

# CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Spring 2019

Vol 22:1



Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.  
The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41

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Cover photograph: Gethsemane – pre-Reformation carving in the Vestry  
courtesy of Stephen Blake

**The deadline for the Summer 2019 issue is 27th April 2019.**

# SUNDAY SERVICES



## Communion

### Sunday 28th April

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**

## Monthly Communion

**Sunday 26th May**  
**at 12:15pm**  
*Individual Cup*

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# VIEW FROM THE MALTINGS

*by Rev Thom Riddell*

As we come to the end of our journey through Lent and approach the events of Holy Week, we are reminded of all that Jesus went through and suffered, on our behalf. The betrayal by one of those close to him, the arrest and unjust accusations by those in authority, the mocking and flogging, followed by the cruel death on an instrument of torture. In the words of a well-loved hymn:

We may not know, we cannot tell  
What pains he had to bear;  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.

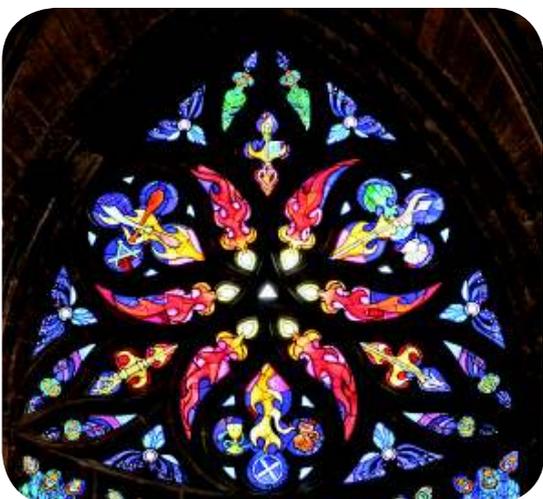


The amazing thing is that Jesus did all this for us, and all humankind, while we were still sinners. It wasn't a reward for good behaviour, and there was no certainty, no guarantee, that it would make us change our wicked ways in response.

When we buy something in a shop, like groceries, we expect a receipt but are unlikely to get a guarantee. We accept, in good faith, that what we are buying will meet our expectations. When we buy a washing machine, or a TV, or a car, we expect both a receipt and a guarantee. We have made a bigger commitment to the transaction and so we seek additional assurance.

What happens if we decide to 'buy into' Jesus? Is there a guarantee that comes with him? God loves us so much that he gave Jesus, his only Son, as a gift to the world. So, we don't need to 'buy in' to Jesus. In fact we can't, because it was Jesus who 'bought' us when he died on the cross and paid the price for our sin. He bought us freedom from our sinful past and, in accepting God's gift, we are reconciled to him through Jesus.

Where is the guarantee that this is for real? The resurrection of Jesus, the good news of Easter, is one part of it, when he defeated sin and death. The second part of it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the good news of Pentecost.



The guarantee comes with a promise, which is our grounds for assurance. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus: 'The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised.' That inheritance is the eternal life bought for us by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There is no guarantee that our lives will be easy and without sorrow. We have to face many challenges as we seek to serve the one who lived and died and rose again, for us and our salvation. Often our lives follow the pattern of Holy Week. We may start with days of celebration, like the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when we feel joyful and triumphant. Then we have to go through the trials, the days of prayer and preparation, the Thursdays of betrayal and the washing of feet, the Fridays of death, and the Saturdays when God seems silent. We think the Sundays will never come, but they do. There is new life, the power of resurrection to sustain us, and assure us of God's amazing grace.

Whatever our situation is today, as we look ahead, we know that there will be highs and lows; times when we feel uplifted, and times when we struggle. Life will have more triumphs, more times for fervent prayer, more trials, more suffering, more heartbreak, but also more Sundays when Christ's victory over death leads us forward into new life. The good news is that we do not travel alone. Jesus is with us every step of the way, and he has given us the gift of the Spirit to guide us when we start to stray from the path, to uphold us when we stumble, to comfort us when we sorrow, and to assure us of God's love when we are troubled by doubts and fears.

As our Nominating Committee does its work in searching for the next woman or man who will feel called to serve as our minister, we pray that they will be guided and upheld by the Spirit in their deliberations.



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# CHRISTIAN AID

*by William Ross*

Christian Aid has been working around the world to end poverty for over 78 years.

It is currently involved in 37 countries, working through 456 local partners.

Poverty is largely man-made – the result of the unfair distribution of Creation's bounty, as when the natural resources are exploited by the powerful or where there is poor governance, covering such matters as tax raising and how those taxes are spent on health services, education and the creation of jobs, as well as a justice system allowing discrimination on account of people's gender, class or creed.

Wars and violence are other causes of man-made poverty – vast sums of money diverted to destruction of homes and livelihoods, reducing people to refugees. Poverty is also caused by natural disasters – floods, droughts, earthquakes, hurricanes, again destroying homes and livelihoods, often ending in disease and famine.

Christian Aid campaigns vigorously on climate change, and for the successful delivery of the globally-agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the end of 2030.

With regard to the SDGs, all countries have undertaken to report to the UN at intervals on how their plans are progressing. The UK will be presenting its first report in July 2019. It is vital that this report is realistic. The job of writing this report has fallen on the Department of International Development (DfID). The UK, with all its experience around the globe, should take this opportunity to lead the way on this matter.

Christian Aid is asking its supporters to press the Government to produce a world class report. Contact your MP to call for this action; Martyn Day MP, 62 Hopetoun Street, Bathgate, EH48 4PD, Tel 01506 654415, or email [martyn.day.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:martyn.day.mp@parliament.uk)

In 2018 Christian Aid raised £8.5m, including Scotland's £1.5m and Linlithgow's £13,500. Our door-to-door collectors here number 65, and even then we do not cover every street. We hope to recruit new collectors in 2019. Please volunteer – it is not a huge commitment – just a few hours in the week 12-18 May. If you can help please telephone 842646 or email [wandeross@hotmail.com](mailto:wandeross@hotmail.com)  
Door-to-door collections provide a great opportunity to meet one's 'neighbours' while expressing one's concern for the world and its people.

# MOVING FORWARD

*by Alan Miller*



It feels like a lot has happened in the 6 months since I was appointed as session clerk. Perhaps more importantly, it feels like we've come a long way. It's good to thank God for his blessings over this period, and to look ahead to where he is leading us next.

Colin Johnston has been with us as our locum since November 2018. What a power of work he has done, with his energetic worship leadership, his uplifting preaching and his pastoral care! As or when he moves on elsewhere, he will go with our grateful thanks for the hope and faith he has

encouraged in us. But it's also important to acknowledge the fantastic work that Thom Riddell has been doing: not just preaching and leading services, but planning the programme of worship and generally holding things together. And John Povey has been providing excellent support and counsel behind the scenes.

In the autumn we held a series of Kirk Session conferences, under the wise leadership of Very Rev John Christie. The purpose of these was to help us reflect on a period of change and drift, and recommit ourselves to moving forward together. John shared something of the process, and invited the whole church to join in that recommitment, during a very uplifting rededication service on 13th January. It has been really heartening to talk to so many of you and to hear of your commitment to move on from the past and look to the future of the church.

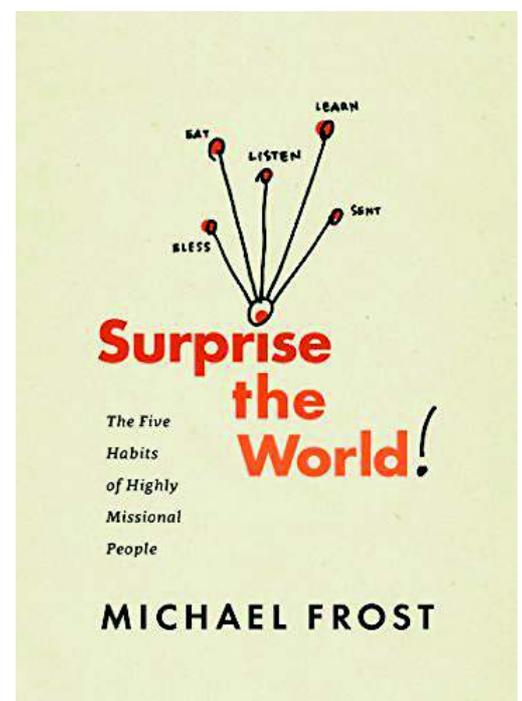
Thankfully, that future began to take more tangible shape in December, when Presbytery gave us permission to proceed to seek and call a new minister. We moved through all the necessary legal and administrative steps and were able to elect a 'nominating committee' at the congregational meeting on 10th March. Those elected were (in alphabetical order): Jane Brown, Tom Costley, Ian Fowell, Ashley Johnston, Ken Mackenzie, Fiona McCracken, Alison Murray, David Pandian, Sheila Rae, John Reid, Barbara Thomson, Andy Tunnicliffe and Gordon Young.

What happens now? The committee's task is to advertise the vacancy, to consider applications, and to nominate a potential new minister for our church. This is a very sensitive task: after all, no minister would want their current congregation to know that they were considering a move. So, annoying as it may seem, that's why the rest of us need to leave the committee to get on with it for as long as it takes, and not to pry!

What we can do, of course, is to pray – both for the committee, and for potential applicants who are considering whether they are called to St Michael's.

And in the meantime, what about the rest of us? As John Povey reminded us in the autumn, the manse may be vacant but the church certainly isn't. Coming towards the end of our 5-year '2020 Vision' period, this is a good time to reflect on where and how God is leading us forward from here. We want to build on the successes such as Seedlings, Messy Church, and Sunshine Sing-Along; we want to see more people drawn to the Good News of Jesus; but many of us would have to admit that we also like things to stay safe and familiar.

While that can be a powerful feeling, I was reminded at a conference in January that it's not our church (or even worse, 'my' church) – it's God's church. As we look to the next phase of St Michael's life, perhaps it will be our growth in faith, love and faithful witness to the love God has lavished on us that will make more of a difference than anything else. During Lent, I hope you caught some of the services based on the book 'Surprise the World!'. Let's encourage each other as we seek to bless people, to eat together, to listen for the Holy Spirit, to learn about Jesus, and to see ourselves as sent into God's world. ('BELLS': bless, eat, listen, learn, sent.) If you haven't yet read the book, please do: it's short, cheap, easy to read, and packed full of practical wisdom for shaping our lives as 21st century followers of the way of Jesus. Available now at Amazon and at [www.eden.co.uk](http://www.eden.co.uk)!



There is so much potential for us to go further with God, and to experience the simple profundity of the children's song:

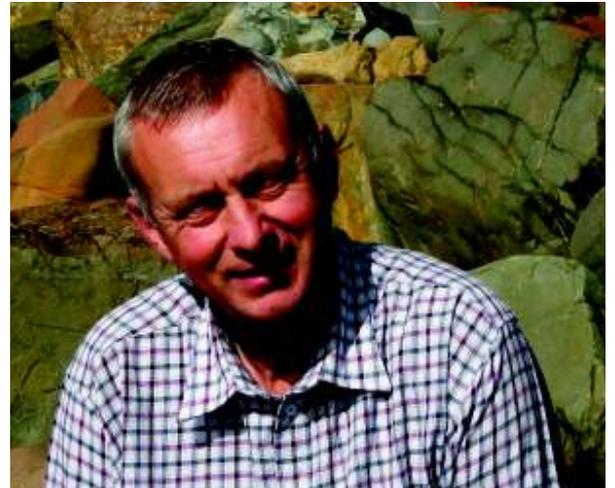
'Love is something if you give it away,  
You end up having more'.

I'm sure that our new minister – whoever he or she turns out to be, and whenever called – will be delighted to go with us in that journey into deeper faith and sharing.

# A DOVE DESCENDING

*Precis by Alan Miller of the sermon preached in St Michael's  
on 13th January 2019 by the Very Rev John Christie*

Here's a question... When you saw the sermon title, what was your first thought? The story of Jesus' life and ministry begins to gather pace though it's just one week after the arrival of the Kings and two weeks after the arrival of the shepherds and the angel voices which split the night-time sky. The Gospel story can't be taken in isolation from the circumstances of the day.



All worship the new born King. Except one. King Herod, a thoroughly bad man whose response to Jesus' birth was murder. The only option was for Joseph and Mary to take the infant Jesus and to run for their lives. You see, the Christmas story does in fact have a dark side.

Time passed... An email from your Session Clerk in July last year asked me if I would be willing to assist the Kirk Session to navigate the stormy waters in which the Congregation found itself.

'I am writing to see if you could help us with some conflict resolution work, probably during the autumn. For various reasons, the last 12 months or so has been quite a turbulent time in the life of the congregation. From speaking with a number of elders, I think there is a broad consensus that it would be good to find a way to reflect on some of this experience, in order then to move forward with greater unity before we proceed to seek for and call a new minister.'

I am here today, not to rake over the past, but to affirm a path to the future. Nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus' exile recorded after Mary and Joseph and the child returned home. Today is not about what happened in the past. Today is the result of what has happened in the last six months.

I began with a question; let me return to it. When you read the sermon title what was your first thought? Preparing for today and thinking about how to create a sermon to meet the occasion, my mind wandered.

In 1994, I was returning to the Isle of Tiree where I'd taught Science in the High School for six years. A lot had happened since, as a family, we'd left for Inverness some 10 years before. I hadn't been back since. This time I was coming alone – my wife had died a year before; my daughter was at University in Aberdeen. I'd been called to Ministry and left teaching.

Now I was returning to officiate at the marriage of a close friend's daughter. I stepped off the plane that May day some 25 years ago into warm spring sunshine – a decade's worth of memories whizzing back like there was no yesterday. I was welcomed by music... a chorus of skylarks ascending, offering their energy, their being, their singing. Their inspiration was soul-refreshing and soul-renewing.

The answer to my question comes from Luke's words *'the Holy Spirit like a dove descending settled on Jesus accompanied by the words "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life."* It comes, of course from the baptism of Jesus.



Isaiah's affirmation is also for us today. A new stage in the long history of this place where praise and prayer too has risen to offer to God the best of who and what we are. At this turning point, as the New Year begins to germinate and this congregation commits to look forward, be inspired by Isaiah.

Isaiah describes the situation of the faith community in exile. But the voice of God has promised redemption, and those who travel through the heartbreak and regrets of their circumstances – no matter how difficult the journey – will not be alone. Gerald Markland's hymn, based on Isaiah 43.1-4 beautifully sets the scene: *'Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you'*

And then, like Jesus, prayerfully look to your calling as members of Christ's Church. If our praise and prayers have, like larks ascending, travelled heavenwards, to be drawn into the story of Jesus' baptism. It too begins with a prophetic voice, a call to repentance and the renewing waters of baptism. The Jesus of the stable, the exile, the carpenter's son is about to begin his ministry. But first, despite John's protests Jesus is baptised.

The Holy Spirit descends and Jesus' ministry is affirmed. It is the new beginning – affirmed by the dove descending, beginning a life and ministry marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Surely the foundation of the Values to which all are called in Christ's name

# IDEAS

by Anne Law



In this year of stewardship of treasure by the time you read this article we will have had our Gift Day on 24 March; our stewardship of treasure campaign will begin in June 2019. Our audited annual accounts will have been agreed by our elders as trustees and we will be heading towards our annual congregational meeting in June to consider the annual accounts for 2018.

I wonder how you decide how much you give to St Michael's. With so many good causes around, it is difficult to pick and choose which ones will receive our money.

I looked on the website [www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk) for some inspiration for this article and found this: We read in the bible:

*'Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.'* Luke 6:30

*'To you, who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person. If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, gift wrap your best coat and make a present of it. If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. **Live generously.**'* The Message

In the supermarket on Saturday, you've run the gauntlet of the charity bag packers at the till, wincing as small boys ram a bag of spuds on top of a loaf of bread – you make for the exit, where you find someone with a clipboard. Would you consider donating monthly to this worthy cause? A mere £5 a month makes a difference. The case is compelling and no doubt deserving, so do you sign up, or apologise and walk away? We now accept requests like this as we shop, watch television, read newspapers or open emails. The 24-7 culture has extended to the charity world and it can feel like an assault on the senses. You could probably text away your monthly income by responding to each appeal.

So when Jesus says to his disciples in Luke 6:30 'give to everyone who asks you', where does that leave us? Drowning in a sea of direct debits, fundraising appeals and text giving? No, it means giving the best we have.

Before we end up feeling inadequate and overwhelmed, it's worth going back to basics. Our God is the ultimate giver and John 3:16 says everything you need to know about His generosity – He gave His only son. If we are to cultivate an attitude of generosity borne out of God's love rather than our own guilt, then we must acknowledge how much He's given us. The Message paraphrase of the passage in Luke sums it up with the words – **Live Generously**. So how do we learn to do that?

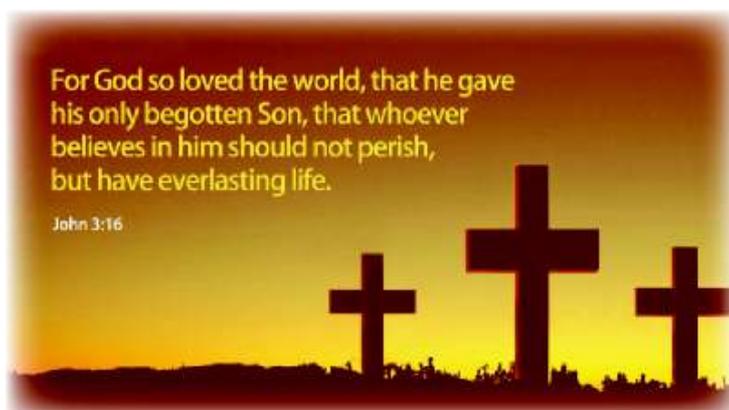
**1. Be thankful:** spend time giving thanks for how God has blessed us in our life. Do a quick inventory of what we have – time, skills or knowledge, our home and family, car, money and give thanks for these 'gifts'. Prayerfully consider how God might want us to share these with others.

**2. Be intentional:** work out a financial budget so that we can be thoughtful and intentional about what we give financially. Planning our giving and assessing the proportion of our income available to give away allows us to make informed decisions.

**3. Make it personal:** think about the people and causes that God has put on our hearts – not everyone has the same passions and personal experiences. How best to respond to each opportunity? It may be financial giving, but it may be prayer that God will supply all their needs. We may feel a call to be an advocate, raising awareness of an issue or campaigning on their behalf. Use discernment when considering requests for help – is it actually what is needed or might there be a better way for us to give?

**4. Be available:** there will always be the emergency appeal requiring an immediate response but also be alert to God's opportunities. Being spontaneous may not come naturally to everyone but developing spiritual antennae to respond to an unexpected request is part of the generous journey. That may be the big news item but equally a small kindness we can offer a neighbour or friend.

By taking time to pray and think about who or what we give to and being intentional about it, we'll be able to tune in to what God is saying to us about our giving, start to live more generously and take our lead from Him on the generous journey.





# MUSIC IN ST MICHAEL'S

by Matt Edwards

Music never sleeps...

Music at St Michael's certainly never stands still, and the new year has heralded some new opportunities. After the excitement of the Nine Lessons and Carols we are now looking towards the warmer weather and the promise of Easter. We continue to give thanks for the wealth of talents we have within the church family and, as the results of the music survey come together, we can see how these can be aligned with the reordered ensembles that we are now able to offer.



**Setting up for the recent production of 'Exiles'**

The Adult Choir continues to go from strength to strength, welcoming several new members over the past few months, and expanding the repertoire to enrich the 11am service. The music we are working on falls into two categories, short and long term. Short term is over a matter of a few weeks for new and shorter anthems, long term allows us to build up something special for the larger services of the year. We are currently planning to introduce some choral greats! We have recently been gifted a large library of choral music from Thomas Coats Memorial Church in Paisley, my previous post. The church has closed to worship and I was invited to offer a home for approximately 80 anthems. We have been able to offer the occasional introit at special services. A large concert is planned for later in the year, together with other local musicians – however we shall reveal more nearer the time!

The Junior Band (Sunday Club) has already made a couple of wonderful appearances at worship, and our thanks to Tracy for making this possible. We hope to have the resources to start a Senior Band for the older children at some point this year. Both have the main objective of supporting us in worship and outreach events throughout the year. The Adult Band will be reformed with a view to playing on a regular basis at the 9.30am service and at our

joint services. We hope to recruit some voices to join with the band for these occasions and to augment the Adult Choir for special occasions.

The organ is in fine voice after major work last year: the first part of the major clean has been completed and the emergency replacement of the pedal slider action and humidifier was completed in time for the switching on of the heating – which was crucial. As the levels of humidity and heating have settled we have seen the tuning and stability settle well.



Post cleaning there are some small issues that will be seen to as part of the normal Spring tuning visit. The final part of the clean will take place in the summer, returning the organ to the condition it was in when it was installed. We will be looking to showcase this in 2019.



So, what does 2019 hold for St Michael's and our music? Well, growth and development has already been mentioned above. New adult members are always welcome to the choir, please do come and speak to me – I am quite approachable and human (most days!). Also, if you weren't part of the music audit and feel that you would like to get involved, again – please let me know. We are hoping to be able to offer a separate Junior Choir by the autumn term as well, making six music ensembles in total!

This is all good news for our church family and is something we should celebrate and share. The organ recital in September last year was an incredible success, and – as promised – we are preparing to hold a series of concerts this year starting on Sunday 12 May at 3pm with myself at the organ again. Entry will be free of charge, with a retiring collection. On Sunday 9 June, we will welcome the choir of Dunblane Cathedral to sing, again at 3pm. Further concerts will depend on levels of support – however we do have organists enquiring already about performing here!

Thank you to all of those who make our music making possible at St Michael's, and to all of you who support our various ensembles and events. We look forward to hearing from you, and to welcoming you to one of our 2019 events!

# 35 THE GARDENER'S BIRTHDAY

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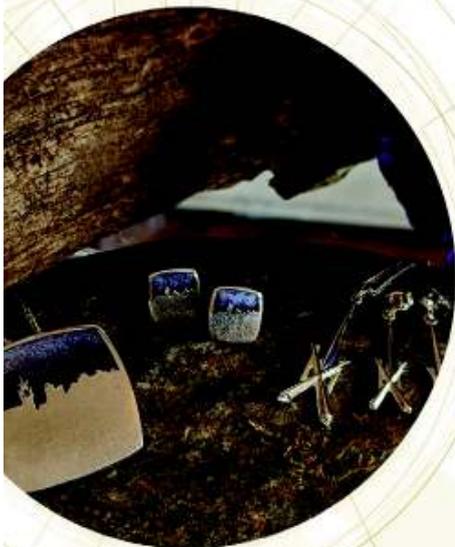
Our bespoke collection of silver jewellery inspired by Linlithgow Palace Skyline and St Michael's Church Spire now includes the 'Black Bitch' pendant and cufflinks. Available now in store.

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# OPEN CHURCH (THE PLACE TO BE!)

*by Ann Mellon*

The Church is not a building, the church is not a steeple... the church is the people! Helping to put those words into action are Open Church Volunteers from St Michael's. From October to March the church is manned by two volunteers from 10.30 am until 1.00 pm and from April to September in two shifts from 10.30 am – 4.00 pm.

That's quite a lot of people to contact, plan and organise on a monthly basis! I've started helping Alison Millar emailing and phoning volunteers to prepare monthly rotas. In March we held a couple of successful get-togethers for Open Church Volunteers to enable volunteers to get know each other a bit more, remind them of key duties and discuss issues that arise from time to time. We are always looking for volunteers and it was great to see a number of new faces!



Being an Open Church Volunteer means that you never know who is coming through the church door next – and that is part of the enjoyment many Open Church Volunteers derive from their shift. Looking at the Visitors' Book shows people from an amazing range of places. In just two days in February we had visitors from Japan, Spain, Australia, Canada and Taiwan, and local folk from Edinburgh, Bathgate and Greenock.

Often visitors only have a short time to spend in St Michael's, but take in the splendour of the architecture and wonder at the skills of the builders. Others spend longer, using the self-guided tour that indicates points of interest in the church.

Some visitors are in a reflective mood and may want to sit and experience the peace of God's presence, use prayer cards in the pews or in St Katherine's Aisle, or light a candle as a physical expression of their prayers.

Some of our volunteers enjoy helping children spot the different animals in the large Creation stained-glass window, or the carved animals in the wooden seats below it, or simply allowing them to experience different parts of the church.

Open Church Volunteers provide a friendly welcome and are around to answer questions and engage in conversation with visitors whenever seems appropriate.

If you'd like to know more about becoming an Open Church Volunteer, please contact Alison Millar [alison-millar@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:alison-millar@blueyonder.co.uk) 01506 845406 or David Timperley [d.timperley@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:d.timperley@blueyonder.co.uk)

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Sitting at Linlithgow's picturesque Cross in the town centre, the iconic town house is next to Linlithgow Palace, St Michael's Church and Linlithgow Loch. It has also recently undergone a £5 million refurbishment to create two stylish, contemporary function rooms and a stunning roof terrace ideal for weddings.

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# PARISH REGISTER



## FUNERALS

*I am the resurrection and the life*



### **December**

John Lawson, Clarendon Road

### **January**

Nan Easton, Highfield Crescent

### **February**

David Brown, Deanburn Road  
Ian Neilands, Kingsfield



### **March**

Ann Gibson, Deanburn Park

## BAPTISMS

*Let the children come to me*

### **February**

Archie Stewart Watts, Oatlands Park



# THE ART OF ST MICHAEL'S

By  
Christopher  
Long



Over its long history, St Michael's has undergone periods of creativity, as well as destruction – desecration even. Its art has followed these extremes.

The catastrophic effects of the 1424 fire are illustrated in one of the eight fine wall hangings. See the illustration.

The tapestries tell the church's history a century at a time.

## ***Fire and Destruction – the tapestry depicting the 15th Century***



## ***Mary, Queen of Scots, in the pulpit***

The town celebrates the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, who was born in the palace next door and who was very likely to have been baptised at St Michael's.

In the turbulent times of the Reformation, altars and statuary were destroyed – the cover shows a surviving piece of carving.

St Michael's Church loyally retains its link with the town of Linlithgow and representations of the black bitch can be seen carved in wood and stone as well as on the surface of the great bell in the tower.

Many excellent publications in the church shop relate the story of the history and architecture of the church and its people.

In my researches into the art of the town I have been struck by the major contribution St Michael's has played through the imagination of many artists in various materials over the centuries.

Illustrated on these pages is a selection of my favourites.



## ***The town insignia – the Black Bitch***

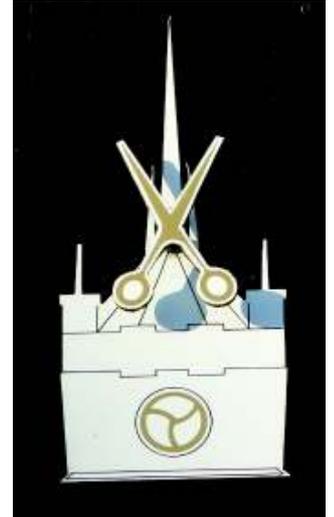


**Queen Victoria, in the John Ferguson window**

Over time local families have commissioned many of the outstanding stained glass windows. Favourites of mine are the 'Samuel window', which adorned the front cover of the last Crosswind and the John Ferguson memorial window, by the war memorial, which graphically tells the story of the church in colourful pictures.

The church tower sans crown is pictured in glass below Queen Victoria.

The new crown erected in 1964 symbolises to many the town of Linlithgow, eg it is featured today in the Cross Cuts hairdresser sign with scissors symbolising the tower.



**Cross Cuts sign with scissors**



**The dove**

Animals feature widely in the church from the Beast in the Crear McCartney window, the lamb in the shepherd's arms, the dove, to the church mouse carved in oak in the elders' stalls in the apse!



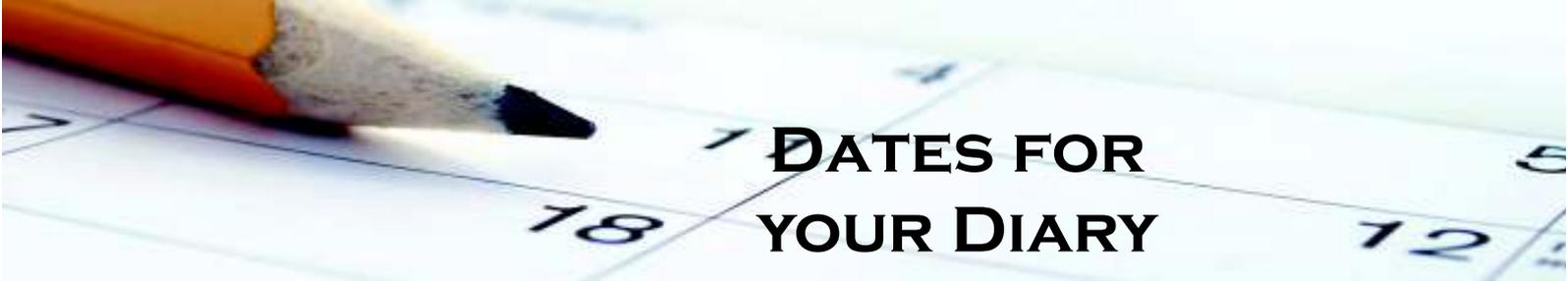
**Shepherd and the lamb**

**The Beast in the Crear McCartney window**



**The mouse carved in oak**

In the next edition I will look at the portrayal of St Michael in the church.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## COFFEE MORNINGS

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

27th April	LAMP
4th May	Project Trust Fundraiser
11th May	Linlithgow Reed Band
28th September	Burgh Beautiful Autumn Fair

## EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

28th April	3.00pm	Scouts' St George's Day Service
15th May	7.00pm	GB Parents' Evening Display
18th May	7.30pm	The Big Noise, Sistema Choir Concert
24th May	7.00pm	NYCoS Summer Concert
2nd June	7.00pm	NYCoS Summer Concert
22nd June	All Day	Gala Day (wet weather venue)

## OTHER EVENTS

29 Jun–30 Jun	12.30pm	Spectacular Jousting, Linlithgow Palace
7th September	7.30pm	The Antonine Ensemble – Kirk
14th September	9.00am	Linlithgow Folk Festival Association (Youth Musical Showcase) – Cross House
14–15 September	10.30am	Doors Open Day – Kirk

## WEBSITES

[www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk) – See Crosswind in full colour! Also find podcasts of sermons, current intimations, details of upcoming events and all other church activities.

[www.helpcentre.org.uk](http://www.helpcentre.org.uk) – For information on support available for most situations.

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# REGENT MOTORS

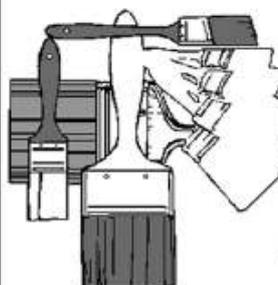


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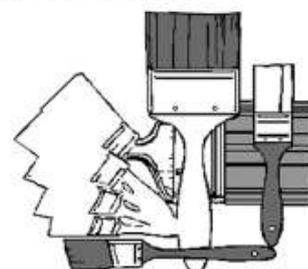
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# CARING FOR THE DYING

*by Tom Brown*



Over the last few years the Pastoral Care Team (PCT) has developed a number of services for the bereaved, led by Sheila Rae. More recently we have started to think about logically extending this work and considering what we might do to support people who are dying. The need for this was highlighted at one of our Sunday morning services by Ruth Middleton (PCT member), in her recent review of Richard Holloway's book 'Waiting for the Last Bus', which deals with this subject.

The review highlighted the common problem of the awkwardness which many feel in talking about death and dying, highlighted by the euphemisms we often use when discussing it, for example 'passed away' or 'departed'. We often use these to protect others and ourselves, to avoid discomfort (often our own) or because of our perception that using words like 'death' and 'dying' is unduly blunt.

## **Reasons for talking about death**

There are many reasons for encouraging people to talk about death and dying, including:

- Relieving the sense of isolation which many dying people feel
- Dealing with the 'conspiracy of silence' which can occur, eg when families insist it mustn't be talked about
- Dealing with financial matters and other business which if left undone can cause distress and hardship for others after death has occurred
- Allowing a forum for spiritual issues to be discussed
- Allowing expression of feelings of anxiety, fear, sadness

This is not an exhaustive list. Research shows the majority of dying people value the opportunity to talk about these things and indeed express relief that they have been afforded the opportunity to do so. Sensitivity is, however, required as there are some people who simply choose not to engage and this should be respected. We should endeavour to 'open doors' to allow discussion but not to force the issue.

## **How to talk to dying people**

There are a large number of variables which can affect someone's attitude to death. These include personality, age, number and quality of supporting relationships a person has, and importantly religious and cultural factors.

Interestingly, in general terms people of strong faith and those of no faith at all tend to cope better than those who 'aren't sure' about major religious and spiritual issues.

Dying people may be more concerned with how they die rather than death itself. For example, they may worry about management of distressing physical symptoms like pain or breathlessness, or psychological symptoms like anxiety and depression. Concerns about death itself often revolve round issues like how family will cope without them and unfinished business (including 'psychological' business). For some there may be anxieties about what happens after death though this is perhaps less common in this secular age.

It is important to approach the dying person conveying a willingness to listen and a sensitivity to cues suggesting they may have issues they wish to discuss. Enquiries about what the person knows or indeed what they want to know about their illness may give a clue as to their need and willingness to talk. It is important not to change the subject, due to one's own embarrassment or feelings of helplessness when dying people want to talk about it. It is equally important not to pressurise people or force the issue when it is clear they have no wish to talk. It is important that you don't feel you have to 'sort' things and it is wise to be very sparing with offering advice. A listening ear and a willingness to spend time with the person are most valuable. For Christians reading the bible and prayer can bring enormous comfort. It is often important for those ministering to the dying to ensure they have adequate support for themselves.

### **Christians and dying**

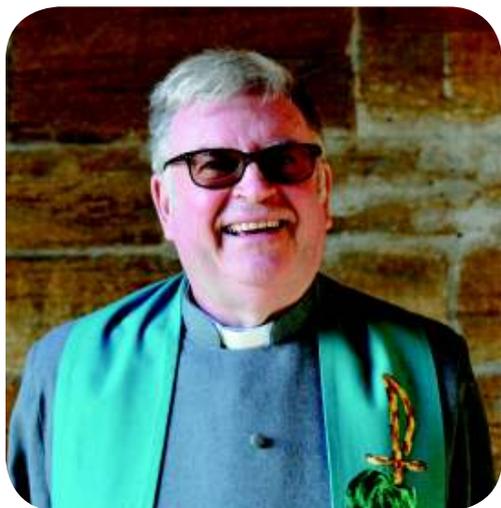
For those of Christian faith the belief that they will be with Christ after death is central to how they cope with dying. It does not of course make us immune to pain and suffering but can help put it into perspective. Paul's staggering words in Philippians 1:21 'For me to live is Christ, to die is gain' succinctly articulate the hope that is ours in Christ. Indeed he goes on to say 'I desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better'.



Last year the national press reported a story about a primary school headmistress Sue East, who was dying and wrote a farewell letter to her pupils. She was a Christian and clearly faced death courageously. In the letter she quoted a poem called 'The Guardian Angel' – 'For me it is time to go home. To the court of Christ, to the peace of heaven'. For the Christian this is what death is.

# THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

by Rev Colin Johnston



The Church has known persecution from the earliest times. Saul of Tarsus was, by his own admission, one of the earliest persecutors, and certainly Peter and Paul are thought to have been martyred in Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome. Later Roman emperors like Diocletian had systematic persecutions throughout the Empire. But as Tertullian famously said, 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'.

Over the centuries the Church has continued to suffer persecution, and at times sadly it has been the Church itself which has persecuted others who differed from the official theology or those from other faiths.

Since coming to St Michael's, I have been asked of my own experiences of persecution in the various countries where I lived. I feel that I have been fortunate to have worked in a predominately Christian country, **Zambia**; a predominately Jewish country, **Israel** and a predominately Muslim country, **Egypt**.

In Zambia, many people had active church connections and were upfront about their faith, while in the Holy Land, faced with emigration and a falling birth-rate, Christians made up only a small percentage of the population and were therefore not deemed to be a threat. The traditional parades through Muslim-majority Arab villages on Palm Sunday were always met with goodwill, and I also found that many secular Jews were curious about the Church. Indeed, some would attend services, especially at Christmas. There were Jews, however, who had converted to Christianity and called themselves Messianic believers, and there were sporadic incidents where their property was damaged. In my last few years in Israel, some monasteries and churches were also targeted by extremist Jewish groups, and there was an arson attack on one of my favourite churches, on the traditional site for the miracle of the Loaves and Fish.

Egypt was another matter. It had been a Christian country for centuries, but the spread of Islam meant that the percentage of the population declined. Today it is estimated that 10% of the population is Christian, mostly Coptic Orthodox (roughly 10 million people). Most urban Egyptian Muslims would regard themselves as tolerant of other faiths, but Christians would disagree and assert that over the centuries they have faced discrimination and have been treated as second-class citizens. Many friends claimed that they had been passed over for promotion at work because they were Christian (Christians

tend to have a cross tattooed on their wrist, plus their names like Peter or Michael are a giveaway). In education Christians are not always selected for subjects like medicine, and again friends say that they have not progressed to Masters level because of their Christian identity.

Discrimination is more widespread in the rural areas, where tensions run high. It is difficult for churches to be built, so often believers meet in homes for bible study and prayer. This can lead to these homes being burned or those attending being beaten. In 2015, just before I moved to Egypt, 70 churches in the Minya area were destroyed by an angry mob, and bibles were burned. This was the time that the Muslim Brotherhood were in power, and many Christians emigrated to North America. However, incidents of churches or homes being destroyed still happen today.

In my first week in Egypt, the story of a Christian mother made headlines. She had been forced to walk naked through her village, because her son had been suspected of having a Muslim girlfriend, and such relations between the faith communities was anathema. Just before my first Christmas in Cairo, a suicide bomber managed to enter a church next to the main cathedral, went to the women's side of the church and blew himself up. 29 worshippers were killed in the explosion, and their photographs are now displayed outside the church, each with a martyr's crown on their head. After that, security was tightened, and churches had to have security checks and police were stationed outside.



The following Palm Sunday, suicide bombers attacked again, exploding bombs and killing 30 Christians in one church, while the same morning others attacked the cathedral in Alexandria, though fortunately security was tight and police stopped the bomber, though they themselves were killed in the explosion. I was in Alexandria that weekend and had worshipped in the cathedral before moving on

to the Presbyterian church. The memory of walking through streets lined with traumatised people, Muslim and Christian, will always remain with me.

In my two and a half years in Egypt there were other outrages, such as when a bus load of pilgrims, including children, were massacred as they went to visit a monastery. However, the result has been to embolden the Christians, and I have always been incredibly impressed by the strength of faith in our Egyptian sisters and brothers.



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# He Is Risen!

All the missing words in this passage from the Good News Bible are hidden in the word square. Words may run in any direction. The leftover letters spell out what the messenger at the empty tomb told the women.

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S	T	O	N	E	Y	S	M	M	N
E	U	M	D	S	L	A	O	H	T
C	J	B	E	H	R	L	A	T	R
I	E	O	L	Y	A	S	N	A	A
P	S	D	L	S	E	I	R	B	N
S	U	Y	O	I	O	W	Y	B	C
E	S	I	R	N	U	S	A	A	E
S	E	L	A	R	G	E	O	S	W
N	E	N	E	L	A	D	G	A	M

## Mark 16, 1-4

After the \_\_ was over, Mary \_\_, \_\_ the mother of James, and \_\_ bought \_\_ to \_\_ and \_\_ the \_\_ of \_\_. Very \_\_ on \_\_ morning, at \_\_ they went to the \_\_. On the \_\_ they said to one another, 'Who will roll away the \_\_ for us from the \_\_ to the tomb?' (It was a very \_\_ stone.) Then they looked up and \_\_ that the stone had already been \_\_ back.

## Eyewitnesses

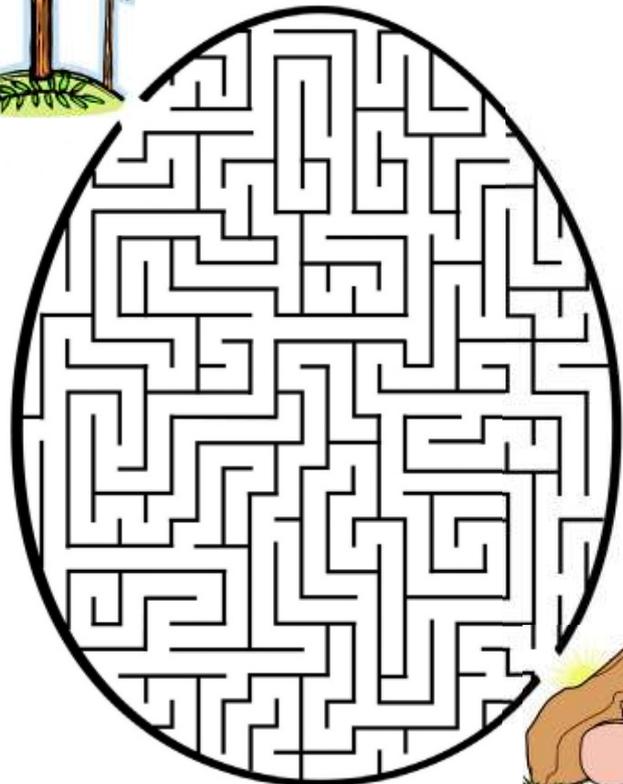
Here are some of the people who met Jesus after he had risen from the dead but their names have become jumbled.

Who are they?

- |        |          |
|--------|----------|
| smhota | treep    |
| ryma   | spoclea  |
| honj   | lentaanh |
| mejas  |          |

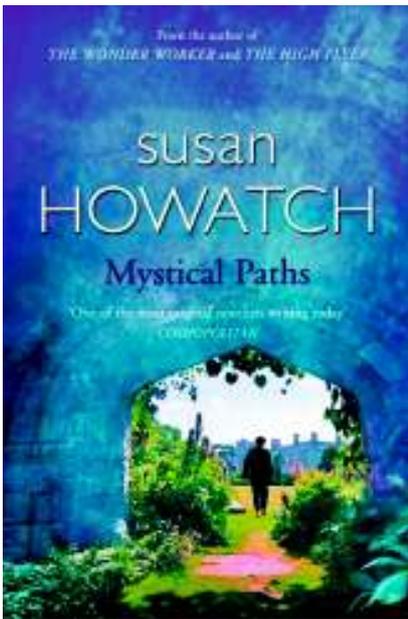


Find the way from the cross on Good Friday to the empty tomb on Easter Sunday!



# GO BY THE BOOK

Continuing our series of book reviews



## 'Mystical Paths'

by Susan Howatch

Reviewed by Alison Parkinson

This book is described as, 'A compelling novel that combines theology and psychology in a complex, fast-moving plot with beautifully delineated characters and the suspense of a mystery thriller.' It's the 5th in a series of nine self-contained but interconnected novels. The series starts in the 1930s and finishes eventually in the 1990s. Each book is independent of the others, but the more books are read, the wider the view of the multi-sided reality

presented. Each book is voiced by different characters providing fascinating insight as situations are considered from their varying perspectives.

In *Mystical Paths*, most of the action takes place in the 1960s. The main protagonist is Nicholas Darrow, a young theology student who yearns to be ordained and serve his childhood hero – Jesus the healer. But he struggles to live the life he thinks a candidate for the ministry should. He is a walking disaster area, describing himself at one point as a sort of spiritual Typhoid Mary!

All the books in the series are compelling because of their multi-faceted, completely believable characters; complex and flawed but striving and surviving their stormy lives. Nick's path winds around the people in the story as he becomes completely obsessed by the mystery surrounding his friend, Christian Aysgarth. Gradually, he realises that discovering the truth about this seeming golden boy, in fact an enigmatic and complex man, will unlock the answers to his own baffling problems. However, his journey goes through some deep darkness before emerging into the light and his certainties are shaken. Nick risks even his own life and sanity. One character sums it up as, 'The Christian Aysgarth Affair – crisis, chaos and the Devil on the loose.'

This story weaves spiritual truths and questions into the tapestry of the story, engaging your mind on many different levels. Even as you are desperate to find out what is going to happen next as Nick stumbles from one disaster to another, another part of your mind is pondering the Christ of Eternity – the truth no human mind can completely grasp – all at the same time!

I recommend this book because it is well written and a real page turner. It also brings the reader back, time and again to God working to redeem his world by his Spirit working through his people, even while they make mistakes and get into catastrophic muddles.

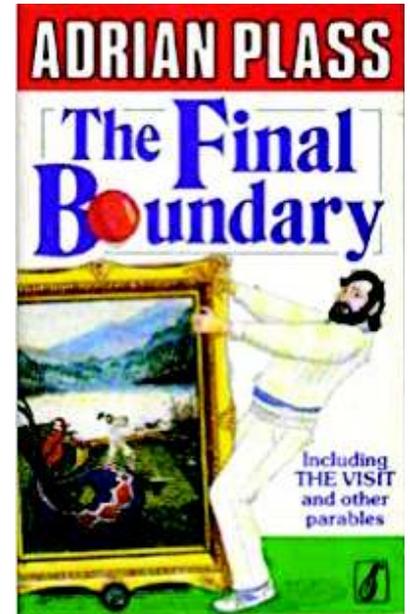
# 'The Final Boundary'

by Adrian Plass

*Reviewed by John Parkinson*

- 1) How would you react if Jesus visited St. Michael's in person?
- 2) How would you spend your time during his visit?
- 3) Who would Jesus spend most of his time with?
- 4) Would his visit make a difference to you individually and to us as a community of Jesus followers?

Adrian Plass, is a humorous Christian writer and speaker, often the butt of his own jokes. He looks laterally at the world, particularly the church and our fellow Christians.



The book preface says, 'A parable is a story that entertains at the front door, while the truth slips in through a side window. Having effected its entrance, this truth may lie unnoticed for a long time, or you might trip over it as you close the door and turn around... What is important is that the mind is distracted and the truth gets in.'

The 9 short stories are unconnected, but they are parables and may disturb your well-manicured equilibrium if truth is allowed to slip in.

- 'Nearly Cranfield,' a moving and poignant story of a little boy trying to come to terms with his Nana's death.
- 'A Letter to William' challenges us to think about our church conventions and pokes fun at how we operate as followers of Jesus.
- 'Why it was all right to kill Uncle Reginald' is a disturbing story about self-justification.
- 'Bethel' is about a Snail called Bethel who crosses a gang of thugs who threaten him until he decides to throw a party.
- 'The Second Pint' is about a young man who thinks he's OK with God and church in a safe, comfortable way until a challenge from his drinking pal stuns him to into silence.

The rest are, 'Except Ye Become', 'Marl Pit', 'The Final Boundary' and my favourite 'The Visit' which describes what happens to a congregation when Jesus visits in person. Hence the earlier questions!

These stories are entertaining and thought provoking; helping us to look seriously at ourselves and our attitudes. If you don't like your attitudes and opinions, or notions of who Jesus is and isn't, being disturbed or challenged – don't read this book. You might be moved out of your comfort zone. You have been warned!



## *100 years ago*

**22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1919** The Moderator submitted the report of the Committee which had revised the Communion Roll. The report was approved, and the Roll ordered to be attested. The Committee drew the attention of the Kirk Session to the fact that the Roll at 31 Dec. 1918 was 1194. The Roll contained a number whose attendance at Communion was not satisfactory and it was resolved that certain of these be spoken to by the Elders in their respective districts when next delivering their Communion Cards, and that certain others receive thro' the Clerk a circular letter in terms which were suggested by the Moderator and approved by the Session.

[*Copy of the letter referred to in the above minute :- 'It is with much regret that the Kirk Session have instructed me to call your attention to the subjoined passage from the Act of Assembly 1896 from which you will see that if you should be absent from the Communion for another year without a sufficient reason being shown, they will have no alternative but to remove your name from the Roll. [the passage referred to – 'The names who have been absent from the Communion for three consecutive years will be removed from the Roll unless a reason satisfactory to the Kirk Session is assigned or is already known to the Session.'*]

## *50 years ago*

**18<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1969** [*Statistical Return*] The Session noted that the Statistical Return to Presbytery showed that the Membership of St. Michael's at the end of 1968 was 1377, and that 1108 members had communicated at least once during the year.

[*Holy Week Services*] The Session noted and accepted a report by the Moderator regarding services to be held in Church each evening during Holy Week. With reference to the service on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1969 at which three students would be licensed by the Presbytery, the Session were pleased to note that two of the students (Mr. Jock Stein and Mr. Eric Waugh) were members of St. Michael's. It was agreed that, at the conclusion of that service, tea should be provided in Cross House for members of the Presbytery, the Licentiates and their friends, and members of the Kirk Session.

# 25 years ago

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 1994** [Membership] Mrs. Ratcliffe confirmed that 94 parcels were distributed at Christmas and expressed her thanks to all those who have assisted with delivery as well as those who had made donations for the parcels.

Mr. Mackay reported on membership statistics. The number of members on the Roll at 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993 was 1699, and the figure for 31<sup>st</sup> December 1993 was 1712. The number of members communicating at least once in the year was 978, approximately 57.1 per cent.

**15<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1994** [New Members] The undernoted were admitted to membership of St. Michael's by Transfer Certificate, having previously been members of other churches :

Mrs I. Blincow, Rowantree Cottage, Hillhouse Farm

Mr. Donald Burgess, 12 Grange View

Mrs. Frances Burgess, 12 Grange View

[My! How the years go in!!]



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# IN MEMORIAM SYDNEY COUPAR

by Bruce Jamieson

While clearing out the St Michael's Manse recently, a 19<sup>th</sup> century psalter was found, bound in heavy gun metal with a khaki oilcloth, interior binding. Carved into the front is the christogram chi and rho (XP – representing the Greek word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ = CHRISTOS) and the words 'IN MEMORIAM SYDNEY B. N. COUPAR.'



Pasted inside the frontispiece is a newspaper article written by Major Magnus Mackay M.C. formerly of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Part of it reads, 'I have heard the Psalms of David sung when serving with a Highland Regiment on the plains of Flanders, with the guns booming their diapason in the distance. The glorious, resonant phrases always filled one with a sense of peace, contentment and solemnity.'

Sydney Bell Nicoll Coupar was one of the 158 Linlithgow boys who perished during the 1914-18 war – a conflict that began with such high hopes of a quick, glorious victory. At a service in St Michael's Church at Christmastime, 1914, his father, the Rev Robert Coupar preached a sermon. In it he said, 'At considerable cost, our armies have prevailed. Their numbers will shortly be bolstered by the presence of the young men who have answered the call to enlist. My own son is still at school but I hear that ninety per cent of Scotland's ministers have seen their eligible offspring, the faithful sons of the manse, volunteer for duty in the armed forces'.



Coupar's son, Sydney, was being educated in Fettes College, Edinburgh, where, in the summer of 1915, he was captaining the school's 1st eleven cricket team. However, as soon as he was old enough, Sydney enrolled at the Cockburn Street Recruiting Office in Edinburgh. All over Scotland, volunteers like him flocked to enlist, for the war offered a chance of adventure, glorious excitement and perhaps the avoidance of a white feather.

Sydney joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and reported to their HQ in Stirling Castle. As a former member of his school's Officers' Training Corps, he received a commission and was eventually sent to Flanders. He served in several areas of conflict on the Western Front including The Somme, Arras and St Quentin where he was mentioned in despatches for displaying conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy. He ended up in late 1918, in the vicinity of Bapaume and was in the trenches near that French town on November 11th when the Armistice was declared.

The trenches were horrendous, mud-filled places – awash with rotting corpses and overflowing latrines and swarming with lice and rats. In these conditions, Captain Coupar contracted enteric fever, a type of typhoid, and was taken to the 56th Casualty Clearing Station where he died on December 30th 1918.

Shortly afterwards, the Rev Robert Coupar and his wife, Ella, received the news which every British family dreaded. As laid down by statute, all soldiers who died in the conflict were to be buried where they fell – the scale of the sacrifice meant that there was no way all the bodies could be repatriated. Consequently, Sydney Coupar was laid to rest in Grevillers Cemetery along with 2105 other casualties, 189 of them unknown – their names ‘known only to God.’

**Captain Coupar’s headstone.**

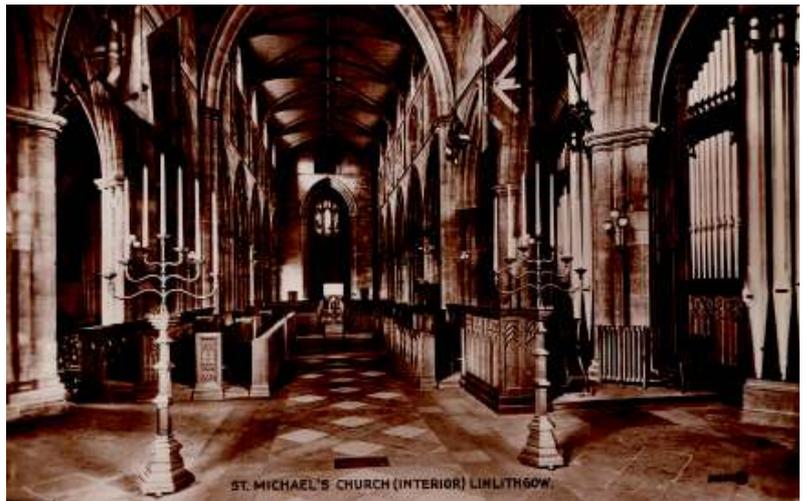


Families were allowed to choose an inscription to carve on the headstone – as long as it did not exceed 66 characters – less than half of that allowed on Twitter! Rev and Mrs Coupar simply chose ‘ONLY SON OF REV. R. AND ELLA N. COUPAR THE MANSE OF LINLITHGOW SCOTLAND’

Later, in his memory, the grieving parents presented the church with the two candelabra still positioned in the apse. In addition to information on their son, a nearby plaque bears an inscription from Horace:

*‘Non Ille Pro Caris Amicis,  
Aut Patria Timidus Perire’*

‘He dreaded dishonour worse than death;  
Delighting for his friends to live  
Or for his bleeding country give  
If she require, his breath.’



**The Coupar candelabra seen here along with regimental colours- now removed.**

Sydney is also commemorated on the Fettes College War Memorial – along with the other 246 Old Fettesians who gave their lives in ‘The War to End All Wars.’



There is one last postscript to the story. While browsing the internet for information on Captain Coupar, I discovered his ‘Death Plaque’ – a 12 centimetre disk cast in bronze gunmetal and presented to the family of each deceased combatant. It had been sold at Lockdale’s Auction House in Ipswich in 2015 – for £150.

**Captain Coupar’s ‘Dead Man’s Penny’ along with the notification given to his father in February 1922.**

# MAD AS A MARCH HARE

by Trish Archibald



I am doubly blessed. I live in the beautiful Scottish countryside and I work in one of the most beautiful of Scottish towns. As I write this, the countryside around us is coming to life with signs of spring. Birds are nesting, sheep will soon be lambing but the funniest of creatures this time of year is the hare.



Hares go completely crazy. They box each other, jump up and down vertically for seemingly no reason whatsoever and generally display weird behaviour. On the face of it, they have just gone mad.

However, there is a purpose to all this. Through all this madness, the hares win a mate and a new generation of these beautiful animals are born. There is a purpose in it all to bring new life.

Our lives can be much like the March hare. There are situations that can seem so difficult and often downright crazy. In our own lives and in our world. Life can sometimes be difficult to understand, for all of us – no matter how young or old.

One of my favourite bible verses is John 16:33, where Jesus says 'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'



When things look as mad as the March hare, remember Jesus says, 'take heart!' God promises he will never leave us or forsake us. He is with us in all the craziness of life, and one day we will be able to see that he has always had a purpose for us in the midst of it all.

Jeremiah 29:11

'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.'

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