

# CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church



November 2021  
Vol 24:3

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt  
among us, and we have seen his glory,  
glory as of the only Son from the  
Father, full of grace and truth* JOHN 1:14

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# SUNDAY SERVICES

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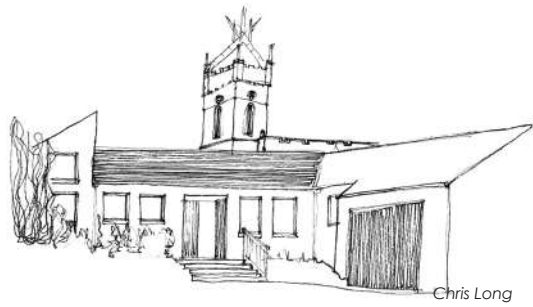
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**The deadline for the February 2022 issue is 1st January 2022.**

# VIEW FROM THE MANSE



*by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser*

As I look out at the Winter season we are entering into, the view from the Manse is not a cheery one. These past few months have been rocked with shortages of just about everything: HGV drivers, CO2 gas, fuel, and some of the groceries that were in plentiful supply even recently. Despite the best efforts of the government and business, we may be heading into a winter of discontent.

Perhaps like you, these possibilities have made me a little worried that our Christmas may be less than magical this year. I have images of the Manse family stockpiling petrol cans in the garage, secreting turkeys and cranberry sauce from the rummaging hordes, and making Christmas presents from pasta and papier-mâché, rather than the usual Xbox, PlayStation or other pricey gifts.



Yet while this level of scarcity has been unusual in Britain over the past few decades, that is the way it is with the world. Things boom and then they go bust. Sometimes we are riding high, and other times we are laid low. As much as we try and find peace and contentment and stability, it is often short lived, and alternatives can be hard to find.

In the first Christmas and nativity, however, we see a very different scene. No Xboxes, fuel queues, or frozen turkeys, no petrol cans stacked up in the corner. While it is a scene of poverty and material lack, it is filled with love and light. Mary, Joseph, the animals, and the shepherds, brought together in simple joy by the presence of the Holy Child, who lightens their lack, and fills their need. It is interesting that even in this rustic scene there are still presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh thanks to the Wise Men. Yet these presents are not demanded from the giver, or expected as a right, but are received as an unexpected blessing, a free gift of grace.



In this edition of Crosswind, you will read of some of the ways in which St Michael's is trying to bless our town, such as our new Listening Service, our partnership with the food bank and the longstanding good work of our Positive Pathways Group.

Yet we don't only feed the hungry or support the hurting and the bereaved. Many other charities and groups do these things, and do them well. We do not only offer material things, but those things without which even the richest wither and fade: love and hope. That is what we offer to our young people as they come to Sunday Club each week, and through our partnership with LYPP. It's what we offer through Make and Bake, the Guild, and Sunshine Singalong. It's what we offer to young families through our Toddler Group, and the visits we make to the housebound and the vulnerable. It's what we try and do with our Festival of Christmas Trees, brightening the darkness with colour and laughter and community. Love and hope, not only to faithful churchgoers, but to all.

So whatever you and your family are going through this Winter, know that you are not alone. For as dark as these days are, there is a light that never goes out. Jesus' friend John called him 'the light of the world, the one who shines in the darkness', and though it flickers, and threatens at times to peter out, that light is waiting to warm and enlighten us as we shoulder the darkness of life. All we need to do is welcome him in.





A community initiative of  
St Michael's Parish Church

By Rev Dr Liam Fraser

Each week at St Michael's we pray 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' This is a prayer that the Earth that we know so well – full of loneliness and sadness and hunger and injustice – would be transformed, that heaven would come to earth and everything wrong would be made right.

Yet the Church does not only *pray* that the world would be transformed. The Church *prays* and then we *act*.

That is why we are setting up **Love Linlithgow**. Love Linlithgow is the new service ministry of St Michael's. It will bring together and coordinate the existing ways in which we serve Linlithgow and will seek to expand on these with new initiatives. It is for everyone in Linlithgow and the surrounding region and no connection to St Michael's is necessary. Among the services that Love Linlithgow operates are:

**The Listening Service:** a confidential one-to-one service for anyone feeling anxious or down and who needs to get things off their chest. Meetings can take place face-to-face, online, by phone or during a walk.

**Positive Pathways Bereavement Support:** This is for anyone who has lost a loved one and who is trying to make sense of the difficult emotions and feelings they are experiencing. The team will help you to process your thoughts and feelings and to find a way forward.

**West Lothian Foodbank:** St Michael's has a longstanding relationship with West Lothian Food Bank and can help with referrals for anyone finding it hard to provide for themselves or their family.

**Sunshine Singalong:** A time of friendship and singing for people living with dementia and their carers. Temporarily paused due to COVID, but get in touch to receive information when we begin again.

All of our services are staffed with volunteers who are trained and vetted by safeguarding and who receive regular supervision.

Love Linlithgow is not only for those who are in need, however, but for those who are wanting to *help* those in need. In addition to the opportunities above, there are many volunteering opportunities in Love Linlithgow and St Michael's for you to explore.

In order to access a service, find out more information, or ask about volunteering opportunities, get in touch by email at [lovelinlithgow@gmail.com](mailto:lovelinlithgow@gmail.com) or find our page on Facebook.

# YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH

*by Trish Archibald*

As I write this, I am in my last few weeks of what has been a wonderful, fun-filled, challenging and absolute privilege of a role as St Michael's Youth and Family Outreach Worker. There have been so many highlights of the last few years. Nativity plays, Messy Church, Christingle services, school assemblies, youth pizza nights, Zoom Sunday Club, Bible Class walks around the loch with glow sticks, teddy bear picnics at Seedlings, working with so many gifted and faithful volunteers to name but a few. It has been a joy to work with the children, young people and families here at St Michael's. I will miss you very, very much!



But why on earth do we have youth and family ministry anyway? It's quite simple really. Children and young people matter to God. If you have ever spent time with a child, you will know that they have a curiosity about life that we often lose as our lives become noisy with the many distractions of adulthood. Children are interested in the big questions, in fact ALL the questions! Why are we here? Do we matter? Why does our planet exist? Does God really care about me and my family?

Statistics show that 94% of people become Christians before the age of 18. That's not 100% and it does not mean that God is not at work in the lives of people who have successfully passed their 18th birthday! But it does show us that young people are more interested in spiritual things than we often give them credit for. It also shows us just how important it is that we are able to show them God's love and give them the opportunity to respond to the significance of Jesus for their own lives. Youth Ministry is different from other ministries as it meets young people where they are, explains faith in a relevant and easy to understand way and is there for young people through the ups and downs of adolescence. It shows them that they are of great value.

In our times, adults are busy. Where young people of the past might have someone at home waiting for them after school, often our young people don't have that luxury. Many have called this generation of young people the loneliest generation. They have social media friends,

but often not real friends to spend time with. Council-run youth services are almost nonexistent due to budget cuts. The church needs to be present and active in the lives of young people who often don't have many people to look up to. The Scottish Government reports over 10% of our young people already have a clinically diagnosed mental health problem, before they even reach adulthood.

Being a Christian at secondary school is probably the most difficult place to be a Christian in Scotland. Young people and children need, more than ever, to be loved, included and valued as part of a church family.

Young people are not the future of the church. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that. The truth is, young people are the church, right here, right now. They are part of our family. We belong together, around the family dining table all of us of all ages, from our little friends at Seedlings, up to our eldest friends at the Sunshine Singalong. They are as much the present church as you or me.

I am so grateful to have worked for St Michael's, a congregation who has consistently over many years invested in youth, children and family ministry. The churches in Scotland who have done this are the churches that are growing.

As I pass the baton on to your new Youth and Family Outreach Worker, I do so with a thankful heart for all the happy years I have had working here. I pray that God will richly bless the youth and family work that will continue in this place, and that the children and young people of Linlithgow will know that they are loved dearly by God.

With sincere thanks for every kindness!

Trish

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# POSITIVE PATHWAYS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

*by Sheila Rae*

Bereavement support is part of the pastoral care work of St Michael's and is delivered by a trained team of bereavement listeners. The team are trained in active listening, in grief work and in group dynamics. They make post-funeral visits and offer one-to-one support sessions. They also run our Positive Pathways bereavement support group.



Positive Pathways is an informal, free and confidential support group which meets fortnightly in the Adam Room, Cross House at 6.30 pm to 8 pm. There are two members of the support team present each meeting who facilitate the group, ensuring that everyone who wishes to speak will be heard, and that all will feel comfortable and supported. Tea and coffee will be served and, for the time being, we ask that you bring your own mug.

Grief is a normal response to loss and most people will have the resources to adapt and adjust, but for some the process is more complex and challenging and you may require additional support. Bereavement is not an illness, but a normal part of living. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, nor any set period of mourning which is right for everyone.

Deaths which have occurred during the current pandemic may have additional complications in that the normal rituals of mourning have often not been possible due to restrictions in numbers allowed at funerals, social isolation, etc. Some people have felt that the death of a loved one has not been properly acknowledged. If this is you, then please come and share with others who are coping with similar feelings.

There is no magic formula which will take the pain of a death away, but by listening to others and respecting each other's experience it is possible to lessen the sense of isolation, chaos and despair that is often felt after the loss of a loved one.

The aim of the group is to focus on bereavement issues by providing an opportunity for people to give and receive emotional and practical support and encouragement. By sharing experiences, people are helped to understand their grief and cope with their loss. You must be able to bear hearing about other people's grief as well as to risk sharing your own.

This is a safe space where you can share fears, anxieties and struggles. You will be made most welcome. Future meeting dates are 18 November, 2 and 16 December, 6 and 20 January, 3 and 17 February.

If you would like further information, then please contact Sheila by telephone or text on 07719966273 or by emailing [sheila.ruth.rae@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.ruth.rae@gmail.com)

# Hello, St Michael's

by Steve Chaffee

*Our new Children and Young People's Worker*

I thought I'd introduce myself at length here. So, if you'd like to hear a bit about my life and my spiritual biography – read on! Now, my style for pieces like this tends to be a little winding – but read on, it will paint a fuller picture by the end!



I grew up on Long Beach Island (LBI), a holiday island on the New Jersey shore, attending a Lutheran church. Between the ferociously busy summers and the calm and cold winters, I was given a sense of spirituality that is tidal – one that has a warp and woof and accounts for the very busy and the very calm periods in our lives. In those years before University I became struck by *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* (hereafter *LOTR*), and drank deeply from their depths. Also, (partly due to my pastor!) I became interested in roleplaying games like *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Shortly before attending Eastern University, I spent time at an overnight Christian Camp called Haluwasa (short for 'Hallelujah What A Saviour'!) I worked there for the next five summers as both a counsellor and a programme director at Tall Pines (10-11-year-old campers) and Frontier Village (6-9-year-olds). Those summers were formative, both for my own spirituality but also for showing me how impactful youth ministry could be. At Eastern University, and later Villanova University, I studied Theology, with an interest for that place where spirituality and systematic theology intersect.

During this time, I became acquainted with the Scottish theologian Thomas Torrance. I read his works as widely as I read *Star Wars* and *LOTR* in my youth. This put me on the trajectory which brought me to the University of Edinburgh's MSc in Science and Religion in 2016/17. During this time, and in the years that followed, *Star Wars* and *LOTR* led me down further rabbit holes; the genre-setting science fiction of Isaac Asimov and Frank Herbert, the modern cyberpunk of William Gibson, and, astonishingly, board games and wargaming!

I am an avid fan of board games and role-playing games – so much so that I call my collection a 'library'! Be warned: I'll happily talk your ear off if given the chance! I get great enjoyment in very 'crunchy' games, whose rules make them into a Rubik's cube to be solved, and also cooperative games that make players work together (there are few things worse than losing to a box!) This, in turn, brings me back to role-playing games.

My mother spent her professional career certifying reading specialists – people who help children with reading difficulties. My father was a letting agent, but his true passion was teaching auctioneering at a school four times a year. Education was simply 'in the air' in my household. Should it surprise anyone that I have found role-playing games to be an incredibly fun avenue for education? They sit at the intersection of critical reading skills, maths (simple arithmetic and statistics, at least!), literature, drama and improvisation, all at once! How wonderful!

Yet, these are not my only loves. COVID has also rekindled my love of the outdoors. While at Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh, I joined their Scout troop, and over the past summer have re-supplied my kit. My 'outdoor cupboard' now has a few shelters, tarpaulins, camping backpacks, and the rest – which I look forward to using while at St Michael's. One of the things Haluwas taught me was that conversations about spirituality happen more easily when we're taken out of our usual spaces and places. Seated around a campfire, conversations about God and the world seem to emerge spontaneously!

This brings me to the Christian faith. As above – for me, spirituality and systematics are *inextricable*. At Greenbank, we would recite the Nicene Creed on Communion Sundays. But have you ever *prayed* the Nicene Creed? And that sort of question drives my work with young people: what happens when we try to take the Christian faith on its own terms, rather than the terms we set before it? Often, that means a great deal of un-learning – a challenge for adults and young people alike! But how worthwhile a challenge it is! To me, faith formation and discipleship cannot help but be a lifelong endeavour.

Whew, what a whirlwind this has become! As I wrote at the top a bit winding, but gives a picture of my story so far. Of course, my story now will include you all at St Michael's! I hope it has given you a glimmer of my passions and things to talk about when we can meet face-to-face. Until then, I hope the very best for you, and will be joining you shortly!

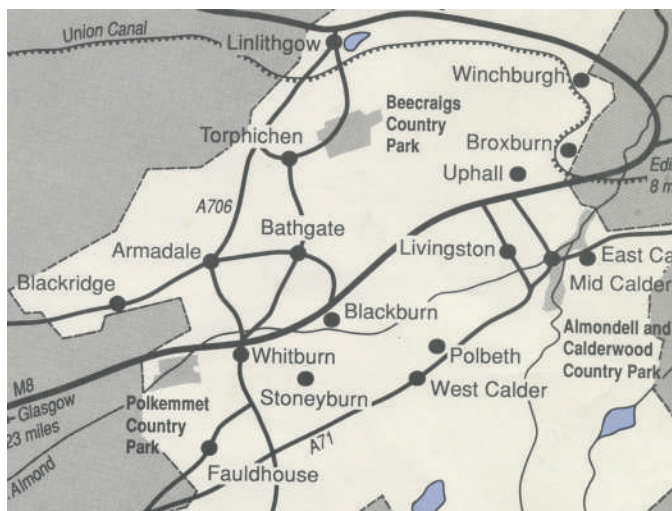
# PRESBYTERY AND PARISH REFORM

*by Rev Dr Liam Fraser*

At the General Assembly of 2019, a Special Commission chaired by theologian Rev Professor David Fergusson proposed wide-scale structural and financial reforms of the Church. These included a 30-40% reduction in the expenditure of the central Church, and a new streamlined decision-making process, culminating in the appointment of new Assembly Trustees.

At the same time, a Radical Action Plan – now known as the Faith Action Plan – began a process of Presbytery unions. The hope behind these reforms is that clearer decision-making processes and greater delegation to Presbyteries will enable the Church of Scotland to respond more quickly to the rapid pace of change in Scottish society, and re-orientate the Church towards mission and outreach rather than maintenance.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic hit just as these changes were being introduced. In some areas of the country congregational giving collapsed, and the central church was forced to furlough the majority of its staff and draw upon funds set aside for mission projects. The outcome of this is that the General Assembly was compelled this year to pass sweeping cuts to ministry posts throughout the country.



West Lothian Presbytery has been asked by the national Presbytery Planning Committee to make a 40-50% reduction in the number of posts for Ministers and Ministry Development Staff (MDS) in the Presbytery. This is unprecedented in the history of our Church, and will have fundamental implications for the way in which St Michael's and the whole Church undertakes ministry and mission.



The principles for this massive reduction in ministries, and the subsequent change to parishes, are contained in the Mission Plan Act, a piece of legislation passed by the General Assembly of 2021. It re-states the centrality of mission to Presbytery planning, and asks Presbyteries to set-aside long-standing parish arrangements to develop creative solutions to our changed context. Among these are the establishment of Team Ministries, where one or more Ministers, MDS workers and other staff work across a large geographical area.

The Act also encourages the use of Mission Districts to facilitate cooperation across parish boundaries. In West Lothian, St Michael's has been placed in a Mission District with Avonbridge linked with Torphichen; Linlithgow: St Ninian's; Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh linked with Abercorn; Uphall: Strathbrock; Uphall: South; and Broxburn. In line with the cuts handed down to us by the General Assembly, our Mission District has been tasked with moving to **four ministry posts** (Ministers and MDS) for the whole mission district, a cut in full-time ministry of around 50%.

While these changes can seem demoralising, they present an opportunity to implement many of the changes that members and elders have wanted to see for decades: closer working with other churches, sharing of events and resources, and the empowerment of members and elders to exercise their giftings and ministries in new ways. While the next few years will not be straightforward, if we make the right kind of changes it will be easier – and not harder – for St Michael's and other churches to serve and reach our neighbours.



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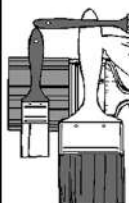
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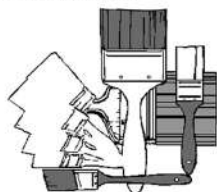


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# Outdoor Church Linlithgow



*by Lorraine Orr*

Outdoor Church has been running for three months now. We meet on the first Sunday of each month. The location changes each month so watch Facebook and the website for updates.

Our first week, we met in Learmonth Gardens (across from the Canal Basin) where we focused on Psalm 96, the trees and God being our Gardener.

God is a tree planter. When we plant trees, we are doing God's work. When we are in the woods, walking next to trees, we are in God's presence.



We then took a moment to wander in the trees, in silence and reflect in our own way.

'It was lovely to be able to sit outside together, share in a picnic, chat and reflect in the great outdoors and be with God in my own way. I especially liked having a walk under the trees as even though I was surrounded with people, I felt like I was on my own with God.' (K.)

Our October Harvest Outdoor Church led us to the Rose Garden for a short harvest story and Bible reading followed by litter picking around our local area. We collected over 6 bags of rubbish (and a rusty scooter).

If you would like to know more about Outdoor Church or be a volunteer for Outdoor Church, please email me on [lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk)



**ST.  
MICHAEL'S**  
Parish church

# Parish Register

## BAPTISMS

*Let the children come to me*

August  
Kerr Liddle, Bo'ness  
Freya Newman, Riccarton Road  
Jamie Hockaday, The Maltings  
Olivia McMillan, Springfield Grange



### **September**

Theodore Renton, Gorebridge  
Finn Walker, Kettil'stoun Mains

### **October**

Hunter Roff, Maddiston

## WEDDINGS

*They are no longer two, but one*



### **August**

Lisa Paterson to Edward Massey

### **October**

Ailie McClay to James Bishop



## FUNERALS

*I am the resurrection and the life*



### July

Emilia (Millie) Ure, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Douglas Avenue)  
Jane (Jean) Turnbull, Laverock Park



### August

Robert Anderson, Kettils'toun Mains  
Margaret Henderson (Snr), Highfield Avenue  
George Wilson, Polmont  
Ian Richmond, Pleau (formerly The Bield)

### September

Margaret Murphy, Preston Crescent  
James (Jim) Hogg, Oatlands Park

### October

Margaret Mitchell, Vancouver (formerly Bonnyton Terrace)

## NEW MEMBERS

*For we are all members of one body*



Graeme Shaw

# Festival of Christmas Trees 2021

by Margaret Johnston



We are delighted to confirm that our Festival of Christmas Trees is back for 2021 on Friday, Saturday, Sunday 3, 4, and 5 December!

Like many events, the 2020 Festival was cancelled but we are determined to make up for it this year. In 2019, our theme was Around the World; we had 57 trees, all decorated by different church and community organisations. What a spectacle it was! Our 2021 theme is a quote from 'The Grinch':

'Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.'

Each tree will explore what Christmas means to the group that has decorated it. It might mean spending time with family or coming to Church on Christmas Eve for the Christingle Service. For Sunday Club it could be all about the Nativity, or for the choir it could be about

singing favourite carols. So what does Christmas mean to you and your organisation?

This year, once again, St Michael's congregations will be coming together to decorate the main church tree. But what does Christmas mean to us? While many of us revel in the joy and merriment of the Advent season (I know I do!), we are all connected in the truth that Christmas has one true meaning. That God loved us so much, that He sent His son to live among us, born as a tiny baby, Immanuel. A miracle so life changing, that 2000 years later we still celebrate. Jesus was the first Christmas gift, one that has never been surpassed. And Jesus is the gift that we at St Michael's want to share with our community, not just at Christmas time but all year round.

This thought made me think of a passage from Acts 3 in which on their way to the temple, Peter and John are asked for money by a man who could not walk. They had none and so Peter said, 'I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene - walk!'





While this is not a Bible passage normally associated with Christmas, its message certainly is. Above all of the parties, carolling, food and presents, above the silver and gold, there is one gift that has been given to us; a gift which we can share with the rest of the world. Jesus.

This year, as a reminder of this I am asking everyone to please donate one silver or gold Christmas tree decoration. These will be gathered together and used to decorate the tree that will stand as a symbol for all who come through our doors this Christmas time, of the real Christmas gift we have to share. More details on how you can donate these decorations will be given soon.

Not only will the Church be full of wonderful Christmas trees, but our Flower team will be decorating the Church with beautiful displays and Christmas carols and songs will be played throughout the weekend by the Music Team. Our Hot Chocolate Bar will also make a welcome return in the Kirk Hall.

We hope to include as many people as possible in our preparations, and by the time you are reading this, we will have hosted our Christmas Craft workshop, where we will be making decorations to adorn the Church, both inside and outside, over Christmas. The Workshop will be held on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 October, and we hope to see as many people as possible coming along to enjoy fellowship after what feels like so long.

Last year, in the darkness of lockdown, we saw the windows of Cross House lighting up the Cross depicting the Nativity. This year, rumour has it that Santa has relocated his workshop to Cross House and you might grab a glimpse of it through the ground floor window in room 1. If you are lucky, you might see some Elves hard at work or, if you're really lucky, you might glimpse Santa and Mrs Claus through the window. Due to Covid restrictions, you won't be able to come in, but you can look in the windows.

During the weekend of the Festival of Christmas Trees we are looking for wrapped donations of toys/gifts and these will be distributed throughout West Lothian. We will also have a donation box for the West Lothian Foodbank.

If your group or organisation would like to take part in this year's Festival of Christmas Trees, or if you would like further information, please contact me [maggij@sky.com](mailto:maggij@sky.com)



# Dates for your Diary

## EVENTS and SERVICES IN THE CHURCH

### November

Saturday, 6th	10.00am	Service of Memory and Thanksgiving (refreshments afterwards in Adam Room)
Sunday, 7th	2.00pm	Pupils' Concert
Saturday, 13th	7.30pm	Linlithgow String Orchestra concert
Sunday, 21st	3.00pm	Occasionally@stmichaels (flute and piano recital with Sue Evans and Alan Hastie)
Sunday, 28th	7.00pm	Ecumenical Advent Carol Concert
Tuesday, 30th	7.30pm	Literary Evening (Far from the Madding Crowd)

### December

#### Christmas Tree Festival

Friday, 3rd	10.30am to 7.00pm
Saturday, 4th	10.30am to 7.00pm
Sunday, 5th	2.00pm to 7.00pm

Adults £5.00

Children £2.00

U2 free

Family Tickets (2 adults and 2 children) £10

Saturday, 11th	7.30pm	Linlithgow Ladies Choir concert
Sunday, 12th	7.00pm	Linlithgow Reed Band Christmas concert
Friday, 17th	7.30pm	Occasionally@stmichaels (piano concert with Glyn Eggart)

## OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

### 2022

Saturday, 12 February	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild 'Broen (string) Ensemble'
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## 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.





# **Christmas Services**

## **in the Kirk**

**Wednesday, 15th December 7.30pm**  
**Blue Christmas Service**

**Sunday, 19th December 7.00pm**  
**Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols**

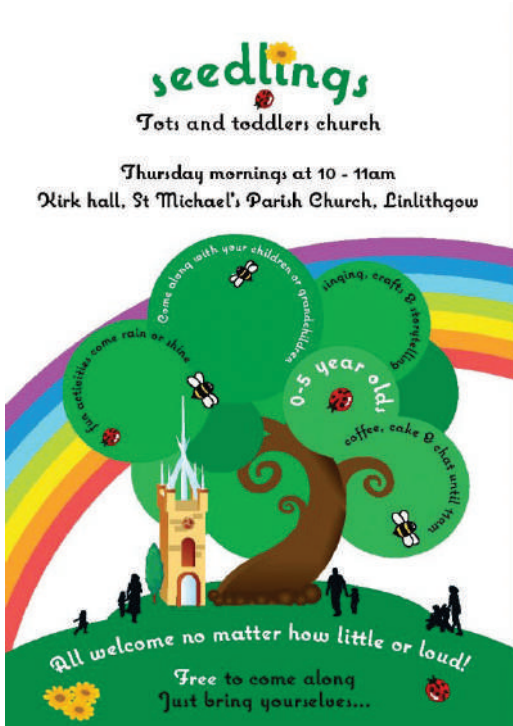


**Friday, 24th December**  
**7.00pm Christingle Service**  
**11.00pm Community Carol Singing**  
**11.30pm Christmas Eve Watch Night Service**

**25 December 11.00am**  
**Christmas Day Service**

# seedlings

by Lorraine Orr



Seedlings meets each week in the Kirk Hall for singing, stories, fun and laughter, a wee craft and some coffee and cake! This is a friendly and relaxed way of doing church. Everyone is welcome – no matter how little or how loud.



We have learnt about Daniel in the Lions' Den, Noah's Ark and Moses and the Red Sea.

You don't have to book, just come along and join us on the day.



# 'TODDLERS'

*by Lorraine Orr*

**St Michael's Parent and Toddler Group runs on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9.30 to 11.30am.**

'Toddlers' was established in 1988 to provide a welcoming, warm and safe environment for families with young children to meet together and make new friends.

The Kirk Hall provides plenty of space for youngsters to run about in, and we provide lots of toys for them to play with. Families are welcome to come and go during the sessions according to their needs.

Within our Kirk Hall, we have a soft play corner, a climbing frame, lots of ride-on and push-along toys for all ages.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided in the servery area for the grownups (please bring your own mug). At the moment, you will need to bring your own snacks and drinks for your wee ones.

Due to current restrictions, we operate a booking system via Eventbrite. For more information, please contact Lorraine on: [lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk)





# EASY FUNDRAISING FOR ST MICHAEL'S

*by Andrew Jones, Gift Aid Convenor*

During lockdown many of us were forced to do more of our shopping online and, having found it convenient, may well continue to do so (but do support your local high street if you can). However, you may not be aware that St Michael's is signed up for a scheme where you can raise FREE donations for the church when you shop online. There are over 4,000 shops and sites – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – that will donate to us when you use *easyfundraising* to shop with them, and all at no extra cost to you.



These donations can really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if the online shoppers amongst you could take a moment to sign up and support us this way. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment.

You can find our *easyfundraising* page at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmichaelslinlithgow/>



where you can join for free. Then, every time you shop online, go to *easyfundraising* to find the site you want before you start shopping and, after you've checked out, that retailer will make a donation to the church at no extra cost to you whatsoever. You can even download *easyfundraising*'s FREE Donation Reminder tool, which finds donations when you shop as normal and lets you activate the donation in one click. Why not give it a try the next time you log on to go shopping?





And for those of you who just want to be able to make a straight donation online, a reminder of our link with *Stewardship*; a Christian charity that offers fundraising services to churches across the country. At the foot of every page of the St Michael's website – [www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk) – there is an orange 'Support us with Stewardship' button. Clicking on this takes you to a page where a donation to the church can be made via debit/credit card. Our link-up with *Stewardship* means that they securely process all card transactions, handle Gift Aid where appropriate, and send on the funds at the end of each month (less a small amount in respect of the card fees). As all the processing is carried out by *Stewardship* it is also possible for donations to be made anonymously; the funds are then remitted to the church (with Gift Aid if applicable) but no details of the donor are shared with anyone at St Michael's.

**Support us  
with Stewardship** 

Both these tools are intended to complement the well-established envelope, standing order and cash offering arrangements, which are always available for both existing and new donors. In these difficult times please remember that your regular giving can be adjusted at any time, **in either** direction. If you'd like more details of any of these schemes, or about giving to the church generally, please get in touch with me in confidence, by email via [giving@stmichaels-parish.org.uk](mailto:giving@stmichaels-parish.org.uk) or phone me on 01506 840914. As the trademarked slogan of a well-known grocery enterprise says 'every little helps'.



# Chapters Book Club

*by Sally Chambers*

Chapters book club has been now running since May 2015, with many friendships being formed along the way. We have now started our face-to-face meetings which is great compared to the challenges of Zoom!

Books selected for each new session (September–May) are based on suggestions from members in the group. I then Google to make sure that there is a cross section of subject/type designed to suit everyone. Like life, the choice of book for each month doesn't always suit everyone, which makes for healthy discussions, but we always end well over a cuppa and a blether.




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The beauty of Chapters is that all members bring their life skills and background to the group, and I would like to think at some point in the not too far distant future that we could put together a journal of life from Chapters!

We currently have the maximum number suggested for a book club, but if you love to read and would like our current book list, join us in reading and submit your views on the book(s) I will then share with the group and vice versa. Please let me know.

Mobile: 07732722146 or email  
wordsandstories2015@gmail.com

# St Michael's Knitting Group

*by Mairi McFarlane*

The last time the Knitting Group met was in March 2019 and so, after 18 months, it was good to reconvene in September this year. During the pandemic, the group was not idle and, among other things, contributed many Christmas Angels to the successful church/community initiative last December. The knitters also produced a variety of goods which will go to the Salvation Army when it re-opens. They are always grateful for woollen goods for disadvantaged people they support.



This year we will be supporting the Blythwood Appeal by knitting hats and scarves for this worthy cause. In addition, we knit for the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, supplying elephants for memory boxes given to those who have lost babies.

The 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Knitting Group is the Poppy Fall dedicated in 2016 – it was good to have it displayed during lockdown, and that it continues to be an integral part of our Remembrance Service in November.

The group meets on the first Monday of every month in the Adam Room. Knitting is certainly getting a high profile these days with people like Tom Daley contributing to its popularity. Why not give it a go?

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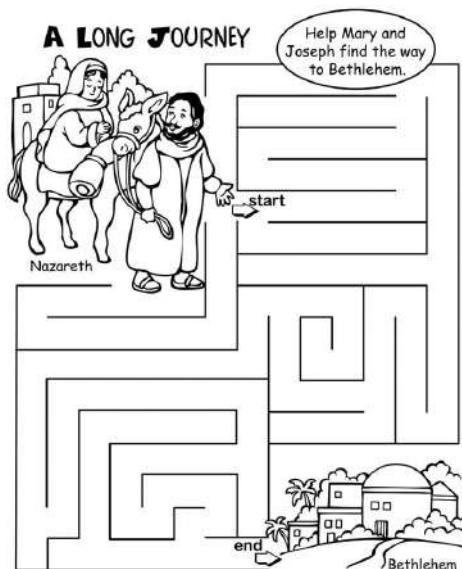
# The Birth of Jesus

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

All the words below feature in the story of Jesus' birth. Can you find them in the wordsquare?

angels	Bethlehem
donkey	gold
Herod	incense
innkeeper	Jerusalem
Joseph	Magi
manger	Mary
myrrh	Nazareth
sheep	shepherds
stable	star

The left-over letters spell out part of what the angel told the shepherds.



Joseph and Mary went on a long journey from the town of Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem.  
(Luke 2:1-5)



Find 10 differences between these two pictures.



# AN INSPIRING FUTURE

*by Alan Miller*



'Over 2 million quid – where are we going to find that kind of money?!' I wonder if that's your reaction when you hear that St Michael's is embarking on a major new fundraising programme. But before we panic or despair, let's remember, and reflect, and refresh our faith.

Let's recall that when we have set out in faith on previous projects that inspired and motivated people, we have been blessed by finding the resources to complete them. The Kirk Hall in the 1980s... the Church ceiling... the rewiring and

relighting of the Church Sanctuary... each a major undertaking; but each spoke of St Michael's as a living community of faith, and each was fully resourced and completed.

Then we can reflect on what drives us to take on new challenges. Our 2030 Vision is one of St Michael's re-animated by a living hope to become a blessing for our town through its service, facilities and witness. That starts with people reaching out in new ways, from Outdoor Church to the Listening Service. But our buildings must also work as places of care and connection that enable as many as possible to engage with Christian love and faith.

So the 2030 Vision speaks of transforming Cross House into a centre for community and wellbeing: 'A House for the Town', an inviting and warm hub for people and services to connect together. The Vision also speaks of enhancing the Church Sanctuary as a unique and inspiring place for worship, events and visitors alike – but to achieve that will first require addressing problems in the roof timbers, stonework, guttering and drainage. (Big old buildings pose big problems that require special care!)

Finally, our iconic Crown of Thorns spire requires major refurbishment to correct decades of weather damage, with a price tag of at least £260,000. Popping up on logos, sweatshirts and labels all over town, there could be no clearer symbol of the intimate connections between St Michael's and the Linlithgow community. But the spire is also a potent symbol of faith and courage in adversity.

By the time you read this, we'll have a clearer idea of the overall fundraising target and of how we will tackle it. But let's start by remembering, reflecting, and then renewing our faith in the inspiring future that our generous God has ahead for us.

# SIGHT TO THE BLIND

*by Luke Davidson*



Clinging to a rope for dear life was NOT how I'd imagined myself serving God.

I was on a tiny motorboat alongside the Logos Hope, a missionary vessel run by Operation Mobilisation, furiously trying to help keep it in place as we loaded people and supplies to run a small medical clinic on the Bahamian island of Abaco. We were to engage in a relief effort – providing free eyeglasses and dental care to people affected by the recent Hurricane Dorian.

'Careful, Luke!' came a voice from above, 'we'd rather lose the rope than lose you!'

Well. That's reassuring.

A couple more boxes, a few more people, and we were off – eleven racing across the crashing waves with the wind in our faces. Once docked, we travelled the rest of the way by car. On the way there, we were able to see the extent of the damage done. Buildings torn open, houses we were told came from another part of the island. It was a sobering reminder of why we were there.

Eventually, we reached the site of our 'clinic' (a local church building) and set to work. Some joined crew members from the Pacific Hope in the dental clinic, whereas others were assisting on the reception desk. The rest of us were assigned to test patients' vision and distribute eyeglasses. As more and more people came to be served, I began to understand more and more of why God partners with His people. Of course, I was placed there to be a blessing to the survivors of a horrific natural disaster, but as an inexperienced teenager in the middle of a global pandemic, there was very little I could've done, even with the team around me.



This was perhaps one of the biggest lessons I learned during my time aboard the Logos Hope – the importance of relying on God to work through you. Living on a ship away from home is an experience that forces you out of your comfort zone, and thus pushes you to accept that when situations are out of your control, be it a slippery rope or an antsy queue, they are firmly in His.



Living and working aboard the Logos Hope was an amazing experience I would recommend to anyone with a heart for serving the Lord aboard. If you would be interested in finding out more, please check out [www.om.org/ships/logoshope](http://www.om.org/ships/logoshope)

or contact me at [luke.a.davidson@hotmail.com](mailto:luke.a.davidson@hotmail.com)



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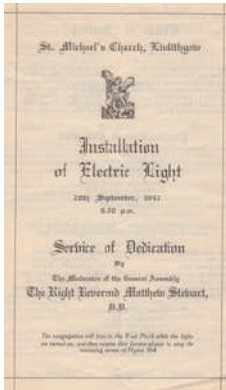
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# THE LIGHTS OF ST MICHAEL'S

by Bruce Jamieson



'I turn on the lights of this Sanctuary. May they shine to the Glory of God and be to the Church a symbol of the illumination of the Holy Spirit.'

These were the words spoken by Moderator, the Right Reverend Matthew Stewart, when he switched on and dedicated the first ever electric lighting in St Michael's Church. The event took place on September 28, 1947, in the presence of a large congregation. The service itself was conducted by the Rev Charles Rutherford in his eighth year in charge of the 700-year-old church.

In Pre-Reformation years, the church would be illuminated by candles placed on the 27 altars – the cost met by a tax collected from the owners of nominated properties throughout the burgh. The beeswax used for the candles had a religious significance due to the belief that bees were absent from the Garden of Eden and so escaped original sin. It was the duty of the chantry priests to keep the candles lit and a document of 1529 records the chastisement of one priest who 'did no' leme (light) the Lycht o' the Haily Table o' San Michael.'

By the 17th century, the use of candles had almost died out in Presbyterian places of worship. There is some evidence of burning braziers being used in St Michael's to both warm and illuminate the building, but early etchings show no visible signs of permanent lighting. There was probably very little stained glass in the windows of the medieval church so natural light would have entered – and services were doubtless conducted only during daylight hours. Later, oil lamps were installed as seen on this early photograph.



Some time after the Linlithgow Gasworks started up in business by the lochside, the church installed gas lighting and there are still traces of piping and gas-lamp support brackets around the building.





Elaborate wrought-iron chandeliers equipped with gas mantles can be seen in this 1911 postcard.

Electricity came relatively late into St Michael's. Thomas Edison had invented the first effective light bulb in 1879 and, from 1919, electricity became increasingly used to light a variety of buildings. The system installed in St Michael's in 1947 consisted mainly of wall-mounted spots and, with some alterations, this method lasted until fairly recent times.



In 2014, the Penicuik company, 'Lightfolio', was commissioned to prepare a new lighting scheme for St Michael's, one the company described as 'sympathetic, discreet, highly functional, low maintenance, energy saving and easy to control'. This was created using LED light sources, with 'very high colour rendering properties.' Certain details were picked out for special treatment including the bosses on the roof, the statues adorning the pulpit and fretwork on the communion table.

Interestingly, the installers, 'Bigg Design', forbidden to make holes in the ancient fabric, used what was left of the old gas pipes as conduits for the new electric cabling.

The new lighting is amazing, and I have used its flexibility, during several presentations in the church, to call up the 47 different lighting zones – all controlled from an iPad – a far cry from the days of candles!

# A KICK IN THE INTERIM!

*by Rev Iain Walker*



Rita Snowden is very well known for her short stories and reflections. In one of her reflections she tells of a friend recently inducted into a new charge. He had been very warmly welcomed by his new congregation and, with tongue in cheek, replied to the chairman's generous speech. After having thanked him and the congregation for their kind words, responded "When a new minister starts in a congregation he always gets a good 'kick off'; when the time comes for him to leave he usually gets a good 'kick out'; but what he needs even more is a 'good kick in the interim'."

A few weeks after he had settled in, the manse doorbell rang and he was surprised to find the youth group there, each carrying a dish. "What's this all about?" he asked and was told with a wide smile "This is a surprise party for you – it's our 'kick in the interim'!"

Rita Snowden finished up by saying "There is nothing else like a word of encouragement to 'put steam in the kettle'."

On reading this I couldn't help but think of Liam and of the Manse Family's introduction to St Michael's. I am sure that they would have felt that they had a good 'kick off' in Cross House but, before they had a chance to get to know people or to receive the encouragement that is so necessary, the Covid restrictions got in the way and made life very difficult.

But it is not just ministers who need that kind of support. It might be a friend or neighbour who has lost confidence because of lockdown; or a young person who feels isolated and afraid. So many people have been affected by the isolation caused by Covid. Perhaps now is our chance to think about offering our 'good kick in the interim' to all our friends and neighbours by offering that word of encouragement, or that word of appreciation, to put steam in their kettles.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive us that so easily we forget other people's interests and efforts and withhold the encouragement that would 'put the steam back in their kettle'. Forgive us the times when we make excuses or by-pass opportunities to encourage others. Help each one of us to be true witnesses to the love of Jesus and with joy and patience serve you through our service to others. Amen

# USEFUL CONTACTS

## The Ministry

### **Minister**

Rev Dr Liam Fraser  
tel: (01506) 842195

### **Auxiliary Minister**

Rev Thom Riddell  
tel: (01506) 843251

### **Pioneer & Outreach Worker**

Lorraine Orr  
email: lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk

### **Youth & Family Outreach Worker**

Steve Chaffee  
email: steve@stmichaels-parish.org

### **Church Office**

Val Wood  
Office closed at present so contact by  
e-mail: info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk  
or leave a message on  
tel: (01506) 842188

## Office Bearers

### **Session Clerk**

John Reid  
tel: (01506) 842030

### **Gift Aid Convener**

Andrew Jones  
tel: (01506) 840914

### **Coordinator of Music**

Bill Jones

### **Roll Keeper**

Alan Bennie  
tel: (01506) 848166

## Organisations

### **The Guild**

Margaret Henderson  
tel: (01506) 844787

### **Parent and Toddlers**

Lorraine Orr  
email: lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk

### **Sunday Club Leadership Team**

Rona Molloy  
tel: 07745 957326

Sunday Club (3-11yrs)  
Bible Class (12-14yrs)

### **Boys' Brigade**

Lisa Callaghan  
tel : 07894106425

### **Safeguarding**

Alison Murray  
tel: (01506) 840407  
Andy Tunnicliffe  
tel: 07961521919

### **Bereavement Support Group**

Sheila Rae  
tel: (01506) 847538

### **Events Co-ordinator**

Stephen Blake  
tel: (01506) 822603

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