotten by the time you read this). What are your **aspirations** for 2022? The pandemic has caused many of us to re-think our hopes and dreams. Whether through loss or experience, we've re-learned the value of good health, family and friends, and a supportive community and environment.

As a church, we'd already started reviewing our future plans with the 2030: Our Story workshops in 2019. From there came the 2030 vision of 'an ancient community animated by a living hope, that becomes a blessing for our town through its service, facilities and witness'.

Has Covid-19 changed our vision at all? Far from it: if anything, our sense of what God is calling us to do seems stronger than before. Setting up Linlithgow Coronavirus Support demonstrated the servant role we could play, bringing other groups together to meet the needs of our neighbours. The church sanctuary has once again rung to the sounds of worship and concerts, enhanced by the screens. Lorraine's work as Pioneer and Outreach Worker is showing how we can creatively build new relationships.

Just as we are blessed with what we already have as a church family, we are also blessed, and challenged, by what God asks of us in the next stage of our journey together. Realising the vision – transforming Cross House into a 'house for the town', securing the fabric of the church building and creating in it a more flexible special space for all – will require us to prayerfully review our commitments of time, skills and resources. While we will seek major grant funding for the building works, we'll all have a part to play too.

In our year of generosity, our fundraising appeal 'Aspire Linlithgow' showcases the iconic Crown of Thorns spire both for its popularity and for its meaning. When Liam first preached in St Michael's, he said 'The church can no longer bear the weight of the royal crown, but it can bear the Crown of Thorns'. We're called to give of ourselves in God's service; but whatever sacrifices we make are returned with lavish interest through Jesus' self-sacrificing love for us.

As God said when encouraging his people's generosity via the prophet Malachi, 'Test me and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams'. Now there's something to aspire to!

A YEAR OF GENEROSITY

by Anne Law



I write this at the very start of the new year. I don't know about you, but I hope mainly for a healthy 2022 when Covid becomes more managed, and we have some sense of a new reliable normal.

You may recall at the start of 2021, Tim Brown of the Stewardship and Finance team had put together a very conservative budget that described a worst-case scenario of a deficit at the end of 2021 in the region of £28,000. I cannot tell you how relieved I am that outturn at the end of 2021 looks nothing like that figure.

I have said on many occasions in these articles that we have been incredibly blessed in St Michael's in terms of the ongoing regular financial giving of members. At the time of writing, I cannot give an accurate figure of our surplus at the end of 2021, but it looks as if we will break even. Our freewill offering and standing order income for 2020 amounted to £250,000. The budget for 2021 was £220,000 and the actual income for 2021 is £240,000, so overall less than the 2020 figure. Over and above this regular giving we have received wedding and Cross House income that we could not have anticipated a year ago to the tune of £13,000.

We have monitored our expenditure very carefully during the year and indeed had a Budget Management Plan in place. Had the anticipated deficit developed during the year, we had plans in place on how we might cut expenditure. There has been one main area of savings in our expenditure and that has been in property. We have not spent as anticipated in maintaining the church, Cross House or indeed the Manse. However, the maintenance expenditure is only delayed and potentially will have to be included in the budget for 2022.

All in all, the outturn is better than anticipated. However, there is an underlying concern about future regular income. Covid is a complication but there is an underlying reduction in regular income. As a result, Kirk Session has agreed that 2022 will be entitled A Year of Generosity and it is the intention of the Stewardship and Finance Team to mount a stewardship campaign in the late spring of this year.

In finishing I would however like to thank you once again for the continued financial support for St Michael's which has been remarkable during these challenging times.

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SAYING THANKS

by Sam Fraser



On Hogmanay night 2021, in between sipping my non-alcoholic Prosecco (or 'Nozecco' to give it its proper name!) I hurriedly wrote an article for Crosswind to meet the deadline of 1 January 2022. I sent it to Liam so that he could have a read over it, and after a pregnant pause he said that he was fairly sure that I had written almost exactly the same article before.

Sure enough – I had! Perhaps it is not surprising that I ended up repeating myself. There is more than just a sense of *déjà vu* at the moment: social gatherings are being limited again, things are being cancelled, and media debate turns on whether there will be another lockdown or – even more challenging! – a return to home schooling.

My previous article was about *gratitude*, and how being grateful can help us overcome the negative feelings we experience when things don't seem to get better. Yet this concept of remembering what I'm grateful for, of counting my blessings, is fresh in my mind because of a new change in my life.

Some of you will know that recently I started a job as the church administrator for Bridge of Allan Parish Church. I'm very happy to have this new job, but it has been a tricky adjustment to the balance of family life. I suddenly found myself without a minute to spare in the day, and very little time to slow down at all. This meant that I quickly found myself *forgetting* the lesson of gratitude I had spoken about in my previous article. That's because gratitude doesn't come naturally to me, but is something I have to remind myself to do. I have to adjust my focus. Stop listening to the noise and be intentional about it.

I think a lot of us are perhaps too busy, and perhaps *like* being busy. Being busy is exciting and gives us a sense of purpose. We feel useful, and feel like we have something to show for the day, the week, the month. But perhaps some of us, like me, struggle to find time in our busy lives for quiet, for still, for peace, to find a moment to pause and give thanks for all that God has given.

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.' John 14:27

I encourage you, if you find that you are very busy, perhaps *too* busy, and distracted by all the noise, to remember to make time to be still and rest, and pray that, as you do, the peace of God will surround you, and help you remember all that he has given you.

DAVID MORRISON, MY FATHER

by Anne Corr



David Morrison was born on 26 February 1926, to David and Mary Morrison. His birthplace, Court Square, was demolished to make way for what is now Tam Dalyell House, built in the 1930s.

Dad was educated at Linlithgow Primary School, then Linlithgow Academy; on leaving school he joined West Lothian Council as an administrative assistant, first in the Education Department then the County Clerk's Department. In 1943 aged 17, he enlisted in the navy, was quickly assessed as possible officer material, and transferred to training at Loch Ailort in preparation for going to France. Later he remembered his convoy leaving Portsmouth, cheered by hundreds. On 6 June, they landed on Sword Beach and discharged their young soldiers. Dad recalled these brave young men, remembering German

shellfire on D-Day. Visiting the battlefields in 2009 Dad saw, still intact, the houses from where the Germans fired.

Dad was in the Far East when war with Japan ended in 1945. Despite an invitation to become a career officer, he returned to civilian life. I suspect the presence of Lily Erskine, his sweetheart, played a part in this decision. They married in March 1949 and spent 41 idyllic years together until her early death in 1990.

Post-war, Dad returned to local government, working his way up to Depute County Clerk. He became West Lothian District Council's first Chief Executive in 1975, a position he held until he retired. He saw major changes, but always strived to ensure everything worked effectively for West Lothian's people. He helped to establish twinning links with Hochsauerland in Germany and made many friends through the years. Later he became both Depute Lord Lieutenant and an Honorary Sheriff, remits he conducted meticulously and with pride.

Dad was a member of Bathgate Rotary Club, serving in various ways including as President, and received a Paul Harris Fellowship for services to club and community.

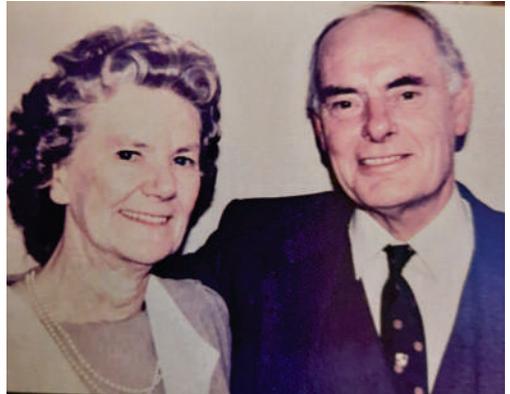
Dad, a proud member of the Fraternity of Dyers, loved donning the top hat and tails every Marches Day. He was delighted when his son-in-law, Raymond, and grandsons, Jamie and Andrew, became Dyers to continue this ancient Linlithgow tradition.

Irene and I had a wondrously happy childhood. Dad and mum believed in having a good education and encouraged us to be the best we could be in everything we did. As a young child, when others were learning from their dada about Snow White and Cinderella, I was looking at photos of famous cricketers in one of Dad's books. I could name men like Len Hutton, Gary Sobers, Richie Benaud – I couldn't do that now!

I loved sitting on Dad's knee as he sang to us – songs like the Laughing Policeman and Ally Bally. He loved musical theatre. As children we often holidayed in Scarborough and in recent years, Dad, Irene and I revisited this special place. Daily attendance at the Spa Orchestra was the norm. After one show, Irene said to me 'you realise we knew every word of every song tonight!'

Family was so important to Dad. He was delighted at becoming a grandfather to Jamie, Andrew, Alasdair and Gordon and took great pride in everything they have achieved. The icing on his family cake was the arrival of his precious great grandchildren, Jessica and Gregor.

After Mum's premature death, I saw Dad's strong faith clearly. His words and actions helped Irene and me cope with our grief, as indeed they are helping us now. Dad was an Elder in his beloved St Michael's for 70 years, serving variously as Treasurer, Session Clerk and on the Parish Trust. He was proud to be made a Patron of the Society of Friends of St Michael's in 2013. He didn't shout his faith from the rooftops, but it gave him strength in the years after Mum died, and the sure knowledge they would meet again.



The last two years have shown me the great kindness and love shown by Dad's friends and neighbours; the dedication of his team who cared for him with dignity, love and respect enabling him to remain in the surroundings of his home of 72 years; the amazing NHS teams in Linlithgow Health Centre, and Forth Valley and St John's Hospitals who looked after Dad so wonderfully during an incredibly difficult time for them; and Linlithgow Link for little gifts during the pandemic. Our world is in turmoil just now, but many are daily making it a better place.

I was so lucky to have Dad in my life for so long – few people have that privilege. As Rev Ian Paterson said to me, 'Yes you are grieving, but you are also celebrating a long life lived so well'. Wise and comforting words.

Dad now rests in peace safe in the arms of the Lord around whose teaching he lived his life, and home with Mum, the love of his life.

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Remember COP26?

by William Ross

Do you remember 6 November 2021 – the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice – when people of the 196 world nations attending COP26 called their Governments to strive towards solving the crisis caused by current and future effects of Climate Change.

Our lifestyles grossly misuse what is available in our World for all our needs, causing Earth to hurtle towards environmental disaster. As ever, funding to resolve the problem is scarce. Billions can be found to protect the populations of developed countries from the worst effects of diseases such as HIV/Aids, Cancer and Covid – but sharing solutions with less developed nations is seen as squandering resources. Meanwhile droughts, floods, warming seas spiral out of control as we continue exploiting people in pursuit of profit.

Thank goodness, however, that there are moves among the 'concerned' of our World to 'Think Global, Act Local' and they have been given the gift of a socially responsible 'World Wide Web'.



We have the chance to change from disparate communities into a Global Village where neighbours, although thousands of miles away, still need neighbourly support.

The Global Day of Action 2021 showed this sharing disposition; we must keep this movement alive and scale it up urgently.

It was wonderful seeing the response of our Community and Churches gathered at The Cross on that extremely stormy Saturday, 6 November 2021, with the possibility of others watching via the town centre webcam. There were people in battery operated wheelchairs, toddlers in push chairs, families who had created their own placards, leaders of Linlithgow Academy's Environmental Group, supported by several of their fellow members; there were representatives of Transition Linlithgow, Linlithgow Development Trust, our town's fossil-fuel-free cycling group, a trustee of Christian Aid, our Member of Parliament at Westminster and, for the leading of the singing between each of the speeches, the Directors of Music of the Reed Band and of St Michael's Parish Church who played their trumpet and trombone respectively. We even got a mention in the Scottish Parliament.

Let's hope that the actions put forward to COP 27 in Cairo next November will resolve many of the problems – as we do not want to have to send the delegates 'Hame tae think again,' yet once more.

Meantime, we must keep on 'Thinking Global and Acting Local'.



The school day started at 5.00am and lasted for 10 hours, with most lessons in Latin – a vital prerequisite to going on to university or to a profession in Law, Medicine or the Church.



Fearn Abbey – the 'Lamp of the North'

And it was to the Church that the young Patrick Hamilton was headed. Aged 14, he was appointed to the nominal position of Abbot of Fearn Abbey in Ross-shire. The income from that sinecure allowed him to go to university in Paris, where he came across the writings of Martin Luther – he may even have met the man. Patrick became convinced that the Roman Catholic Church was steeped in corruption and false doctrine.

Back in Scotland, Patrick continued to criticise the Church and preach the Protestant faith. He fled to Germany but came back, feeling that he had to reform his native land. He stayed again at Kingscavil, preaching in and around Linlithgow.

His outpourings came to the attention of James Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews, and, with the blessing of King James V, Patrick was arrested and taken to St Andrews to be tried.

The trial was a sham. He was sentenced to death and, to prevent any rescue attempt, taken for execution on the very same day: to be burned at the stake outside St Salvator's College. His bravery impressed all who watched the tragedy unfold. In a rain shower, he was fastened to a stake, and firewood placed round him. A quantity of gunpowder was placed under his arms and set on fire, causing severe burns.

It took six hours for him to die – the slow burning fire causing him great agony, through which he tried to speak until the volume of smoke choked him. His bravery impressed all who saw the event. John Lindsay (Archbishop Beaton's advisor) remarked that 'the smoke of Maister Patrick Hamilton hath infected all those on whom it blew.'



When Patrick Hamilton met his grim death, he was just 24 years old – and not that long out of his Linlithgow school.

Patrick Hamilton's sister also resided for some time at Kingscavil before marrying Robert Hamilton, (a distant relation), Captain of Dunbar Castle. Moved by her brother's commitment to the cause, she embraced Protestantism. When the authorities heard of this, she was brought to trial for heresy and cross examined at Holyroodhouse by King James V himself. She managed to convince her monarch that she was going to abandon her Protestant faith and was allowed to go free. She promptly fled over the border into England where she met Henry VIII's third wife Jane Seymour – and continued in the Protestant faith!

TIME WITH GOD

by Gordon Wardall

In February 2020, just before the Covid-19 crisis took hold, my wife and I visited Cyprus. One of my outstanding memories is of a visit to one of Cyprus' many Orthodox monasteries. Such places have always interested me, an interest originally triggered by Ellis Peters' Cadfael stories, with their descriptions of life among monks in 12th-century Shrewsbury.



I have no wish to give up creature comforts for a life of seclusion and self-denial, but I can see some appeal to a life centred on contemplation, Bible study and prayer. Whenever I think about this, though, I'm aware of an underlying tension: does God want us to retreat from the world to a life of solitude, or to engage with it?

In the church as a whole and in our lives as individual believers, it seems clear that there is a place for both approaches – to serve God, but also to step aside from earthly distractions to be with Him.

This is reinforced by the teaching and example of Jesus. His human life was characterised by constant engagement with the world, in his care for the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised. His final commandment to his followers was to make disciples of all nations – hard to do in seclusion. Yet he often took time to be alone to pray and be with his Father.

It is also true that among those who have followed the monastic path, many did important work for the sick and poor in communities close to them. Others gave much to society as a whole, including contributions to literature, agriculture, science and technology. God has a role for us all: to serve him and to work for his kingdom – in activities that we perform through the church, but also at home, at school or at work, and in our daily interactions with others.

While we don't need to retreat to a life of seclusion, we all need to make time to be with God – 'to recharge our spiritual batteries' – through Bible study, prayer, or simply times of quiet reflection, whether sitting at home or while out for a walk.

CS Lewis spent much of his life promoting and defending Christian faith to an increasingly sceptical, secular world; yet he fully understood that he had to take time to read and reflect on scripture. As he wrote, a person couldn't '... be always defending the truth; there must be a time to feed on it.'

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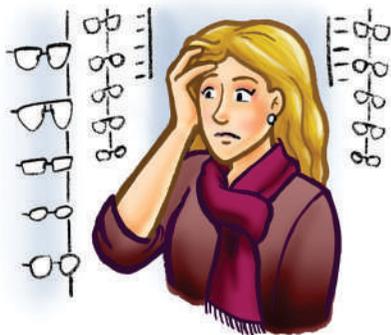
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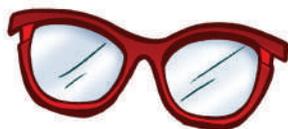


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