



St Michael's
Linlithgow

Welcome to St Michael's Newsletter!



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Rev Dr Liam Fraser

A message from your minister

Dear friends

I hope this newsletter finds you well!

We will soon be turning to consider the future of St Michael's in a special series of worship looking at the outcomes of our 2030 Consultation. Yet when deciding which path we should take in life, we cannot rush in. We are not a business, or even a religious charity, but a *Church*, and that means we must not only listen to our own voices and views but the voice of the Living God.

To that end, we are in the midst of a series looking at how we hear God's voice when we rest, pray, and read Scripture. All of these things can be hard! Yet – and I speak from personal experience that has been shared by millions of Christians throughout history - when we persevere, we are blessed, and get the benefit of the things we believe

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To help you on your way, and enable you to grow in prayer and discernment, I thoroughly recommended the following websites and apps. Each have their own speciality, and should hopefully appeal to a wide range of tastes and learning styles:

Pray As You Go: This is my own personal favourite resource for prayer. Each day there is a call to prayer, a piece of reflective music, a reading, a meditation, and a closing prayer said with others. Best of all, you just listen - no reading required! Visit <https://pray-as-you-go.org> to try.

Lectio 365: This comes from the successful 24/7 Prayer movement, and offers a new way to read and pray through Scripture. It offers short prayers, meditations, and readings, and offers both listening and reading options. Visit <https://www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional> to learn more.

Daily Prayer from the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA): Finally, for those of you who like liturgy and set prayers, the PCUSA has a carefully crafted and beautiful app for phones and tablets called Daily Prayer. This combines the best of Presbyterian, Anglican, and Roman Catholic tradition, and connects you with the richness of Christian worship. Visit <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/10/31/daily-prayer-app-here/> to download.



Tom Costley

Update on opening the church for worship

Thank you to everyone who responded to the question in the last newsletter. The question was: would you wish to attend communal worship under the restrictions created by guidance from both the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland? Responses received so far are:

- Definitely – 12
- Probably – 14
- Probably not – 42
- Definitely not – 14

The Kirk Session Coordinating Team will take these responses into account when it meets (over Zoom) next week to discuss the situation again.



Ian Fowell

Church and Community in Service

Amidst all the hardships of the Covid-19 lockdown, there have been many shining examples of people reaching out to people; one such was the Linlithgow Coronavirus Support service. St Michael's played a leading role in setting up the service and managing it, but it was a true partnership project involving all the main churches in the town as well as Linlithgow Community Development Trust and the Community Council.

Twice a day, 7 days a week for 20 weeks, a team of coordinators responded to calls for help from local people. There was a marvellous response from the community, and 120+ local volunteers signed up to help. Around 90 grocery shopping trips were arranged and nearly 80 prescriptions delivered, with other callers wanting advice, or personal support, or simply the reassurance of knowing the service was there to help if required.

A big thank you goes to St Michael's finance team, who promptly reimbursed the volunteer shoppers, and then recouped the cost from the recipient. With the lockdown easing, the service has now 'paused', but it was a real example of the church and community pulling together and sincere thanks are due to all the many volunteers who so willingly gave of their time to help.



Alison Miller

Staying Connected

How can we stay connected with each other as a church now that we are in phase 3-and-a-bit of post lockdown, and stay safe? If you have any suggestions or ideas that don't involve using the internet, please get in touch!

One possibility is a Socially Distanced Walk (or SDW). This can work in a number of ways:

- A small "Walk and Talk" event has been taking place for a few weeks now. This involves a walk of about an hour, in socially-distanced pairs. Anyone is welcome, but please contact me first so that we can arrange time, place and numbers. We hope this can take place on a few different days of the week.
- Any individual can phone a friend, (or someone from church who you feel might benefit from some fresh air, exercise, and company), and arrange to meet for a short or long walk.
- Another idea is to buy a take-out cuppa and enjoy a seat in the late summer sunshine(!) in one of the open spaces in town.

If you are interested in joining a Walk and Talk, or have any other suggestions about how to stay connected and stay safe, please contact me on 01506 844992 or at connect@stmichaels-parish.org.uk.



Alan Miller

Coming Soon: 2030!

Autumn 2019 seems like a distant memory after all we have been through since then. Many of us gathered in October and November of last year to let our imaginations loose on St Michael's in 2030, through the eyes of people visiting the church in 10 years' time. All your wonderful creativity was then sifted down into 8 key characters and their views. We were busy planning to launch these imaginary friends and their insights at a celebratory church conference: then lockdown struck.

Can we still find any pointers for the future in ideas developed before we even heard of Covid-19? We're going to find out soon: starting in a few weeks' time, the 8 characters – plus one new visitor – will be introduced during our online services. You'll see the visitors through the wonderful artwork created by Jan Brown, and hear their thoughts about St Michael's in the not-so-distant future.

As a taster – here's single parent Anne who loves the chance to meet up with other parents as she visits the Food Bank and Clothes Bank in Cross House. Her 'wow' factor about St Michaels? – the interactive information in the church. "They've even got on-screen story-bots that chat to the children and help them shape the story."

St Michael's 2030



Anne



Paul Davidson

Read the Bible: Who – Me?!

Reading the Bible can seem a bit daunting, especially if we don't have somebody like Liam on hand to explain it to us. Where do you start, and how do you make sense of it?

If you have ever felt like this, then using some daily notes might be just the thing for you. The notes will take you through books of the Bible with daily readings, followed by pointers as to the meaning of the passage, and what the relevance is to us today.

I know that many of us enjoyed the Lent readings earlier in the year, so if you haven't done so already, why not take this up as part of your daily routine? If this is something you would like to do, then please get in contact with me at paul.n.davidson@blueyonder.co.uk so that we can discuss what might work best for you.



Ken Mackenzie

Social Justice

Many thanks to everyone who donated children's clothing in response to a recent request from a local group for some help. They had identified the need for clothing for newborn, early months (up to 9 months) and 2-3 year olds. The response was tremendous and the clothing has been handed over to First Steps who will be responsible for its final destination. We hope that this will be start of an ongoing relationship.

The Social Justice Team are aware that other needs are going to arise as we leave lockdown, such as problems with debt and employment. We are in the process of looking at agencies that can help, and being aware of other local groups we can work with, including our local authority. Ideas and guidance are always welcome. Please feel free to contact me on mackekw@tiscali.co.uk

God's People around the World



Fiona Duke

Disaster in Beirut.

The statistics on the effects of the massive explosion in Beirut are grim enough – more than 100 dead, 300,000 homes destroyed and more than 5,000 injured. But this is in a country with a failing government and a huge refugee crisis as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. Three hospitals were destroyed, as was a massive silo containing 85% of the country's grain supplies.

The Church of Scotland partners National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) responded immediately, as did Embrace the Middle East and Christian Aid, with emergency supplies, mobilising volunteers to remove rubble and finding temporary shelters for families.

Please remember the people of Beirut, the organisations bringing relief, the Lebanese government and international commitment to help in the aftermath of this catastrophic disaster.

Journeys of faith in Israel and Palestine Zoom event on Wed. 26 August: 7:30 to 8:30 pm

This event, organised by an Israel-Palestine working group of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, provides an opportunity to listen to the experience of two Christians.

- Linda Ramsden will describe how her encounters with Palestinians took her on a faith journey that has led her to be the Director of ICAHD UK. ICAHD is the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions: see www.icahd.org.
- Omar Haramy of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (www.sabeel.org) will speak of the journeys that were forced upon Palestinians in 1948, the crisis of faith that resulted, and the response of Sabeel as it lives a theology that stresses God's love is for all people.

Please register in advance

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcoc-6vrzgtG9Hg4I-wWTPedW99iJ0KCzSV>)

News from Japan

Lorna Ferguson has recently circulated her August 2020 prayer bulletin. While the churches have been closed, she has been busy writing daily devotions which church members have greatly appreciated. She asks for prayer for creative approaches to outreach during coronavirus restrictions, and for church members to feel empowered to share their faith with others.

Sunday Service and Chat



Our Sunday services continue on Facebook at 11am <https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsparishlinlithgow/> and on YouTube from just after 11, available at <https://www.youtube.com/c/StMichaelsLinlithgow>.

We're sorry that some of you have been having difficulties accessing tea and coffee on Zoom after the service. We hope the issue has now been resolved



Please join us afterwards for coffee and chat on Zoom!

The meeting ID: 550 085 9322

Password: kirkcoffee.

You'll be able to link direct from:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5500859322?pwd=U0lvbDFnUXdIY01lak0vNmVidjZkQT09>

**Remember that the service is also available by phone.
Just dial 01506 306 036 and the audio recording of the service
starts immediately.**



Holy Communion

Sunday 30 August 2020

Communion will take place at 11.45 am with Rev Dr Liam Fraser and will be live streamed on the church website. Have bread and wine or grape juice ready

We take our members' privacy seriously, and the information provided will be retained by us for as long as it is required for the purpose for which it was collected or unless you tell us otherwise. A copy of our full Privacy Notice can be found on our website <http://www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk>.

This information is for church use only and is not shared with any third parties.



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Reg No SC016185**