

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

May 2022

Vol 25:1



*All you people of the world, you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it,
and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it* ISAIAH Ch18 v3

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday, 29th May

10am in the Kirk*

and

3pm in the Kirk Hall

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

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Weekly Services

10am in the Kirk*

and

9.45am in Springfield School

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

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Cover: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's visit to St Michael's on 7th July 1989

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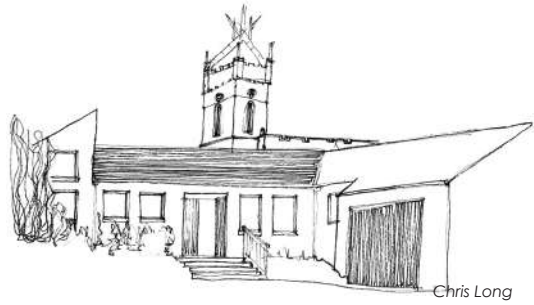
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The deadline for the August 2022 issue is 1st July 2022.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser

On 24 February this year, Russia invaded Ukraine. While there are various political reasons why Vladimir Putin chose to invade, commentators have noted the importance of the *story*, or grand narrative that the Russian government tells to its people to explain the war. The story told by the Russian government is that Ukrainians have no independent culture or history of their own, and that Ukrainians are actually Russian. If Ukrainians choose to ignore this fact and refuse to be part of the Russian empire, then they must be completely eradicated. Further, if the majority of the world sides with Ukraine, then Russia must go to war with the entire world too. The consequences of this story are seen nightly on our TV screens: the deaths of tens of thousands of people, the forced migration of millions, and the perpetrating of horrendous war crimes that amount to genocide.



The story that Ukrainians relate about this war is very different from the Russian one. The Ukrainians tell about centuries of attempted domination by Russia, and the preservation of Ukrainian identity, culture, and self-determination against huge odds. It is a story about freedom, and the hope for a place within the mainstream of contemporary European life. Because Ukrainians tell a similar story to that of the global community, they have found huge support in the West and throughout most of the world. Because Ukraine's story about itself makes sense, and leads to mutual flourishing among the nations, while they will face huge struggles along the way, the world will not allow them to lose this war, and Ukraine will eventually win.

The stories we tell about ourselves, then, are *powerful*. Depending on what they are, they can either lead us and others to flourish and succeed, or lead us into ruin.

What story do you use to make sense of your life? How do you explain what's important, to explain why you're on this planet? Perhaps your story is about *family*, and the importance of loving and being loved by those closest to you.

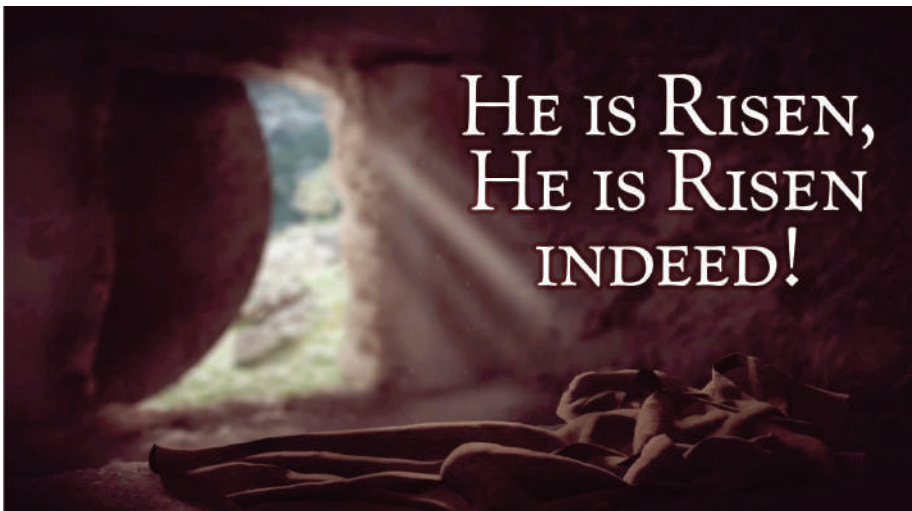
Perhaps you talk about *success*, about how you forged a successful career, or created the kind of life that sets you apart from others. Or perhaps you tell about the *trauma* you've suffered, something that set you back, and which you feel you have never got over.

Well whatever story dominates your thinking, the stories we tell about ourselves have huge power. Some of these stories allow us and the people around us to flourish, bringing happiness, healing and prosperity. While some of the stories we tell hurt us and the people around us, keeping us locked in cycles of grief, or anger, or anxiety that we never seem to shake.

At Easter, the Christian Church tells a story, the account of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. This has been the central story across 1500 years of Western civilisation, and is essential to this day for the world's 2 billion Christians. It's a story about life and hope and peace coming from death and despair and suffering. Unlike some stories that are *only* sad or *only* upbeat, this story is both sad *and* joyous, a story that is true to life. In the Easter story, Jesus undergoes every kind of suffering, suffering which you and I may be familiar with – betrayal, rejection, abuse, and physical pain – plus a great deal that we will be unfamiliar with. Yet when the darkness and evil of the world laid him low, God raised him to newness of life. After Resurrection, he still carried his wounds as a mark of all that he had been through, but on Easter morning, freed from sin and death, he began again, and offers today the same new start to all who make his story their own.

In a world so full of darkness and uncertainty, it has never been more important to have the best story to guide and make sense of our lives.

So what story are you following at the moment? And is it the right one?



HIGH ASPIRATIONS

by Alan Miller

As leader of our church Fundraising Team, I'm learning that the numbers keep changing. Grant funders amend their priorities or processes, or run out of money. The fundraising target changes: although the cost of repairing the Crown of Thorns spire was previously estimated at £260k, that will increase due to inflation, VAT (albeit recoverable) and an element of fundraising costs.



But the other number that keeps changing – growing – is the total raised. Remarkably, we're approaching our first £100k in donations. After covering the cost of short-term repair works, at the time of writing that means we already have nearly £80k towards the major refurbishment of the Crown in 2023.

People are already giving liberally at this early stage of our campaign. Some are contributing more than generously: we've already had several 4-figure donations and two of £10,000 plus. And I'm conscious that some smaller donations may represent a greater sacrifice by the donors. Some come from church members, others from people in the community expressing their support for our landmark Crown or their gratitude for care received in difficult times.

We have a long way to go, but a huge groundswell of goodwill to build on. Our campaign now goes forward with book sales and a Kirk Hall market (check the newsletter and website for details). Then comes a Silent Auction/Cheese and Wine evening at the Queen Margaret Hall on Friday 10th June. The array of items to bid on already includes



- A one-off signature piece from Jewellery by Design
- A private piano recital by Steven Osborne (and yes, he's happy to play your piano!)
- Dinner, bed and breakfast for 2 at The Champany Inn.

What can you do? Buy tickets for 10th June and bid on a wonderful array of unique auction lots. Contribute an item – a holiday home stay, or a

unique and valuable skill, perhaps. Run an event yourself: just tell us your plans at aspirelinlithgow@gmail.com.

And donations are always very welcome! Go online to www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/aspirelinlithgow; or set up a bank transfer or standing order in favour of St Michael's Parish Church Special Projects A/c (CAF Bank; account no 00400779, sort code 83-91-46). Cheques and cash (in an envelope marked for Tim Brown's attention) are also more than welcome.

Thank you so much for the support already given, and for all that's to come!

AND HER MAJESTY CAME TOO!

by Rev Ian Paterson



1389 was an important year in Linlithgow's history because King Robert II conferred on it the status of a Royal Burgh, thus independent from the authority of local barons and even Bishops. It could organise its own markets and the taxes it levied, with no appeal, except to the king.

As the 600th anniversary of this event approached, the Deacons' Court decided it

should be marked appropriately. Someone daringly suggested that the Queen, as a descendant of King Robert, should be invited to join the celebration! To everyone's surprise and delight, a message from Buckingham Palace intimated that the Queen would gladly accept an invitation to visit Linlithgow on her way to Stirling Castle. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to have a short service in the church, giving thanks for those six centuries since 1389 and praying for God's guidance in the years ahead.

The Queen had visited Linlithgow in 1964 when the new Forth Road Bridge was opened. On that occasion she gifted to the church a specially designed silver alms dish, on condition that it be used regularly. She also commented to the then minister, the Very Rev Dr David Steel, that the recently carved reredos behind the Communion Table would be greatly improved if lighting were installed behind the carvings and, the intricacy of the carvings would thus be clearer! Her suggestion was followed up and is certainly an improvement.



Royal visits to the town are rarely associated with a church service, but it was appropriate to have a service in St Michael's as the old church, standing next to the palace, has played an important part in the history of the Burgh and in the lives of our Kings and Queens. There have been times of rejoicing, with the birth and baptisms of several princes and princesses, including Mary, Queen

of Scots. There were occasions of great sadness, when James IV, facing a battle with England, prayed in the St. Katherine's Aisle in the church. Tradition has it that he was warned there in a vision not to go into battle, advice ignored by a headstrong young king and, at Flodden, he and most of his army perished.

There were also times when the church was abused by those occupying the palace. Edward I (the Hammer of the Scots) and later, Cromwell, stabled horses in the church and stored supplies there for military campaigns.

The close association of palace and church is depicted in the pulpit which includes four statuettes of Queens with a link to the church: Queen Margaret, who gave land to the church, Mary, Queen of Scots, Queen Victoria, during whose reign a major restoration of the building took place; the most recent statuette is of the Queen, carved by John Donaldson for the Society of Friends of St Michael's, with her permission and approved by the Duke of Rothesay on a private visit to the Burgh in June 2003.

The Queen's visit in 1989 began with her coming to the County Buildings to be greeted by the Earl of Morton, her Lord Lieutenant and by Provost Tom Baird who introduced the Bailies and guests. The highlight of the civic ceremonies was presentation of a black Labrador bitch puppy, given to the Royal National Institution for the Blind to be trained as a guide dog.

After ceremonies at the Cross, the Queen came up the Kirkgate to the west door of the church where a small guard of honour of BB Queen's Men – Alastair Ross, Russell Eadie and Stewart Millar, with Queen's Guide, Fiona Aitken – had lined the steps. Lord Morton presented me to Her Majesty, with my wife, Lorna, Session Clerk, Derek Henderson, with his wife, Margaret, and Beadle, John Packman, with his wife, Frances. The Queen was then escorted to her chair at the front of the nave.



The service began with a strong statement of faith in the metrical Psalm 100. On this occasion, with choir and organ, played by Andrew Sutherland, the singing lifted the roof! The service ended with the National Anthem after which the Queen processed to the Burgh's War Memorial, pausing for a moment of silent thanksgiving. The Queen is Patron of the Society of Friends and the chapel in the north aisle had been created and furnished by the Society shortly before her visit. The Queen consented to its being called The Queen's Aisle. She returned through the Choir to meet clergy from other churches in the Burgh before being invited by the Vice Chair of the Society of Friends, Mrs Julia Wade, to sign the 'Visitors' Book.

Thus ended a short, yet memorable occasion in the life of the Burgh. Today, we thank God for her continued contribution to our country as we celebrate her remarkable Platinum Jubilee.

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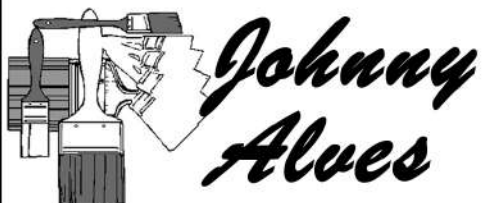
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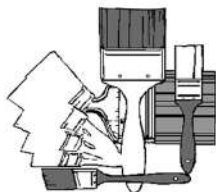
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REV IAN WALKER

by John Macartney

Most of us in St Michael's will remember Rev Ian Walker, not only as a regular attendee, but also as an occasional preacher and, most recently, as locum prior to Liam's arrival.

Ian was born in Aberdeen in 1941 and attended Aberdeen Grammar School before enrolling in Nautical Navigation College, graduating top of his class. From there, Ian became a Merchant Navy officer with British India Line. Having met and married Shona in Aberdeen, they travelled out to Mombasa in Kenya and later to Bombay (now Mumbai) where they had a flat overlooking the 'Gateway of India'.



When in India, Ian felt a calling to the ministry and they returned to Scotland for him to study Divinity at the University of Aberdeen (supplementing his student's income with summer stints back at sea), as well as starting a family.

After graduating from Aberdeen and taking a Diploma in Missionary Studies from the University of Edinburgh, Ian and Shona headed out to Zambia where Ian was ordained into the recently created United Church of Zambia. After three years in Kafue and another three in Chingola and Chililabombwe in the 'Copper Belt', they returned to Scotland. In 2007, they returned to Zambia for the fiftieth anniversary of St Mark's Church in Chingola.

Back in Scotland, Ian took up the charges of Garvald and Haddington West in East Lothian; the family remember fondly their time there. When an opportunity came to teach at St Colm's College, Ian and family moved to Edinburgh where he prepared students for the Diaconate as well as setting up new distance-learning-based courses. When the college closed, Ian moved to Rutherglen to oversee the merger of two Churches. Ian and Shona, as always, left with more lifelong friends.

During Ian's 'retirement', he took up a series of locumships, each one 'definitely the last!' These included Armadale, Broxburn, Bathgate High, Avonbridge and Torphichen – and, latterly, St Michael's itself.

During his long and varied time as a minister, Ian carried out countless weddings and baptisms in Africa and across Scotland including those of his own children and grandchildren; the most recent of which was a grandson's wedding in Kirriemuir last December.

Ian is survived by his wife, Shona, his three children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. All of us are left with the memories of a caring, thoughtful man of God, with a wonderful sense of humour and a constant twinkle in his eye.

‘I WISH HE HADN’T SAID THAT’ THE HARD SAYINGS OF JESUS

by Gordon Wardall

‘Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.’ Matthew 10:34 NIV (A)

‘...Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ Mark 10:21 (B)



Sometimes Jesus doesn't exactly make things easy for us. I wonder if you sometimes come across one of his sayings that gives rise to feelings of confusion or possibly dismay. You may even have thought: 'I wish he hadn't said that.' If so, be assured that it's a not uncommon response to what have become labelled 'the hard sayings of Jesus'. We read in the Gospels how the disciples themselves were often puzzled by Jesus' teaching or missed its point. In response to one statement (concerning eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood – *John 6:53-56*) they reply: 'This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?' (v60).

The first saying quoted above (A) is among his most surprising, and even shocking. FF Bruce takes the view that here Jesus is talking about the *inevitable* consequence of his message and ministry, and warning of the hostility that awaited the church (and individual followers) throughout its history; not what he would necessarily *wish* to happen. An important point to note with this saying is that it seems on the surface to be in marked contrast to several other sayings and other NT passages, which emphasise Jesus' role in bringing peace (eg *John 14:27*; *John 16:33*; *Matthew 5:9*; *Matthew 11:28-30*; *Philippians 4:7*) Although this apparent contradiction may seem to be a further challenge, it can add balance and depth to a teaching that may seem harsh or shocking at first sight. Here as elsewhere, Jesus wants to make us think. He is perhaps challenging us to understand how both types of saying may be true at different levels or in different situations.

So, what is it about many sayings that makes them so difficult? Scholars give many reasons as to why difficulties might arise; but for non-experts, most of Jesus' hard sayings can be put into one of two main categories:

- 1) Those whose meaning is, for one reason or another, difficult to understand (eg due to historical or cultural context, or difficulties with translation).
- 2) Those where Jesus' meaning seems all too clear BUT we find it unpalatable or inconvenient – the real 'I wish he hadn't said that' ones. Both the above quotes seem to be in this category (particularly B!).

Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised by our difficulty with the latter group of sayings. Jesus is, after all, God and we are flawed human beings, in need of forgiveness. Some at least of our difficulties result from this gulf. We look at Jesus' teachings from a view which is fundamentally distorted: we compare ourselves to each other and to society's values, rather than to a perfect, loving God and his purpose for our lives.

In many of his teachings, Jesus challenges us to look at our attitudes, priorities, and motivations. His advice to the rich young man (B, above), to give everything to the poor, can be seen as illustrating this. One of the main points of Jesus' reply seems to be to make the young man focus on the powerful hold which his wealth and possessions have upon him. It is interesting to contrast this with Jesus' reply to the tax-collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8-10), who, after meeting with Jesus, announces he will give half his possessions to the poor (and repay anything he has cheated people of four times over). Jesus commends Zacchaeus for his response: he doesn't rebuke him for not planning to give away the other half! For Zacchaeus, the power of material riches had been broken.

Clearly, we need to see all teachings in context and guard against overly literal interpretations; undoubtedly, Jesus makes use of hyperbole (exaggeration) and makes cultural references that may be puzzling to modern readers. But it's all too easy to respond to difficult passages by ignoring them, fudging them, telling ourselves that he's not really saying what he seems to be saying or that it doesn't exactly apply to our situation.

Perhaps we should consider that such passages may be difficult because they highlight the ways in which our thinking is most out of line with God's; for that reason, they're the ones we most need to take heed of. As E Becker writes:

'If we can all be truthful, we find some things Jesus said difficult... Yet all I can do is wonder if the things I wish Jesus hadn't said are really the things He wanted me to hear and do the most'.

ESTD  1919

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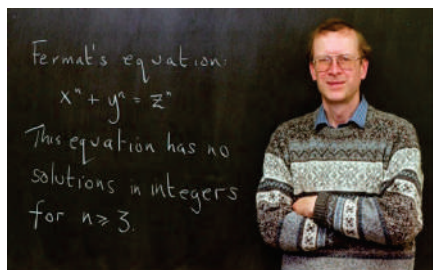
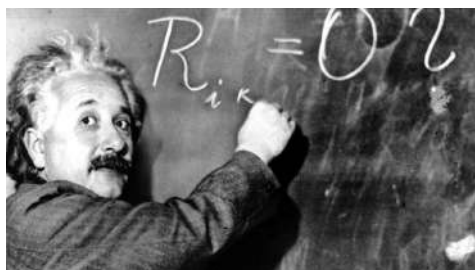
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STEM TUTOR

MAKING TUITION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

What do you think of when you think of a scientist? What about a mathematician?



When children are asked these questions, they might use words like 'nerd' or 'boffin', 'boring' or even 'mad'. They may visualise an old man with glasses; indeed, when searching for an image of a 'mathematician' for this article, almost all the images offered played into this stereotype!

Even in 2022, there is a lot of stereotypical thinking around science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) – STEM can be seen as something for very clever people, for well-off people, for males. University of Stirling, working with Church of Scotland and Linlithgow Academy, is hoping to disrupt these ideas by offering one-to-one tutoring in STEM to young people in the school catchment; young people who don't fall into the categories listed above or who would not otherwise have access to tutors. Some parents already pay for their children to access one-to-one tuition, but at around £30/ hour, it remains a luxury item.

COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly had a detrimental effect on young people's experiences of education, with some being affected more than others. Tutoring can really help with this, with its one-to-one support and focus on relationships. We know what works with tutoring – it helps if it takes place in a non-judgemental space by people who know what they are talking about. This is where the church and STEM volunteers come in. St Michael's and Bridgend church halls are ideal places for tuition – relaxed environments where young people can work with volunteers from the congregations and local community with expertise in and passion for STEM.

Challenging injustice: There are many injustices in the world and sometimes it can feel overwhelming, like there's nothing we can do that could make a dent.

God tells us that we can and should help and has given us some guidance in the bible:

'Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression.' (Isaiah 1:17)

'God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.' (1 Peter 4:10)

People with the gifts of communicating or helping others can freely share their passion for STEM to inspire and motivate young people to select STEM subjects at school. The aim is for our young people to achieve success in their education, opening opportunities for rewarding careers that contribute to our communities and address problems affecting our society.

The project: For young people in S1-S3, the tutoring is designed to shape and support their love and knowledge of the subject. It will involve learning about topical areas of STEM – for example ethical hacking, global warming or vaccines – in a way that will ignite imagination and enjoyment. This will support them to think of themselves as someone who could be a scientist, someone who could be a cyber security expert, or someone who could use maths to solve world problems. Jobs in STEM tend to be relatively well paid, so it's important to ensure that these jobs feel accessible to all young people.

For young people who have already selected STEM subjects at National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, tuition could help them to achieve higher grades. Free tuition would allow young people who wouldn't otherwise have access to tutors to experience the benefits, which would in turn support their post-school destinations in STEM areas.

A pilot will take place in the summer term with a small number of pupils in S1-S3. Five children and five tutors will have a weekly session for a period of eight weeks. Tutors are all experts in STEM and will take part in training before the sessions start. A volunteer support worker (Elma Birrell) will liaise between school, home and the church to ensure that everything is well organised and well communicated. After summer, we hope to include older pupils, and grow and develop the project.

Adapting as we go: Researchers from University of Stirling will support the project using 'action research', which involves working closely with everyone all the way through to find out what is working well and what could go better, with changes and reflection built into the week-to-week sessions.

Can you help? Are you someone who works in science, computing, technology, engineering or maths, enjoys working with young people in S1-S3 and would like to help after the summer? Or are you a qualified teacher and could commit to eight sessions over an eight-week period? Please contact Elma Birrell: elma.birrell@gmail.com for more information. It feels good to contribute!

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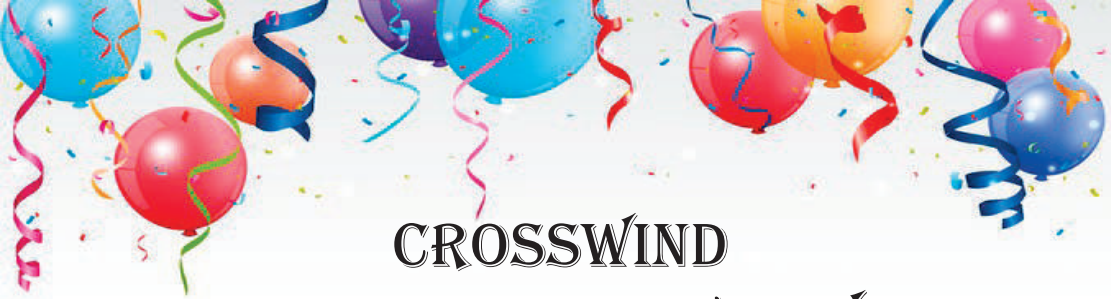
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CROSSWIND

CELEBRATES ITS 25TH YEAR



Crosswind was first published for Easter 1998.

All the words below are related to articles that appeared in that issue.

Can you find them in the wordsquare?

ads (adverts)	cartoon
crafts	creche
Crosswind	diary
Easter	Endpiece
ghost	help
Jubilee	JYF (<i>Junior Youth Fellowship</i>)
Lighthouse	organ
prayer	puzzles
race (<i>London Marathon</i>)	
restoration	Romania
stewardship	Toddlers

CROSSWIND

How many words of 4 or more letters (without using plurals or proper names) can you make from the letters of Crosswind?

Can you find more than 25?

CROSSWIND was the vision of photographer, Gordon Young. He still designs the front covers!

The original committee consisted of Gordon Young, Maureen Blake, Julie Green, Rev Will Jones, Lorna Paterson and Doreen Timperley.

Regent Motors, jmk and Stewart Electrical Ltd were among our first advertisers.

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



**ST.
MICHAEL'S**
Parish church

Parish Register

BAPTISMS

One Lord, one faith, one Baptism

March

Charlie Morton, Clarendon Crescent

April

Malcolm Argo, Stourbridge



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

by Transfer Certificate



Jack and Muriel Davidson

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life



January

Hugh Foley, Acredales



February

George Adam, Oatlands Park
Rev Ian Walker, Carse Knowe
Jean Creber, Grange Knowe
Susan Lindsay, Kettil'stoun Mains
Jack Brown, Preston Road

March

Gillian Macpherson, Linlithgow Care Home (formerly Templars Court)
Jean Robb, Larbert

April

Catherine (Katie) Rutherford, Linlithgow Nursing Home
(formerly Clarendon Road)
Ronald Henderson, Polmont

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one



March

Meghan McBride to Paul Godsman

April

Gemma Lennie to Chris Taylor

Holiday Club 2022

by Steve Chaffee

Calling all those Holiday Club experts at St Michael's! Our Holiday Club this year will take place from **10am-12 noon** from **8 to 12 August!** We'll need all hands on deck for volunteers to help with our groups, crafty experts, and exuberance a-plenty to deliver a jam-packed, fun-filled Holiday Club! Keep your eyes open to the monthly newsletter, our Facebook page, and intimations in the coming weeks for more information about Holiday Club 2022 at St Michael's!



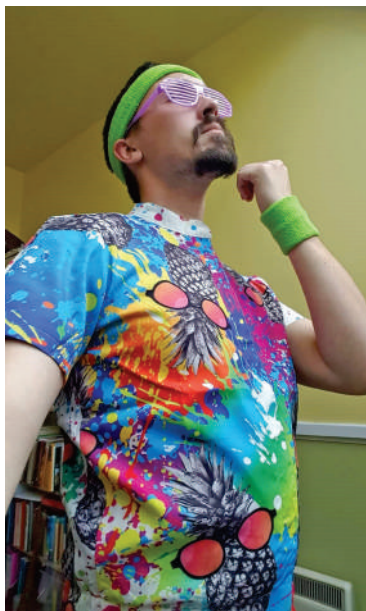
I'm no stranger to Holiday Clubs. I have long been volunteering for Holiday Clubs in my youth (though in the USA they are usually known as 'Vacation Bible Schools'!), and in my early adult years helping at my brother John's Holiday Clubs.

I have a penchant for silly costumes and characters – so thought I would give you a brief tour of some of the notable characters in my repertoire. There's Head Coach, though he went by 'Coach'. It may surprise most of you, but I've been clean-shaven for the better part of the past decade. I grew out a goatee in the lead up to the Holiday Club, and then shaved it all off for Coach – much to the surprise of the volunteer team! After that, there was Radge, the silent disco tour guide who took the Holiday Club on a tour around the world

– and Edinburgh! Finally, there was Dr. Doktor – who emerged from his bunker conspicuously placed beneath Greenbank Parish Church... during COVID!

Though, I will admit, it isn't just for Holiday Clubs that my appearance has changed. I have included a photo of myself, clean-shaven but with an electric green mohawk. That emerged from a fundraising effort for Socialbite, the homelessness charity in Edinburgh. What have I learned from all these varied looks and characters over the years?





A bit of silliness goes a long way! And that is something I bring to Holiday Clubs. Often, Holiday Clubs have been seen as a means solely to bolster Sunday morning attendance. But to think so changes the way Holiday Clubs are run. It often means the daily Bible stories selected for Holiday Clubs are fitted into an older evangelical mode – one that isn't as fitly framed to the moment as it ought to be.

Instead, a bit of silliness and games, paired with stories of deep meaning, helps to build positive associations with the Church, helps St Michael's to connect and serve Linlithgow families, and allows us to show some of the great treasures of our faith: our stories, and how they intersect the Bible's story. Let me say a little more about this.

When I was a 'wee yin', the model for Sunday School treated all of us like empty jugs. We were containers to be filled with Bible stories like the Garden of Eden, the Flood, Christmas,

and the Resurrection. They had a meaning, and that meaning had to be communicated to us. To an extent, that's true. But that is not *all* that these stories are for. These stories are not ones to be learned, but narrative spaces within which to wonder. And, after we have wrestled with these stories and made them our own, then our story *becomes* part of the Bible's story. This is really what I seek to do at Holiday Club – to create spaces within which young people and volunteers can forge fresh connections with The Story of the Bible.

This can happen in a few ways: for some, it's the music and songs, for others, it's the story and craft (sometimes messy ones at that!), and for others still, it is the chance to meet new friends. For that reason, Holiday Clubs are some of my favourite events that a church like St Michael's can run – because throughout Holiday Clubs I see the shape of The Church: young and old alike worshipping God together and seeing God's story in our own stories.



Dates for your Diary

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

15th May	3pm	Occasionally@stmichaels – concert by Toccata Choir
21st May	7.30pm	Linlithgow Ladies Choir concert
12th June	3.30pm & 7pm	NYCoS Summer concerts (2)
16th Sept	7.30pm	SCO Classical Music Concert
25th Sept	(TBC)	Linlithgow Reed Band – Celebration of the musical life of Joe Lavery

OTHER EVENTS

14th June	Marches Day
18th June	Linlithgow Gala Day
8th-12th Aug	10am-12 noon – Holiday Club, Cross House



WEBSITES

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

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

News from



by Lisa Callaghan

Session 2021/22 is nearly at an end, and we know we will go out with a bang.

Just like everyone else, we struggled with the effects of Covid along with a vast reduction in staff. But the remaining Leaders and helpers were adamant that the show would go on, and it certainly did!

We are currently running with 55 boys, ranging from 5-18 years old. We are extremely proud of our boys, and what they have achieved this session. We have 7 boys who will be awarded their President's Badge, the second highest award in the Boys' Brigade, and 2 boys who will be awarded the Queen's Badge, which is the highest award that can be gained in BB.



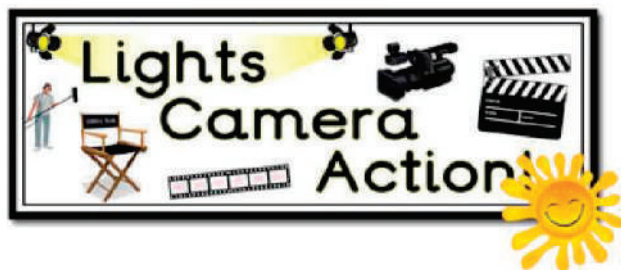
We are currently planning for our display and have also started looking ahead to Session 2022/23 – Boys' Brigade work never ends!

We want to make sure that next session is bigger and better. The only way we can do that is with the help and support of our leaders and helpers. We can always use extra assistance, and we would love to welcome some new helpers into our BB

family. If you can spare as little as one hour per month, please get in touch with us. We promise you a lot of fun along the way, and the opportunity to give something back to our community.



You can find us on Facebook or email us at 2linlithgow@boys-brigade.org.uk



by Chris Collen

Is that how you imagine the live-streaming of services at St Michael's starts on a Sunday? Or do you think it's more in the way of a BBC outside broadcast?

Just before Covid struck, we installed the cameras and screens in the Sanctuary. Once we'd moved into lockdown, Stephen Marshall took on the job of preparing and recording a weekly service that was made available through YouTube and Facebook. He co-ordinated pre-recorded videos from the Ministers, readers and the choir and managed to produce a very professional effort every week from March 2020 to June 2021.



During this period, we recognised that there were some services that we needed to live-stream from the Kirk and so we installed the means to transmit live pictures direct to the Internet. Because of the peculiar times, we were not able to get the ideal equipment but had to make some compromises.

The first live-stream that we carried out was of the Communion at the end of May 2020. We were restricted to having only 3 people

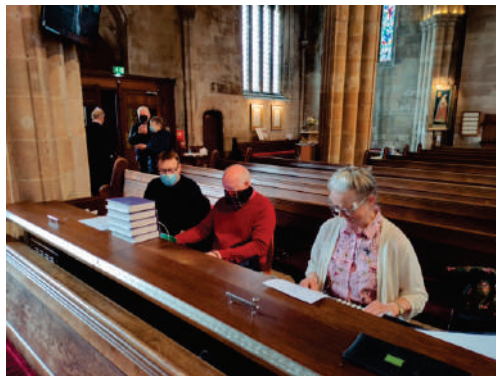
in the church, two of whom were Ministers, so there was quite a lot of panic going on behind the scenes with one person operating the camera and managing the sound. However, it seemed to work fairly well and gave us the confidence to push on. We managed to live-stream some of the services for the rest of the year, including the Remembrance Day Service where the wreath bearers were able to lay them before leaving the church.

From the beginning of July 2021, we were able to go back to church and we had to try to work out how to run services which we could live-stream for real. It took a bit of time to work out a system but we think we've got there now. We normally run services with 3 operators. The sound operator carries on pretty much as we have always done – making sure there is a microphone available to pick up each speaker. We have tweaked the system so the ambient microphones are always live but feeding the live-stream, but not the loudspeakers. That reduces the chances of feedback – that high-pitched squeal when a microphone is on in front of a loudspeaker.

The second person operates the laptop. Because we still aren't allowed to have hymn books, the words of the hymns need to be displayed on the screens. The hymns are advised by the minister and the words taken from a database. Occasionally you may have noticed that the organist stops a verse early or carries on after the words finish. This is because there are discrepancies between hymn books. You will sometimes see a frantic huddle round the AV desk shortly before the service starts as they try to reconcile things.

More and more of the sermons incorporate pictures or even sections of video. These are loaded into the laptop and played from there according to the script that is (sometimes) passed to the operator. The operator also moves each verse on, sometimes even at the right time!

The third member of the team is the camera person. Responsible for moving the cameras round and making sure they are pointing at the right place at the right time, he/she swaps inputs from the three cameras and the laptop so the correct picture appears on screens and on the live-stream.



The live-stream is transferred over the internet to our website hosts in Bo'ness where it is processed and then passed to Facebook and also made available on our website live feed. The Facebook picture runs about 5 seconds behind real time while the website is about 30 seconds later. This delay is apparently directly related to the size of your bank balance – even the BBC has a noticeable delay!

At the end of the service, the recording is slightly edited and made available on the 'Worship (Replay)' section of the church website for the next fortnight. A copy also goes on the Kirk's YouTube channel.

We are now being asked for the cameras and screens to be used at various events taking place in the Kirk such as concerts and this is beginning to stretch our enthusiastic team. If anyone would be interested in joining the team, please get in touch with me on 01506 844245 or chrisclin01@gmail.com . If you want any more information speak to any of the team, preferably not just before the service when they are likely to be slightly stressed!

A NARRATIVE OF GENEROSITY – 2022

by Anne Law



As I write this at the end of March, we are emerging from two years of pandemic – and straight into a war in Europe. It's hard to believe that we could move from one unprecedented event to another. These are challenging times for the world.

I begin with some good news in our tiny, local part of the globe. The annual accounts for St Michael's are currently in draft format and show a surplus of just over £34,000. This is quite remarkable, considering that during the pandemic, we feared a deficit of a similar amount. This was achieved, largely due to our regular giving through standing orders, as well as small changes to Covid rules

allowing groups to meet in Cross House, thus achieving some other income. We have also had little expenditure on our properties during the last year due to lockdown, and then there have been delays in scheduling work due to availability of trades people post-Covid.

The accounts must be approved by Kirk Session as the Elders are the Trustees of the charity. There will then be an opportunity for the full congregation to hear about the accounts at a meeting to be arranged in early summer.

In our Stewardship team we are extremely grateful that St Michael's finds itself in such a position. I can only thank everyone for their continuing faithfulness which enables work in our own parish to continue, and also work in the wider church. Our contribution to the national church is roughly half of our income and that money enables ministry to take place in other parishes in Scotland which could not pay for a minister.

And what of stewardship in 2022? We do still intend to plan for a stewardship campaign, while bearing in mind the wider political and economic landscape both at home and abroad. As mentioned in a previous magazine, there is an underlying reduction in general income and we feel as a stewardship team that we must address that reduction, even as we raise funds for specific projects, such as our Spire.

So, how to go about this in as sensitive a way as possible – given all that is happening locally, nationally and internationally? We have approached the Church of Scotland central Stewardship Team for assistance. They have created materials entitled A Narrative of Generosity for use by congregations. On their front page online we read: 'The Narrative of Generosity encourages the sharing of stories to teach and reflect on Christian stewardship. It is a

modular-based resource with 12 themes to help us fulfil our God-given role as stewards. This Narrative invites us to **share, reflect and act**. The whole congregation and wider church family are encouraged to participate in the conversations, focussing together on one chosen theme at a time'.

Themes include Money stories, Time stories, Volunteer stories and cover a range of areas where Christians manage our God-given gifts. The materials are available at A Narrative of Generosity: The Church of Scotland.

Christian stewardship is our response to God and all that He has given to us. We give as we have received. We give as a token of our love for the blessings we have received from God. We have centred our stewardship initiatives in the past on asking members to contribute a fitting proportion of our time, talents and treasure to the church, but Christian stewardship is seen nowadays in a broader context where we see stewardship as care for God's world in its many dimensions.

We are still in the early stages of our planning for our stewardship campaign but we are excited to use the new resources and approach. Our Stewardship Consultants suggest that we pilot our approach and then roll out larger events. We intend to use the Co-ordinating Team of Kirk Session (leaders of the Session Teams) as our guinea pigs with their partners. If the new approach works well, we will then roll out to all the Elders and their spouses before running events for the congregation and wider church family. We hope you will engage with this approach, so do please keep an eye on Sunday intimations and newsletters. We are planning evening sessions lasting a couple of hours with refreshments – Covid rules permitting.

It will be interesting to hear each other's stories through 'share, reflect and act'. 'Share' might involve discussing our attitudes towards money; we might then 'reflect' on what it means to be good stewards of our money; and in 'Act' we will consider what we might do following the discussions. It will be important to work together as a whole people of God for the future prosperity of St Michael's Linlithgow.



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www.linlithgowlink.org.uk
The Link Office is open
Monday to Friday 9.30 – 12.30
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these hours

CAN YOU HELP?



WHEN IS EASTER?

by Elaine Laing

We've just celebrated Easter, but why does it occur when it does? There are another couple of strange timings connected to Easter as well. Why does the Good News version of the bible call the Thursday 'the day before the Passover festival' (Jn 13: 1), and **also** call the Friday 'the day before the Passover [festival – understood]' (Jn 19: 14)? And why does the bible say that Jesus will be raised from the dead on the third day, when Friday to Sunday is two days?

Let's take a quick look at the Easter story first, with our modern timings.

Thursday – the day before the feast of Passover (more later). Jesus has the Passover dinner with his disciples in the upper room, then is arrested in the garden.

Friday – also the day before the feast of Passover (more later). Jesus is crucified.

Saturday – the feast day. Jesus is in the tomb.

Sunday – the third day. The feast day is over, so the women visit the tomb. Jesus is risen.

Why does the bible call Friday to Sunday three days? If we said to a friend on a Friday that we would see him 'in a couple of days,' we would mean that we would see him on Sunday. But in the Roman world, days were counted inclusively, that is, the first day was counted as day one. So, in Jesus' time:

Friday was day one
Saturday was day two
Sunday was day three.

So Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, as He said in Luke 18: 31- 33.

Then we have the anomaly of the bible calling the Thursday 'the day before the Passover festival,' and calling the Friday 'the day before the Passover [festival].' What is Passover? It is not a day, but a meal which is eaten by Jews on the eve of the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Just as we nowadays might say that the family are visiting over Christmas, not meaning specifically Christmas day itself but the Christmas holiday season, so the Jews often referred to the week of the Festival of Unleavened Bread as 'Passover,' because it immediately follows the day on which the Passover meal was celebrated. And it is a lot shorter to say!

But what about the anomaly of the Thursday **and** the Friday both being referred to as 'the day before...'? This looks strange to us. In our modern world we have arbitrarily taken midnight to be the close of one day and the start of the next. We are accustomed to thinking of Thursday stopping at midnight and Friday beginning then. But the ancient world was a primarily agrarian society, and the day ended at sunset; the next day began then also. So, by the time that Jesus sat down to eat the Passover meal with his disciples, the Friday (the day before the Passover feast) had already begun as the sun set. And so we have it that the Thursday evening (as we see it) and the morning of Good Friday are **both** 'the day before the Passover feast.'

And so to our first question above. Why does Easter occur when it does? Why does it move around? Easter is known in the church as a movable feast. Simply Easter moves around because Passover moves around. Christmas day was set to be 25 December, the day on which we celebrate Christ's birth, as no-one actually knew what date it was. But everyone knew that Jesus died on the day when Passover was celebrated, so the date of Easter was fixed to the date of Passover. But how was Passover calculated?

In Exodus God gave the Hebrews instructions as to how to calculate the date of Passover. You would think that that would make it easy to work out, but no! You see, the Jews used a lunar calendar, not our solar one, and a lunar month is shorter than a solar month; in fact, a lunar year is about 12 days shorter than a solar year. To balance things up, the Jews would insert a leap month every so often! By the fourth century, the date of Easter was fixed as the first Sunday after the full moon on or after the Spring equinox.

By the eighteenth century, it was decided that no matter when the astronomical spring equinox actually fell, for the purposes of calculating Easter, it would be taken as 21 March. So there you have it! Easter is the first Sunday after the full moon on or after 21 March. In 2022, the first full moon after 21 March is Saturday 16 April, so Easter was Sunday 17 April!



EVENTS IN ST MICHAEL'S

by Stephen Blake



In a normal year the Events Team handles some 25 – 30 different events.

What constitutes an event? Many are non-worship occasions but some have a religious element. These exclude weddings, funerals, St Michael's own weekly services and special services handled by other teams. Typically, non-worship events are concerts by choirs, orchestras, ensembles, soloists on organ or piano, literary evenings, historical presentations, Gala Day wet venue, Music Buds, etc.

Events with a religious element have included the Order of St John Service and Investiture, youth organisation events such as Guides' Thinking Day, the Scouts' St George's Day Parade, Boys' Brigade evenings, primary school Nativities and carol concerts, and the Academy's special services. It's good to see a packed house which, happily, includes people who don't normally attend worship services.

The Events Team has also helped with 'one-offs' such as the spectacular 'Brides of St Michael's', the now annual Christmas trees event (along with the Fabric Team), and church dramas like 'Exiles'.

Of course, many events require practices, (especially musical ones), or visits from the organisers to check facilities, so the time committed by the team always exceeds the number of scheduled performances.

How do events come about? Initially requests for events (often more than a year in advance!) go to the Church Office where Val Wood sends out the conditions of let and the pro-forma to fill in, and then sends the booking form to the Events Convenor. Val periodically sends a list of forthcoming events to the Convenor who produces a spreadsheet and team volunteers fill in their availability. The Convenor also usually liaises with representatives of the organisations, sometimes involving extra visits, emails and telephone conversations, making sure they are happy with arrangements.

The church has a scale of charges varying from nil to hundreds of pounds according to various parameters – is the organisation our own church, is it charitable and raising money for good causes, is it commercial like most Arts Guild Concerts, is it local, etc. The Church Office handles these matters.

What is the Events Team? Presently, the Team comprises twelve volunteers, ten men and two women. Nowadays we usually need cameras as well as sound, a carpark attendant, and a couple of stewards as a minimum. That means five people at least, and because we are so few (and have other lives!), we often struggle to have enough. More volunteers would be welcome – full training will be given! We get in return the satisfaction of helping in the wider work of the church and connecting with our community. AND you would attend some super concerts for free!

What does the Events Team physically do? Stewarding and car-parking duties are common to all events. We must have quick answers to all questions made of us: Where's your first aid kit? Where are the toilets? Have you a table handy for us? Can we leave our instruments while we go for tea? Have you a waste bag? etc.

Often, we need to build a stage. This can be every bit of our staging for a large choir, or a small one for an instrumental duo. Usually, we have discussed beforehand the layout of large stages, and we have experience to fall back on. For large ensembles, we may have to shift the front screens and pews, involving unbolting the screen from the floor and handling the pews with our hydraulic trolley-jack. We sometimes shift the lectern which is **very** heavy!

Heating is usually discussed. I was asked by one well-known orchestra for a temperature of 21.5 degrees! For string players' fingering, apparently.

Audio-Visual plays an important part in our work. The screens allow the audience to better see the performers and the operator can pick out individuals or hands at the keyboard. The most fun and games with the sound occurs at school Nativities when we have several mics at a time. Guessing which child will speak next and at what volume can cause stress! A good type of stress though.

Lighting is pretty good in the performance area with two banks of spots, but occasionally we have had to augment this with brought-in tower lighting for large orchestras. That means liaising with other techy folk. Our own church lighting is controlled by an iPad in real time by one of us at the AV desk. We also have a spot at the AV desk to train on a conductor when he speaks, or performers taking their bows.

In conclusion

I was asked to be Convenor by the Rev Dr Stewart Gillan in February 2011. I have a good team and I hope that we all, at least usually, enjoy our work.

My favourite performers? The National Youth Choir of Scotland local branch. A real treat!

ROBERT THE BRUCE AND LINLITHGOW

by Iain Harrison



It may be that Scotland's famous king, Robert the Bruce, has a much closer connection to Linlithgow than the film 'Outlaw King', part of which was filmed in our church in 2018.

It is a historical fact that during the winter of 1301/1302 Edward I of England spent the winter in Linlithgow in his quest to defeat those Scots that were still opposed to him. This opposition included Robert Bruce but Bruce decided in early 1302 to reconcile himself to Edward. The reasons for this were to save the family lands in Scotland as Bruce feared the return from exile of King John Balliol. The Balliol and Comyn families were amongst the most powerful in Scotland, as were the Bruces. However, the Balliols

and Comyns had a history of rivalry and mutual distrust with the Bruce family, and this rivalry would escalate in the years to come. Robert Bruce (the future King), his father and grandfather all believed their family had a claim to the throne and were therefore opposed to the Balliols. In submitting to Edward, it is important to note Robert Bruce did not give up any claim to the throne of Scotland, and he would seize this opportunity when he thought the time was right.

Edward accepted the submission of Bruce and the family lands in Scotland were restored to him. It may well be that as part of this reconciliation Robert Bruce was allowed to marry Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter of The Earl of Ulster, one of Edward's staunchest supporters. This looks more like an attempt to bind Robert Bruce to the English cause rather than a love affair between a 27-year-old widower and a young woman approximately 18 years old whose father just happened to be one of Edward's supporters – but we'll never know for sure.

This leads us to when and where did this marriage take place? Bruce had submitted to Edward by the middle of February 1302 and probably in person, given both men were in Scotland at the time. His marriage to Elizabeth took place in the first half of 1302 and it is likely it would have to have Edward's blessing. But where did Bruce wed his bride?

There are at least three contenders, Writtle (near Chelmsford) where the Bruce family had lands and a manor house, Turnberry Castle, the Bruce's family home in Scotland, or Linlithgow. Writtle seems unlikely given its location, but some historians believe Robert Bruce was born there – although it is more likely to have been his father, also called Robert Bruce. This leaves Turnberry and Linlithgow with Turnberry an obvious choice and the one favoured by 'Outlaw King'. However, if Edward had any part in this marriage between a powerful Scottish Lord and the daughter of one of his key supporters then perhaps, and just perhaps, Linlithgow was where this event took place.



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Following the death of his father in 1304, Robert Bruce firmly believed in his claim to the throne and on 25 March 1306 he was crowned King of Scotland at Scone Palace, after killing his main rival, John Comyn, in Greyfriars Church in Dumfries on 10 February 1306. Ironically in 'Outlaw King' this infamous deed was filmed in St Michael's.

Those of us married at St Michael's may well then be following in the footsteps of our most famous king when Robert Bruce married Elizabeth de Burgh although again we may never know.

GOD WITH US

by Rev Thom Riddell



As the days lengthen, and we emerge from the long dark tunnel of lockdowns and restrictions, we may feel that the last two years have been lost to us. One reason is perhaps that we have endured a period of isolation from our usual social contacts, and are more aware of the importance of experiencing the physical presence of our friends and family. While telephone calls and video meetings have been a blessing in enabling us to continue to see and hear our loved ones, and livestreaming has allowed us to participate in worship, there is nothing like being actually present with our family or fellow worshippers. It may not have taken the pandemic to make us realise this, but being compelled to isolate has shown us how much we take for granted the gift of being present with others.

The first disciples of Jesus also experienced a period of isolation, between the Ascension and Pentecost. After Jesus left them, they must have missed the physical presence of their friend and Lord. They were sustained by the promise that they would be sent a Comforter, a guide and an inner strength in the person of the Holy Spirit. Although they had to wait for it to happen, what joy they experienced when the Spirit came to them, and they knew the truth of what Jesus had told them. 'On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.' They would never be alone, and neither will we.

One thing that has not changed despite lockdowns, is that we can be reassured of the continued presence of God with us. Setting aside time each day to meet with God in prayer, and reading the Bible enables us to experience his presence, because the whole book is about our creator God longing, and in Jesus Christ dying, to be with us. God wants to be present with us, to dwell with us, to meet with us face to face. The ultimate expression of this is Jesus – Immanuel, God with us.

Prayer

Lord God, we thank you that you sent your Son to be present with us, and show us your love. We thank you for the gift of the Spirit to be our Comforter and guide, and your continued presence with us. May we be ready to respond to the guidance we receive each day. AMEN



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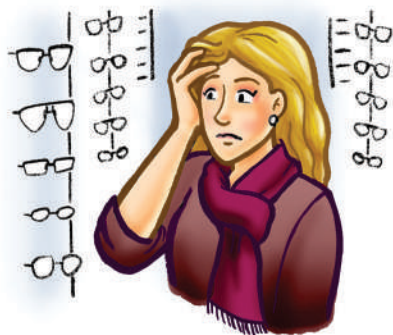
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