

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

MATTHEW 19:14

Summer 2019
Vol 22:2

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SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 30th June

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

Weekly Services

9.30am First Morning Service
Crèche in Cross House

9.45am All-Age Worship
Term time in Springfield School

11.00am Second Service

Monthly Communion

Sunday 28th July
at 12:15pm
Individual Cup

Cover photograph:
Congratulations, Toddlers!
Courtesy of Stephen Blake

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The deadline for the Autumn 2019 issue is 31st August 2019.

VIEW FROM THE MALTINGS

by Rev Thom Riddell

Two events which occurred during Holy Week this year brought into focus what it means, and what it costs, to be part of the universal Christian church in the 21st century. The first was the fire which ripped through the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, causing significant damage to the mediaeval structure. The initial despair at the destruction was tinged with relief when it was confirmed that the basic fabric of the building, the stained glass windows, and most of the art works remained intact. Nevertheless any restoration work will take time and be costly. The response by the French government and from individual donors was generous and, within a few days, almost 1 billion Euros had been pledged.



The reaction to such a large amount being raised so quickly was not universally positive. Questions were asked about whether it would have been better to give the money to worthier humanitarian causes. When Susan Brown, the Moderator of the General Assembly, asked churches across Scotland to ring their bells on Maundy Thursday in solidarity with the people of Paris, it prompted some to refuse, responding that 'the church is not a building, the church is people'. While it is right to say that a building is not necessary for a community of believers to worship, it misses the point that the mission of the church is to reach out to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the world. I am pleased to confirm that the bells of St Michael's rang out.

For many people, the image of the church will be the building. Usually in a prominent place, it may well be one of the few distinctive buildings in the neighbourhood. It may have some historic significance. In some cases it may well be a tourist attraction. This identification with the church as a building – bricks and mortar – is elementary and superficial, but we should not under-estimate the influence of such a physical witness to the presence of a worshipping Christian congregation.

People identify with church buildings, especially in smaller communities. Many who do so will rarely, if ever, have attended a service of worship, but it represents an element of stability which would otherwise be missing from their lives.

The second event occurred on the morning of Easter Sunday, when a number of churches and hotels in Sri Lanka suffered bomb attacks. As I write this article, the death toll has reached 310 and will probably increase. It was a stark reminder, even as we celebrate the joy of Easter and Christ's victory over sin and death, that we are not immune to the cruelty and evil of the world. This should not be a surprise to us, but it is painful and difficult to accept or understand. Jesus did not promise us that we would be free from suffering in this world. The new life that he offers to each one of us came at a tremendous cost, and witnessing to Christ continues to be costly to many people across the world.

As we were reminded by the recent performance of 'Exiles', the shadow of the cross lay across the manger as Herod ordered the massacre of the innocents, and the holy family had to flee to Egypt. Sometimes I wonder why Matthew included this part of the story, while the other Gospel writers felt able to tell the good news without it. Perhaps Matthew did not want us to confuse sentimentality with hope. Perhaps God inspired Matthew to include this event, knowing that later readers would live in a world where the Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia, Rwandan genocide, and the continued persecution of Christian communities are realities.

A birth that did not give hope, even in the face of such horrendous events, would not be powerful enough to redeem the world. Matthew's unsentimental version of Christmas is in tune with the pain and suffering that was to come as the Christ child grew to manhood and gave his life that we might live. It proclaims that, while human cruelty is entrenched in the world, it is not in charge of events. It proclaims the triumph of love and hope over evil and death. Thanks be to God.





Holiday Club Summer 2019

by Trish Archibald

Over the last few winter months at St Michael's, we have run two In-service Day Holiday Clubs. These have been fast-paced action packed days and have been a real blessing, not only to our leaders but also to the children and families who have taken part. This has been a great opportunity to show children and their families that not only do they matter to God, but they also matter enough to us as a church to invest in them in this way.

Summer is coming at last! Planning is already well underway for our annual week long summer Holiday Club for children aged 5 - 11. This year we are running a Monday - Friday club in Cross House, starting on 29 July. Our Summer Holiday Club is being organised in partnership with our friends from St John's Church.

Our theme is Mega Makers. Based on Matthew's Gospel, we will explore the theme of inventions, and learn together that the more we discover about God, the vaster his love for us may seem.

We will have music, crafts, drama, messy games and challenges, stories and a whole lot of fun. If you are aged 5-11, we would LOVE to see you there. If you know some people who are aged 5-11 please let them know about us! We will be running from 10am -12noon each morning.



Holiday Clubs are great fun and a wonderful opportunity to serve our local community. **This is a great opportunity to volunteer!** We need people to give out snacks, to work with small groups of children, to participate in drama, to help with games and crafts, to do registration and just to be there to help the children get as much as possible from being with us. If you are able to give some of your time, for the five mornings or even just for one morning, please get in touch with Trish through the Church office.

THE FINANCE YEAR 2018

by *Tim Brown*

The year 2018 was a year when many things changed for the Stewardship and Finance Team at St Michael's and yet many things remained the same.

After completing the 2017 accounts our accountant Nancy Walker stepped down due to the pressures of a young family and returning to work. At the end of the year one of our Finance Officers, Peter Drylie, who has done a huge amount of work behind the scenes, left Linlithgow for pastures new. David McIntosh will return as accountant for 2019, but for 2018 we had to rely on our good friends at A9 to do the accounts.

In June RBS closed its doors for the last time. This was the branch where we banked the considerable amount of cash that St Michael's generates. This meant we had to put a lot of effort into reviving a dormant Bank of Scotland account in order to be able to continue to handle this cash within the town.

We lost our minister and gained a youth worker, both of which affected our finances in ways shown below.

At first glance our 2018 results would appear to be reasonable, as we report a small surplus of £7332. Look behind these figures and the picture appears to be less satisfactory.

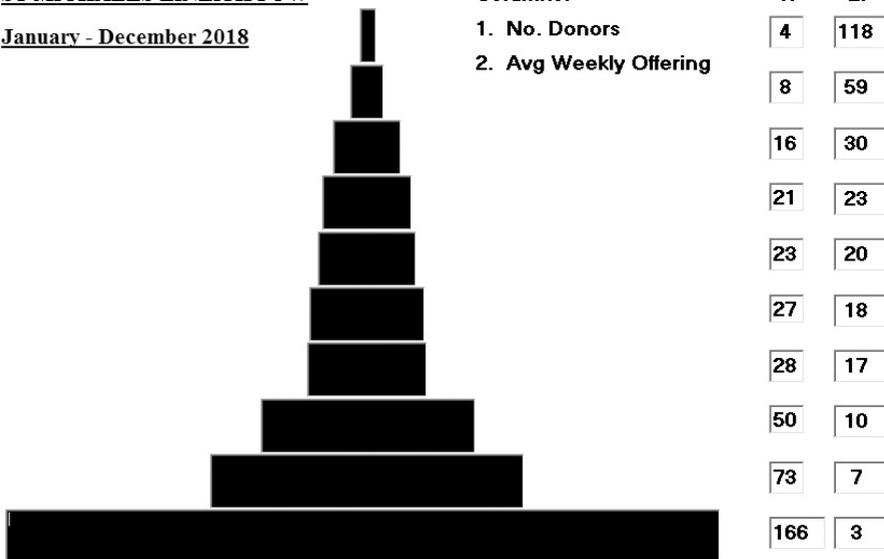
- in 2018 our offerings – our principal source of income, reduced from £265,112 to £249,255. The tax reclaimed on Gift Aid also reduced from £58,293 to £57,094.
- The Stewardship and Finance team has repeatedly warned that we are an ageing congregation that is overly dependent on a small number of very generous donors.
- In 2018 we lost some donors to death, reduced circumstances and removal. This has left us in the situation where our committed standing orders are £10,000 less in January 2019 than they were in January 2018.
- As we had no minister for the latter part of the year our Ministry & Mission contribution to the central Church was reduced from £171,000 to £160,000.
- We also paid less for ministerial expenses and got a council tax rebate for the Manse.
- Our new Youth and Family Outreach Worker, Trish Archibald, was with us only for the latter part of the year, meaning that we paid much less in salary than in a normal year.

Taking these factors into account probably means that our surplus of £7332 was in reality a deficit of around £13,000. The current trend of falling income, combined with rising costs, is expected to continue unabated. This is a worrying situation that we hope to address in the Stewardship campaign that is due to take place in June of this year.

Another thing that changed in 2018 was the status of the Glebe lands in Edinburgh Road owned by the Church in partnership with the Parish Trust. This has been rented out for agricultural use for an extremely long time and the Church has received a one third share of the rent. In 2018 the land was rezoned for housing in the updated Local Plan. Although there is a long way to go and many factors to consider, it raises the possibility of the land being sold for housing. There will be many discussions within the Church authorities (Session, Presbytery and 121) and West Lothian Council before any definite outcome is achieved. New developments in this story will be reported as they happen.

ST MICHAELS LINLITHGOW

January - December 2018



One thing that has remained fairly constant is our wedding cake above. It consists of 10 tiers and the width of each tier is proportional to the number of donors that currently make up that 10% of our offering income (£24512). So, at the bottom of the cake 166 combine to provide that income – at the top just 4. This is a high risk situation where we remain highly dependent on a small number of people. We will be looking to address this reliance in the forthcoming Stewardship of Treasure campaign, and encourage our members to step up to the next tier, wherever possible.

INITIATIVE FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

'It is the churches' responsibility to ensure that the Body of Christ is not broken by exclusion.'

Quote from the Church of Scotland working group on Learning disability.

by Bill Duncan

I am writing this article from personal experience. My daughter Shona, when she was one year old, was left with severe learning difficulties due to encephalitis. She is now 48.

We did not find any spiritual provision locally for people with learning difficulties. The normal church service did not cater for this specific need.

About 10 years ago we eventually accepted an invitation to take Shona to a group for people with learning difficulties organised by Brightons Parish Church. It was facilitated by a Christian Charity 'Prospects' and the group called themselves 'Friends of Jesus Group'.

Although initially slightly apprehensive, we were made very welcome and soon felt part of the group. It was a good example of inclusiveness and belonging.



The group meets every two weeks for an hour and a half. Activities include:

Those who can speak join in the singing with gusto. Sometimes actions/instruments are used in chorus praise type songs.



Short bible reading by one of the members.



Everyone participates in and enjoys the drama.



A brief simple prayer.



Folks enjoy doing the various crafts at the end of the meeting. They take these home.



Social time with drinks, biscuits and cakes.



Craft Time



There is also usually one outing during the year and a Christmas dinner.

There is a gathering of Prospects groups from throughout Scotland at an annual conference.



An ecumenical planning group in Linlithgow is looking to set up a similar unit locally. This group is being assisted by Ivy Blair who is the Prospects Mission Development Co-ordinator. We would hope to have our first meeting on Thursday 19th September 2019 from 7.00pm to 8.30pm at Cross House; thereafter we will meet monthly.

To enable this exciting development to take place we require two main things. You may be able to help in this.

1. Helpers. Their role would depend on their particular skills and interest.
2. Adults with learning disabilities.

If you feel you would like to assist, or know someone with a learning disability who may be interested in attending the group, please contact me (Bill Duncan email: duncanbillt@aol.com Tel: 01506 844877) or Anne Law (email: annelaw1402@gmail.com Tel: 01324 718271). Anne and I are both elders and members of the Mission and Outreach committee.

You can visit the Prospects website — www.prospectsacrossscotland.org.uk which gives a fuller picture of the work of Prospects in Scotland. You will also find a very good short video on the group's work.



TODDLERS@30

by Margaret Henderson



February 2019 was a very special month for the Parent and Toddler Group as we celebrated the group's 30th birthday. Since we meet twice each week this meant we had two parties with balloons, banners and, of course, two cakes. It was wonderful to have parents present who came along themselves as children when we first opened our doors.

Emotions were running high for those of us who were remembering the first day when we opened the doors and waited anxiously to see if anyone would come along. History has shown that there is great demand for places at Toddlers and I am very grateful to the team of helpers who give of their time to help with the running of the group. Many have been involved over the years, some of whom have died – Joyce Robertson, Sylvia and Jim Thom – and their contributions are not forgotten.





As well as changes in personnel, we have witnessed changes in the needs of the families attending. We have supported families through serious illness, unemployment and redundancies. We have seen a shift from childminders to grandparents providing essential childcare for families. Some of these live locally but a few travel from the far side of Glasgow and Fife, with two grandparents coming each week from Invergordon. Lives for young families are continually evolving but in St Michael's we try to meet their needs.



On a personal note it has been a privilege for me to get to know so many young families, to share these early years with them and I always enjoy being able to give that precious new baby a cuddle!

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— IN THE ANCHOR BOYS!

Hi. My name is Adam Clark and I am 7 years old. I go to Lowport Primary School. My hobbies are singing and playing football. My favourite footballer is Sergio Aguero and when I grow up, I want to be a footballer. I have been in Anchor Boys for nearly 2 years, and I am a Leading Boy. It is my job to make sure that the other boys in my squad behave and have fun.



I love playing Dodge Ball, and when we go into the Cellar, I love colouring in.

In Anchor Boys I have learned to listen to God.

I have one older brother who is in the Junior Section, and a younger brother who will be going into the Anchor Boys after the Summer holidays.

I move up to the Junior Section after the summer holidays, and I am excited because I will get to meet new friends.

My favourite Joke is Knock Knock, Who's there? Doctor. Doctor Who?



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Brigader Blog

by Clare Donnelly, Cara Donnelly, Eilidh White, Mya Tomolillo, Zara Bulloch, Sarah Curle and Rosie Eatock

This year is the 30th anniversary of 2nd Linlithgow Girls' Brigade.

Every Wednesday night nearly 40 girls gather to complete their four badgework sections: Spiritual, Physical, Educational and Service. This year the Brigaders are doing Women of Faith for Spiritual, Women of Strength for Physical, Inspirational Women for Educational and Influential Women for Service.



During our time in Brigaders we have met the current Moderator and the previous Moderator; we have also met Radiographers, PE Teachers, Physiotherapists and Home Bakers. We have also enjoyed having interactive talks using wobble boards, seeing x-rays and measuring distance in subways. We have been challenged to make the longest, strongest chain of strawberry laces. For our crafts we have made truffles, cupcakes and gingerbread houses. Throughout the year we have had various themed nights where we get dressed up, such as an American night where we were put into teams and were challenged to dress two people as Lady Liberty in the space of 10 minutes using the materials given.

We made the American flag out of strawberries, blueberries and bananas. Every year we all take a turn in leading the Juniors' and Explorers' crafts. We help with Communion three times a year, by giving out bread and wine. At Opening and Closing Services we parade up the hill to church. We take part in Remembrance Sunday by laying a wreath, parading with the Colours and singing at the Service. In Brigaders, the two oldest members carry the Company Colour and the Queen's Colour to the church every so often. The oldest carries the Queen's Colour.

Helping with the Juniors and Explorers builds our confidence. When we lead we have to stand in front of them explaining the craft and giving a short demonstration on how to create it. We have shown them how to make crafts such as springing frogs, Super Mum cards for Mother's Day, bird boxes for their gardens and whizzy wheeled hedgehogs. When we were in Juniors and Explorers we remember doing things such as learning to knit, making gingerbread houses, creating British bird passports, meeting Cool Creatures and learning about poisonous plants and flowers.

Some of us have been coming to Girls' Brigade for eight, nine and even eleven years!

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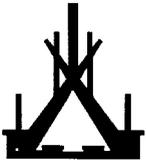
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PARISH REGISTER

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

March

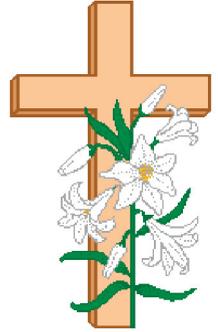
William Tannahill, Priory Road

April

George Ryce, Linlithgow Bridge
Douglas Robertson, Burghmuir Court

May

Christobel (Chris) Grant, Hamilton Avenue
Ian Cameron, Limecroft Residential Home, formerly Friars Way.



WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

March

Morgan Callachan to Iain Hewitt

April

Alyson Bird to Christopher Liddle

May

Lindsay Clifford to Warren Adkins
Alexandra Haddon to Fraser Loudon

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

March

Lewis James Fell, Springfield Road



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body



Michael Ball, Livingston
Peter Johnstone, Merker Terrace
Betty Watson, St Ninian's Road

THE ART OF ST MICHAEL'S

The patron saint of Linlithgow, St Michael, is commemorated throughout the town, from the 1720 statute of St Michael, 'kinde to straingers,' part of an ancient well, to town trail plaques marking buildings of interest in the town trail to the Delft-type tiles by Douglas Watson Studio at the recently restored Burgh Halls.

By Christopher Long



He features in stained glass at Poldrait House, Linlithgow.



St Michael is commemorated, too, throughout the parish church. The archangel continues to hold up the south west buttress of the church, greeting all coming up the Kirk Wynd. This statue escaped the excesses of destruction in the Reformation by being part of the structure of the building.



Alongside the black bitch, St Michael sounds from the ancient bell high up in the bell tower.





St Michael is pictured killing a fierce serpent in the town war memorial, as well as in the stained glass in the marvellous John Ferguson memorial window.



He is also sculptured killing the serpent triumphantly in wood in the reredos, or screen, behind the communion table.

The brilliant carpet, manufactured by Templeton's captures the wreathing beast on the floor of the choir.

Nearby St Michael is carved into the oak moderator's chair.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

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

21st September (2.30pm)	Guild Afternoon Tea
28th September	Burgh Beautiful Autumn Fair
19th October	Stand-up to Cancer
26th October	Friends of Girl Guiding

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

Sun 14th July	3pm	Music @3, Organ Concert
Sun 18th August	3pm	Music @3, Organ Concert
Sat 7th September	7.30pm	The Antonine Ensemble
Sat 19th October	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild Chamber Music Concert

OTHER EVENTS

29th June – 30th June	12.30pm	Spectacular Jousting, Linlithgow Palace
29th July – 2nd August	AM	Holiday Club – Cross House
8th September	All Day	Pedal for Scotland
14th September	9.00am	Linlithgow Folk Festival Association (Youth Musical Showcase) in Cross House
14th – 15th September	10.30am	Doors Open Day – Kirk
6th October	2.30pm	Linlithgow 10k Race

WEBSITES

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

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

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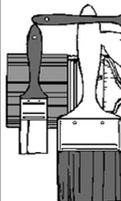
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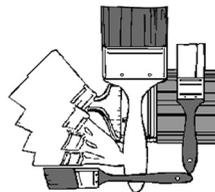


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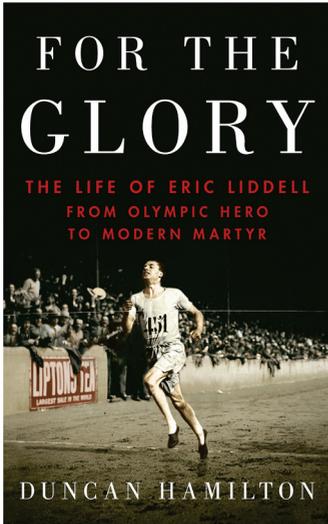
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GO BY THE BOOK

The last in our current series of book reviews



Over the last year several people have given reviews of books that they have enjoyed and found enlightening. The book reviews that follow will be the final two for several months. The book titles and authors listed at the end have previously been reviewed in *Crosswind* and are here to remind anyone who may have missed the details that these books were recommended.



'For the Glory The life of Eric Liddell From Olympic Hero to Modern Martyr'

by Duncan Hamilton

Reviewed by Tom Brown

Duncan Hamilton is a well-known sportswriter who has previously penned biographies of Brian Clough, George Best and the cricketer Harold Larwood before this book on Eric Liddell. Liddell is best known to many as the man who refused to run in the 100m at the 1924 Paris Olympics as the heats were on a Sunday. He went on to win the 400m in a new world record. He also played

rugby for Scotland. His feats have perhaps best been publicised in the 1980 Oscar-winning film 'Chariots of Fire' which focussed almost exclusively on the 1924 Paris Olympics.

For Liddell himself winning an Olympic gold was a mere prelude to the main purpose of his life, serving God in China, and Duncan Hamilton, (despite, as far as I am aware, not being a Christian), has captured this perfectly. Though written decades after Liddell's death what emerges loud and clear from this book is the quality of Liddell's Christian life. He lived his life in the presence of God and in the service of God. He had a staggering capacity to subjugate his own needs to those of others whom he always put first. Liddell died, separated from his family, in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in China. St Paul's words in 2 Timothy could have been written as an epitaph for Eric Liddell – 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will award me on that day'.

'Waiting for the last bus'

by Richard Holloway

Reviewed by Ruth Middleton

The difficulty of using words such as 'death' 'dying', 'died' has produced many books, articles and media discussions, trying to change denial of death and bringing it back into everyday life. One such book is 'Waiting for the last bus' by former Bishop of Edinburgh, the Rt Rev Richard Holloway.

Now over 80, aware that he is in the last years of life and affected by ageing, Richard realises that this is part of human life and the secret is to learn how to live with it. 'Accepting the reality of the certainty of our death won't make us happy, but it might save us from the greater unhappiness of trying to ignore or hide from it'.

The book discusses how advances in modern medicine have affected the process of dying, where we see it as a battle to win, rather than a time of reflection and preparation for death. It also reflects on how keeping people alive well into their eighties distorts the balance of society.

Facing up to the approach of death, Richard notes the sorrow of what it will take from us, but also the opportunities it gives us of reflecting on our lives, recognising where they have taken us, rejoicing in the good, and seeking forgiveness for the less so, taking time to acknowledge the world's beauty. It gives us time to decide what to do with our time left, to cherish those we love, and to think about the meaning of life. It can mean the difference between ordinary sorrow and unbearable regret. This book is radical, joyful and moving – an invitation to reconsider life's greatest mystery. It challenges us to think again about the 'last thing we want to talk about'.

List of Recommended Books

Chasing Francis

Children of the Manse

Mystical Paths

Old Story New – Ten minute devotions to draw your family to God

Searching for Sunday

The Final Boundary

The Grace Outpouring

The Landscape of Faith

Ian Morgan Cron

Alice Thiele Smith

Susan Howatch

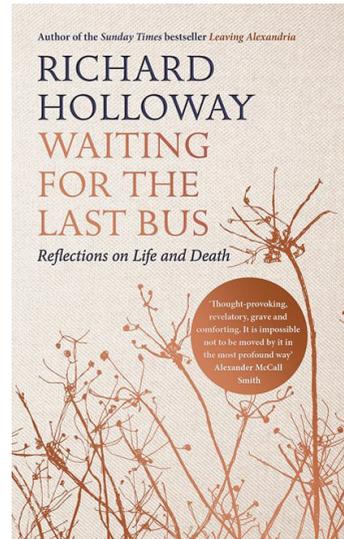
Marty Machowski

Rachel Held Evans

Adrian Plass

Roy Goodwin & Dave Roberts

Alister McGrath



NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM



by Jim Rae

Along with the general maintenance of all of our church properties, the Property Team has been engaged in some exciting and challenging projects.

The year started off well with the purchase of one hundred comfortable red upholstered chrome framed chairs for the Kirk Hall. Several of our own church organisations gave generous donations towards this purchase, for which we give thanks. The feedback to date has been very positive.

The church rainwater and toilet drainage project has come through a couple of difficult months, resulting in new consultant civil and structural engineers being appointed. Simpler solutions have been discussed and we are confident that final proposals will be ready by midsummer.

Through the recent Gift Day, members generously donated sufficient finance to refurbish the church west doors. Thanks to everyone who supported this initiative. Discussions have taken place with Charles Taylor Woodworking, who are wood restoration specialists, and contractor appointment is about to be concluded. This company come highly recommended and were the appointed contractor who installed the Charles Rennie Macintosh 'Oak Room' in the recently opened V&A Museum in Dundee.

Our properties have been subject to numerous condition inspections since the beginning of the year. The annual inspection of all buildings by the Property Team was concluded during early January, providing information to formulate this year's maintenance programme. An inspection of our Manse was carried out by a team from West Lothian Presbytery property committee and observations were made regarding some remedial work. Our Quinquennial Survey followed, our first since 2009, with the report findings to be issued by mid to late summer. More survey information is reported in the Cross House Improvement Project detailed below.

As custodians of the Linlithgow War Memorial it was our responsibility to effect an extensive repair to the deteriorating memorial stonework. We were successful in our grant application of June 2018 to the War Memorial Trust and were granted further funding from West Lothian Council.





Matching the stone colour proved difficult, but was eventually successfully sourced from Hutton Stone, based in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The appointed contractor was Conservation Masonry, based in Glasgow, and the refurbishment was successfully completed on 10th April. We are well pleased with the excellent outcome to this complicated and delicate project. Thanks to all contractors, Gareth Jones, Conservation Architect from Pollock Hammond Architects, the funding bodies and our own Brian Lightbody.

Our vacant Manse is providing the opportunity to carry out larger scale renovation works, some of which were identified in the previously mentioned surveys. The kitchen cupboards

and worktops are to be replaced and a contractor has been appointed to carry out the installation. An application has been submitted to the council planning department to replace the original secondary glazed windows with double glazed Upvc units. Internal decoration and carpet replacement will also be necessary and will be completed after discussions with the incoming minister. Other maintenance issues will be tackled on a planned programme, including the clearing of garden ground and rejuvenation of flower beds. Please contact me if you wish to lend a hand in maintaining the garden grounds.

The Cross House Improvement project has taken a leap forward with April's Session meeting approving the start of phase one, which will deal with roof timber structural and preservation work, new windows for selected phase one elevations, stone lintel and sill replacement and cement rendering window surround repairs. The external cement rendering decoration is included in this phase. Numerous intrusive surveys and stonework examination has been required to provide an accurate picture of necessary remedial works. External funding will be required to finance this project.

Our insurers have indicated that a robust key strategy must be in place and so David Robertson, team member, has been involved in the formulation of an appropriate strategy. Also GDPR legislation requires the security of personal information and an effective key strategy will assist this requirement. Proposals will be discussed in the coming weeks.

This has been a busy period and indications are that the future will only get busier. We welcome all offers of help. Please contact me if you would like more information on how you might assist the team, even on an ad-hoc basis.

PARTY TIME



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A 'VAL'UABLE ASSET

by Pat Brough

In olden days churches did not have offices – well maybe important ones like St Giles did, but St Michael's certainly did not. The office was the Minister's wife, answering the phone among many other tasks. She would inform her husband of phone calls, visitors, etc and he took note of these.

When Rev Ian Paterson took over from Dr Steel, Lorna was working and Ian needed some help with correspondence. The church office became a typewriter in the boot of Ian's car; this was delivered to Helen McNeil's house where letters were typed. Soon, a room in Cross House was furnished with a desk and typewriter, with added assistance of a 'ca' the 'haunle' copier.

How things have changed! Desks have multiplied, the typewriter has metamorphosed into several computers and the copier has no 'haunle'.

Today, Val Wood is part-time secretary to the Ministry Team and also provides support to the Session Clerk and church organisations. As well as the daily running of the office, she is the first point of contact for wedding and baptism enquiries, booking the Church for special events and arranging Vestry appointments. Val co-ordinates the duty team for church funerals and oversees the Church and Cross House diaries for concerts and room allocations. Val prepares the weekly intimation and order of service booklets, using different colours of paper depending on the time of year; the collation and distribution of Kirk Session papers; organises Easter and Christmas cards; provides the church with multi-language leaflets; looks after various keys; keeps licences up-to-date; uploads items to the website and keeps the stationery cupboard well stocked.

Val is joined on Wednesday by Anne Law and June McIntyre who prepare the monthly invoices and on Thursday by Myra Lawson to assist with the printing and collation of the order of service booklets.

Val enjoys her varied work at St Michael's and approaches everything with enthusiasm and occasionally dons her 'detective hat' to solve issues. She has a very necessary sense of humour and surprised a member one day when he asked – on the off-chance – if she had a screwdriver to hand; she produced several!

Who said that secretaries keep only pens and rulers in their desk drawers?



EXILES

The proceeds from the production of Exiles staged earlier this year was divided equally between the following two charities which assist refugees.



StARS – Cairo

by Rev Colin Johnston

Many tourists travel to Egypt to see the amazing temples or to lie on the beaches. However, over 250,000 people have also come to Egypt from countries such as Sudan, Eritrea and Syria as refugees, fleeing war, oppression and persecution. They are confused and vulnerable, but StARS provides a welcome, practical help and a safe place for them. St Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) was founded in 1979, when members of St Andrew's (the old Church of Scotland congregation) were aware of refugees, mostly Christians from the South of Sudan, and decided to do something about it!

It began small, with volunteers teaching basic education to the children and English conversation with the adults. But by 2018 25,000 refugees accessed services from StARS, and its aim is 'to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where refugees can pursue their aspirations and live in dignity'.



Education is still important and it has been heart-warming to see some of our students go on to graduate from universities. But StARS also provides vital **legal assistance** (many are young lawyers from Europe and North America taking gap years) with visas and applications for resettlement. Refugees can also access medical help, with some doctors and dentists offering their services free. **Psycho-social** care and counselling provides support to adults (I taught English to some Ethiopian women, but the important thing was getting them out of their homes and into the community).

Finally, there is the award-winning **Unaccompanied Youth Programme**, offering support to young teenagers who have left home and family behind; it has

been wonderful to see them realise their potential.

As a church-based charity, StARS offers help to vulnerable people from all the different faith communities, affirming, supporting, showing that they are valued. It was a privilege to be a volunteer and board member.



More information can be found on StARS' website: www.stars-egypt.org

Refugee Survival Trust – Glasgow

by Mahdi Saki, Community Engagement Co-ordinator

An ex-Muslim, I converted to Christianity, I was a political activist in my home country, Iran, before I came to the UK in December 2008 and claimed asylum. In 2012, I went to university and gained BA Business. I know well the daily problems asylum seekers face. I am honoured to work with them, supporting them and helping establish a new life in UK.

Refugee Survival Trust (RST) was set up in 1996 to deal with the problem of refugees and people claiming asylum being made destitute in Scotland. It relies solely on support and expertise of its Board of Directors, its small team of dedicated staff, with help from volunteers. Our vision is that all refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland receive just and respectful treatment and support; we work within our available resources and powers to help and support asylum seekers and refugees in need.

Our **Destitution Grants programme** provides small one-off payments to asylum seekers and refugees without support from government or other sources, and at real risk of destitution. These last resort grants are available to people seeking asylum and refugees for up to six months after they are granted refugee status.

The **Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS)** is a partnership project led by RST with the Scottish Refugee Council, British Red Cross, University of Strathclyde Law Clinic, Glasgow Night Shelter, Fasgadh and Rehoboth Nissi Ministries. DASS assists those who have exhausted all Appeal Rights and have no recourse to public funds, to escape from destitution.

Our three programmes help refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland to integrate:

- Our Access to Education and Employment Grants help to overcome barriers preventing asylum seekers and refugees from study and work opportunities
- Our Glasgow Welcome befriending programme links people new to Glasgow with those well-established – in order to explore the city, share cultural understanding, and build social networks.
- Our Office Internship programme provides experience of working in a UK office environment.

Changing policy: RST participates in the national debate on asylum in Scotland, achieving significant success in bringing about changes in procedures affecting refugees and asylum seekers. For example, our 'From Pillar to Post' report shows barriers people face when trying to exercise their rights to education, health and social care services. Research also highlights the need for a national action plan to tackle asylum and migrant destitution in Scotland.

JUST A MINUTE

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

100 years ago

4th May 1919 The names of the following young men and women were submitted as having been in attendance at the class for Young Communicants. *[There followed a list of 23 names]* The Communion Roll was produced and the report submitted by Mr. Hugh McLachlan. The report was adopted and the Roll ordered to be attested. It was unanimously agreed to admit the young communicants to the membership of the Church and to add their names to the Communion Roll.

11th June 1919 A letter was read from Mr. A.M. Meek, Secretary for the Church Choir, regarding the unsatisfactory state of the blowing apparatus of the Organ. The Kirk Session, after consideration of Mr. Meek's letter, instructed the Clerk to acknowledge thereof, and state that the matter is receiving the earnest attention of the Kirk Session.

*An application was notified from the Secretary of the Church Choir for the annual grant in aid of the expenses of the Excursion. The Kirk Session unanimously authorised payment of the choir's annual grant of £5, also £5 to the choir of Kingscavil Church.

50 years ago

15th April 1969 *[Elders' wives]* It was agreed that it should be left to the Moderator to investigate the possibility of a social evening to enable elders' wives to meet one another.

[The late Mr. and Mrs. Johnston] The Session noted that the appointed Sub Committee had engaged a carpenter to make the oak table in memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, and that it was hoped to make use of the wood from one of the spare pews in church.

[Cross House Warden's Flat] The Moderator referred to a proposed visit to Scotland in the early summer of 1969 by the Rev. and Mrs. John T. Ames of North Carolina, United States, during which Mr. Ames would preach in St. Michael's and other churches. The Session agreed that Mr. and Mrs. Ames be allowed to occupy the Warden's Flat in Cross House during their visit, and that they be invited to make a donation for the facilities.

25 years ago

19th April 1994 [*Church and Community*] Mr. Smith advised that residents of the Ark Housing Project wish to attend St. Michael's services but that volunteers are required to bring them along to church.

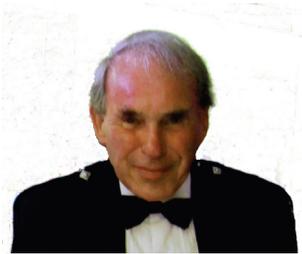
The Moderator explained the appointment of the Rev. Daniel Connelly to Session. Mr. Connelly is a Baptist Minister who had been received into the Church of Scotland at last year's General Assembly. He has completed a period of attachment with Zetland Church in Grangemouth and is actively seeking a charge of his own. In the meantime Mr. Connelly will work within St. Michael's.

[*Church Restoration Project*] The Session Clerk reiterated that Historic Scotland have offered in principle a fifty per cent grant which amounts to £380,000. The Session Clerk advised that he intends to meet with Historic Scotland to discuss how the work will be carried out over a four to five year period. He will also be approaching other grant-awarding bodies. Session approved the retention of the services of the architect.

[*Repairs*] The Minister's car is due for renewal. The Treasurer recommended, for tax reasons, that the Minister should buy his own car and reclaim business mileage at the rate laid down by the Inland Revenue.

[*Manse*] – The kitchen at the manse is in dire need of refurbishment. The fabric committee unanimously agreed that we proceed by getting designs and costs for study.

Thank You, Donald!



This issue of Crosswind contains Donald Burgess's last Annals, as he has decided to stand down from the editorial team. Donald has been part of Crosswind almost from the beginning and has been providing the Annals since 2004, making the current one his 61st! He has spent a considerable amount of time travelling to Register House

in Edinburgh to comb through the church archives and then writing the article for the magazine. We are very grateful for the Annals which have always been interesting and have often stirred memories for long-standing members; grateful also for all Donald's contributions to the editorial team. We will miss him sorely but wish him well in his 'retirement'.

LINLITHGOW YOUNG PEOPLES PROJECT (LYPP) – UPDATE

by Rona Molloy



Our Session Clerk, Alan Miller, was a board member of LYPP for twenty years before asking if I would take on the responsibility of helping to oversee the work of this local charity. Stephen Marshall is the other St Michael's representative on the board and he has also given many years of service in this role.

Finding out about the work of LYPP has been a huge learning curve for me. There is so much going on but the staff seems highly proficient at juggling a lot of balls in the air at once, and the young people just keep on coming!

The young people engaging with LYPP have a broad set of needs, the most common being low confidence, few friendships, poor mental health and limited social connections or abilities. Many of them are also from low income families, which creates additional pressures.

Office Life

LYPP has a small staff team consisting of Elaine Kinloch (Project Manager), Graeme Lacey (Bridgend Co-ordinator), Russell Shields (Lounge and Schools Worker) and Katherine Orr (Youth Support Worker – mental health) as well as some sessional staff and volunteers.

Recently LYPP hosted Mental Health First Aid training for 16 people involved in youth work. I attended this, along with a half-day Child Protection training session. The quality of both sessions was excellent.

Here is a flavour of some the activities on offer:

Lounge

Lounge, in the Vennel, is a drop-in space with comfy couches, a cosy chill out corner, a craft area, pool table and a kitchen space. Sessions run on Tuesday evenings and Friday afternoons.

Recent activities include carving pumpkins, making art with sparklers and looking at topics such as managing stress, fear, pressures, safety, consent and sexual health. The young people have also made crafts for the Linlithgow Advent Fayre, designed gift vouchers for LYPP to sell as Christmas presents, had a Christmas party, and continued with upcycling projects. Fridays now include toastie making, so the staff have used some funds to invest in decent sandwich makers and equipment such as graters.

Bridgend

LYPP runs a hugely successful football project in Bridgend with 55 young people attending regularly. There is also a youth club for senior pupils and a games club at Bridgend Primary.

A new Outdoor Adventure Club was launched in September for pupils referred by Bridgend Primary. Activities have included hammock-making, a session with a local park ranger, hoverboarding, campfire-making and a visit to Linlithgow Palace. The group has already worked with more than 20 pupils and 23 of these will receive their Hi5 awards (accredited by Youth Scotland) for their active participation.

Mentoring

By far the biggest new piece of work that LYPP has embarked on is a Mentoring Project, which will be an important part of its early intervention work in the town.

The pilot programme at Linlithgow Academy started with 7 pupils from Linlithgow, Bridgend and Winchburgh. This is proving to be very effective and will start again in the new academic year. The hope is that more volunteers can join and thus allow the Mentoring project to work with more young people.

Schools

Russell Shields, our former youth worker at St Michael's, is busy with various local schools. He runs the JASS award scheme (Junior Award Scheme Scotland) working in partnership with Springfield Primary and Linlithgow Academy. At Linlithgow Academy 8 pupils from the autistic base are working towards their Gold Jass Awards while over 100 P6 & P7 Springfield Primary pupils are working towards their Bronze Jass Awards.

Russell and Katherine run a weekly lunch club on Thursday at the Academy for vulnerable young people who find lunch time in a large school overwhelming and difficult at times.

LYPP also helps to deliver Personal and Social Education Classes for all year groups at the Academy and participates in the annual P7 transition days.

Funding

All of this work requires funding and LYPP is grateful for the annual contribution given by St Michael's Church to further its work. LYPP is currently Linlithgow Sainsbury's charity of the year and there are always collecting cans on the checkouts for your spare change! Looking ahead, its funding from West Lothian council for the forthcoming year has been reduced – not unexpected in the climate of council savings, but a challenge nevertheless. The Robertson Trust and Stewart Investors are the other major sponsors, providing vital funds for the wide range of activities on offer. Elaine is constantly seeking new sources of income, so if you might be in a position to become a regular supporter, please let me know.

THE LABYRINTH

by Rev Ian Walker

The last few months have been marked by some dreadful pieces of news. It is a long time since I visited Notre Dame and even longer since I was last in Sri Lanka, but events in both had a huge effect on me. They, and all the other awful things, tell me that our world is in a pretty sorry state. It feels like being in a frightening maze; stuck in the middle with no idea of how to get out.

That fleeting thought reminded me of a conference I attended many years ago at Lancaster University. In the courtyard there was a painted outline of a medieval labyrinth with a notice telling the story of this particular maze.

In medieval times, it told me, wealthy people went on pilgrimage to holy places but if you were too poor to go on a 'real' pilgrimage you could walk round a local labyrinth. As the pilgrim meandered along, he or she could think about life with all its ups and downs and about God's leading and supporting.



Labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral

Apart from the fact that there were no hedges, the other strange thing about this maze was that there were no dead ends. The path wandered in and out, sometimes getting close to the centre and then leading me almost to the outside again. At first that felt frustrating but, as I persevered, it helped me to reflect on my own pilgrimage of life, and of faith.

Just when I think I'm getting things right the path takes me to the outside again and it feels as if I am back where I started and feeling pretty discouraged. I'm sure we have all had the same kind of experience. However, in Lancaster I persevered and eventually reached the centre where I found a medieval picture of the tree of life.

That made me realise that, however I am feeling, however lost or frustrated, God never lets me down and, if I trust him and hang in, I will reach the goal he sets for me no matter how badly I think I'm doing.

A Prayer for confusing times

O God, give me the strength to look up and not down,
to look forward and not back, to look out and not in,
and always to lend others a hand. Amen

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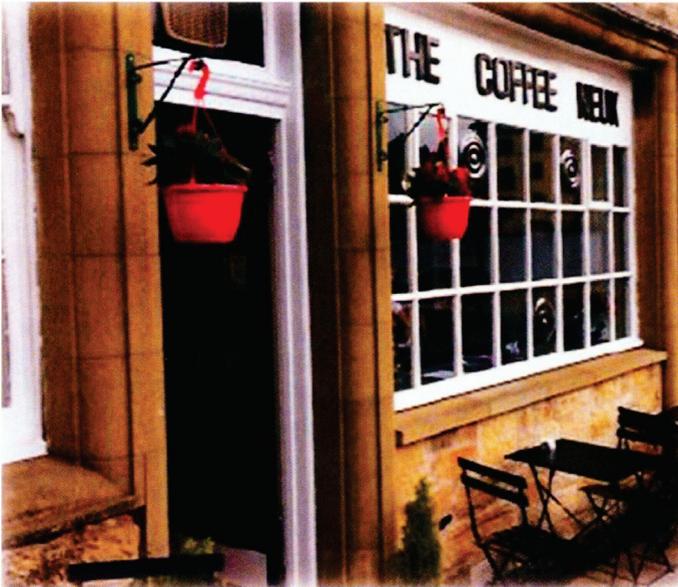
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