

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Winter 2017

Vol 20:4



Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:18-20

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The deadline for the Spring 2018 issue is 3rd March 2018.

St. Michael's Parish Church of Scotland is a Scottish Charity Reg. No. SC016185

SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 28th January

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

Weekly Services

9.30am First Morning Service
Crèche in Cross House

9.45am All-Age Worship
Term time in Springfield School

11.00am Second Service

6.30pm Evening Service
in Kirk Hall

Monthly Communion

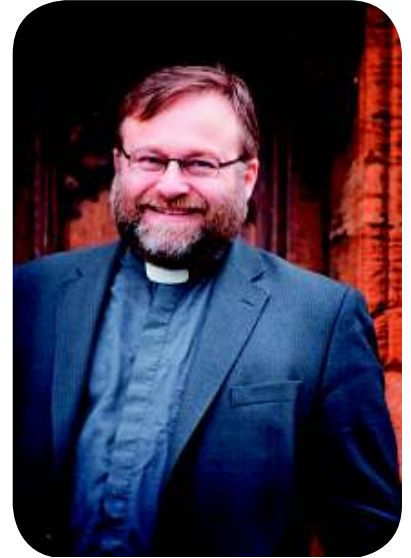
Sunday 25th February
at 12:15pm
Individual Cup

Cover photograph: Celebrating 20 years of Crosswind – Gordon Young

VIEW FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

Yesterday I spent a happy hour and a half with a class from Oatridge College, meeting in the Burgh Halls to hear the story of the Peace Garden thus far, with a view to submitting designs for the garden as part of their Landscape Management coursework. Chris Long had organised the meeting with Ann Burns, Team Leader Horticulture and Landscape Management at Oatridge. The students took a spirited and professional interest, from the garden's origin in St Michael's twinning with Palestinian Christians in Galilee to the practical matters of envisioned usage, disabled access, and the need to use low maintenance materials. As the session unfolded I found myself encouraged anew by the prospect of a peaceable place outdoors in the heart of our community, open to people of all faiths and none, conducive to stillness and well-being, and a deeper awareness of the things that make for peace in our world.



On possible uses, we discussed gardening for mental health, peace education with primary school students, weddings, and times of prayer led by the churches. We spoke of a 'Wits End' space within the larger design for personal reflection, and of the garden as a whole as a place where friends could meet and engage in the art of conversation. Other uses are surely possible; one of the students spoke of music and small outdoor concerts.

We thought of the Peace Garden as a place to which international visitors to Linlithgow and West Lothian could be taken, to further the sharing of stories and commitments, strengthening ties. Of the importance of the relation between justice and peace, of working to right wrongs that they not be there staring us in the face again every morning, undermining all efforts. We spoke of wisdom as the meeting point between justice and mercy, and of how this might inform work for peace.

We spoke of other gardens open to the public in Linlithgow and the value of having a map with notes for visitors and walkers, guiding them on a local pilgrimage.

Thinking of the thousands of tourists who come to Linlithgow each year, we reminded ourselves of how we tell the story of the ancient and royal burgh's founding. Of David I's decision to establish a royal lodge here because it was on 'the marching route' between Edinburgh Castle and Stirling Castle. We discussed too the archaeological finding that the garden is located on what was the original approach to the Palace. We let ourselves imagine the history of war and peace that has passed over this very ground. The coming and going of Edward I, Robert the Bruce, and Cromwell, to name three. Of the remnant of defences in the peel, the memory of warfare in the landscape and stone of the Palace and Kirk, of the human geography of war and peace.

Chris Long spoke of his vision that the entrance to the garden feature two figures whose hands, though they reach out to each other, have not yet effected contact. He takes this image from Auld Lang Syne: 'And there's a hand my trusty fiere! And gie's a hand o' thine!' Sung the world over, the song offers a most Scottish invitation to friendship. Visitors would pass under these hands.

Later that afternoon, as I walked Alvin past the front of the Burgh Halls and along the south approach to the peel, I found myself thinking of the link between our discussion and the 'Lest we forget' evenings led in November by Bruce Jamieson in the Kirk. Linlithgow, no stranger to wars and the call to war, has known great sacrifice, as have so many towns and burghs throughout the country. Acts of public remembrance bring us together in story and hope. I thought too of the Festival of Christmas Trees in the Kirk in December, and of our yearning for a more peaceful world as we prepare ourselves each year for the birth of the child whom we call Prince of Peace. Both events told us again of the enduring value of a parish church open to its community, part of the life of its people.

Which reflection brings me round to the merits of the Peace Garden having a Society of Friends to support it, drawn from the churches and community together. Watch this space.

Returning to Robert Burns, two lines from his song, 'On the seas and far away,' come to mind. I look forward to the day when they might be contemplated in our Garden:

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild War his ravage end.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart'.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

– AN UPDATE

by Tom Brown

'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'
John 13:34

These challenging words of Jesus underpin the work of the Pastoral Care Team. Its mission is to provide pastoral care and support services based on Christian commitment to members of the congregation but also to those living within the parish irrespective of faith, cultural background, ethnic origin or life choices. There are 8 members of the team including the ministry team and the convenor (until recently Sheila Rae, currently myself). The main strands to our work are summarised below.

Bereavement Support. This aspect, one of the most valued parts of our work, has been largely developed by Sheila Rae and indeed she still leads it. The 'Positive Pathways' group meets fortnightly at the Canal tearoom, providing support for bereaved people. This has been so successful that the first group has just become autonomous after around two years and a second group has recently started. A trained counsellor also provides one-to-one support, and we provide post-funeral visiting, with guidance from the Ministry Team and District Elders.

Prayer Ministry. This work, currently led by Ruth Middleton, has several strands. A monthly prayer diary has been produced over the last year and has received much positive feedback. There is also a prayer team available to pray with people after the morning services. A well-attended group meets to pray on Wednesdays at 12.30pm in the church, while a prayer chain responds to more immediate requests for prayer. For more information on this work or requests for prayer please contact Ruth Middleton or myself.

Pastoral visits. We also assist the Ministry Team with pastoral visits. We have a Church Visitors Team which meets regularly and is presently visiting about 30 people. We depend on elders and members to inform us of anyone whom they think would value a visitor.

Miscellaneous. Our work also includes maintaining the Cradle Roll, overseeing funeral duty teams, making and delivering posies to the ill and housebound and sending bereavement and first wedding anniversary cards.

The team's work is both rewarding and valuable, a central part of the Ministry of St Michael's. If you want more information on any aspect of the work or indeed with any suggestions about other things we might consider, please contact the convenor or any team member.

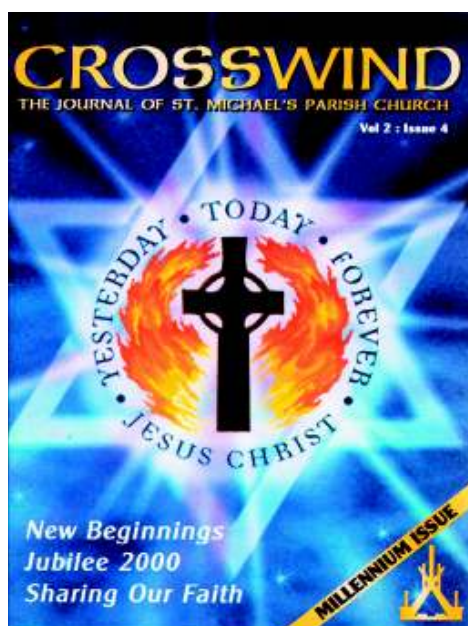
Contacts: Tom Brown – 842508, Ruth Middleton – 670980, Sheila Rae – 847538



20 Years of Crosswind

In the spring of 1998, Gordon Young asked Kirk Session's approval for the production of a professionally printed parish magazine, the cost of which would be mostly met by advertisers. This being granted, a small committee consisting of Rev Will Jones (our associate minister at the time), Lorna Paterson, Julie Green, Doreen Timperley and myself met with Gordon to plan the very first issue of the eighty that have been published over Crosswind's twenty years.

Some features of that first issue have appeared in every subsequent magazine. There was and still is a 'Letter from the Manse' now entitled 'View from the Manse' which gives the minister an opportunity to address all in the parish whether they attend church or not. Rev Will Jones wrote the first 'Endpiece'. There were articles on various church organisations and one on the progress of the restoration of the church stonework then in progress. (It was expected to cost in excess of £1,000,000!) There was also a plea for more volunteers – a perennial problem – this time for the Parent and Toddler Group. A photocopied insert on coloured paper giving up-to-date information on baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as forthcoming events was stapled into the centre. As the main magazine has to be with the printer about a month before it is distributed, the centre pages have always been compiled as late as possible.



Colour in the first seven issues was limited to a border around a black and white photograph on the front cover and the same colour highlighted some text on four inside pages. To mark the beginning of the year 2000, permission was given to print the whole of the cover in full colour. This was such a striking improvement that, although more expensive, it was continued for every subsequent issue. It was not until Spring 2015 that our printer, JMK, offered to print pages 16 and 17 in colour too at no extra cost.

Crosswind has always relied on its advertisers to help offset the printing costs. Regent Motors, Stewart Electrical and JMK have been with us throughout and to them and the many others who have supported us loyally over many years, we are very grateful. Please do let them know that you have seen their advert in Crosswind when you use their services.

Gordon Young continued to both edit and design the magazine for the first five years before handing over the editorship to Myra Lawson in 2003. He has continued to design the cover, though, and gives invaluable professional help whenever needed. The design of the contents was undertaken by Graeme Stirling and then Alan Herd before I took over in 2008. Various people have liaised with our advertisers and this role is currently performed by Vicki Carlin.



The latest enhancement has been to have the magazine professionally collated by JMK. Previously, as the pages of an issue arrived from the printer, an army of volunteers gathered in the Kirk Hall to assemble and staple each of the 1500 magazines by hand. The current Crosswinds are certainly much neater but maybe lack that rough, personal touch!

Looking back through the eighty issues of Crosswind, one can trace the ebb and flow of the life of St Michael's. Ministers and associate ministers have been welcomed and have been bid farewell; babies have arrived and are seen growing up through the magazine's pages; well-kent faces have featured and then, later, have passed on; initiatives and stewardship campaigns have been tried with varying success; the never-ending efforts of the property team to maintain the church properties is chronicled; social events, shows and festivals are recorded. Perhaps in a few more years, a Donald Burgess of the future will be dipping into the pages of past issues of Crosswind as well as into the Kirk Session minutes to entertain and inform our readers.

The current committee of Myra Lawson, Gordon Young, Vicki Carlin, Donald Burgess, Pat Brough, Anita France and Maureen Blake are very proud to be carrying Crosswind into its 21st year. We are grateful to all the contributors, both regular and occasional, who have helped to make it the attractive, long-lived Parish Magazine that it is. Since 2006, it has also been published in full colour on the church website and the communications that the editor has received from all over the world show that its appeal extends well beyond the confines of Linlithgow.



As it enters its 21st year may Crosswind continue to reflect the life and work of St Michael's Parish Church and do so for many years to come.

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A VERSATILE MINISTER – REV HILARY BERESFORD

by Pat Brough

In many remote parishes in Scotland, it is quite customary for residents to have two or three occupations, but it is not usual for the local minister to have another line of work.

Brought up in the south of England, Hilary was the youngest of three. Her father and mother were dentists, so it is not surprising that she decided to enter the health profession. She trained at Guy's Hospital to become a nurse and, having obtained the SRN qualification, trained as a midwife in Birmingham.



"REVEREND HILARY ARRIVES AT ST. MICHAEL'S."

by Jim Rae

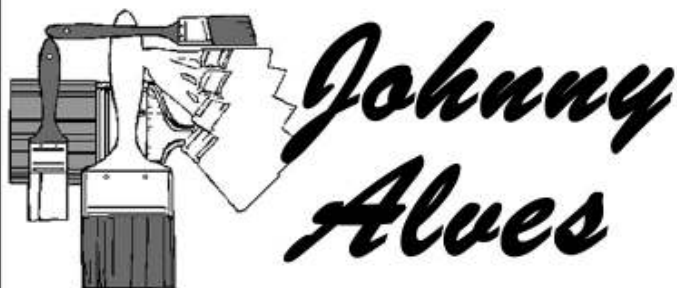
Following a spell in India to research Leprosy, Hilary returned to London, to recruit and train health workers for various parts of the world. After this, she worked in Brixton and Clapham as a health visitor, then it was off to Papua New Guinea to work for four years with The Leprosy Mission and World Health Organisation, before returning to London and health visiting.

Receiving the call to ministry, Hilary decided to go to Cardiff to train as a Baptist, which explains why she held a charge in New Zealand alongside practising as a midwife. It was whilst she was transferring to the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand and attending a rural parish, where everyone knew each other, that a funeral and an expectant mum clashed. Hilary made sure that the mum-to-be was fine, conducted the funeral and returned to deliver the baby – not many ministers have done that!

When her bereaved father needed help, Hilary returned to London to decide what to do. On visiting Iona, she met a minister from Christchurch in New Zealand and returned there with her father ministering through the earthquakes. Following her father's death in 2014, Hilary took study leave to research Christian Spirituality at Sarum College, University of Winchester.

In 2017, unsure of the future, Hilary hired a camper-van to tour different areas of Britain. On discovering several vacancies within the Church of Scotland, she met with the Ministries Committee to discover she was eligible to apply for a transfer of ministry. On 6 August, 121 George Street sent Hilary to St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow to spend six months familiarising herself with the Scottish ways of being a parish minister.

Hilary certainly has two of the essential qualities for a parish minister – a sense of humour and an interest in people.



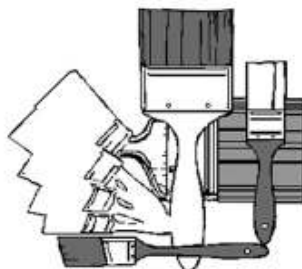
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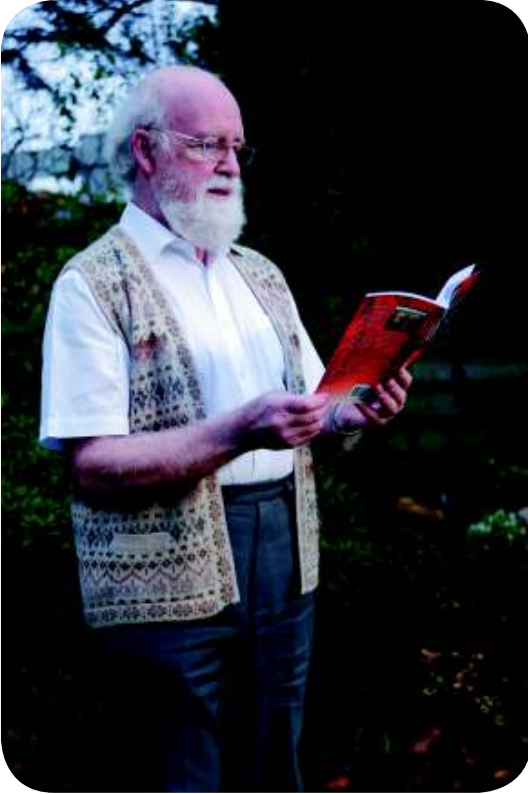
Sitting at Linlithgow's picturesque Cross in the town centre, the iconic town house is next to Linlithgow Palace, St Michael's Church and Linlithgow Loch. It has also recently undergone a £5 million refurbishment to create two stylish, contemporary function rooms and a stunning roof terrace ideal for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

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A SONNET AT 775

by Rev Jock Stein



Odd numbers these, much easier to say
this church is seven centuries my elder,
worked out to a year (if not a day).
Each member still a living body builder
of its serious but seldom joyless history,
its dialogue of sermon, stone and song,
celebrating life and gospel mystery,
a standing witness to what's right and wrong,
yet smiling gently on each wondered at
newborn,
each wedding dress, each coffinful of grief.
St Michael's, kind to kin and stranger, worn
and frayed by Cromwell, time or other thief,
ring out your bells to make us still aware
of God who even numbers each grey hair.

The sonnet above was written to mark the 775th anniversary of the consecration of St Michael's by Rev Jock Stein, a son of this congregation.

Jock Stein is a poet, piper and preacher from East Lothian, and currently convener of Tyne and Esk Writers. He brings experience of the Sheffield steel industry, people and places in East Africa, and the life of modern Scotland to his poetry, which began seriously when he turned 70.

Jock launched a booklet at the 30th birthday celebrations of the Carberry Festival, which he started in 1987 when in charge of Carberry Tower near Musselburgh. That Festival in turn sprang from the Urban Street Level Festival in Dundee, where he was minister of the Steeple Church for ten years.

One of Jock's ambitions is to be, in Hugh MacDiarmid's words, 'whaur extremes meet' – perhaps why his poems cover such a wide range of modern life, with the odd reference to ancient Greece. Apart from a few recent ones, the poems in the booklet have all been published in *The Eildon Tree*, *The Evergreen*, *The Herald*, *Scintilla*, *Stand*, *The Scots Independent*, *Umbrellas of Edinburgh* and collections from United Press in London.

(The booklet costs £5, and copies can be obtained from Sanctus Media, Bo'ness Business Centre, 12-16 Corbiehall, Bo'ness EH51 0AP, 01506 827217)

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

As we say an emotional goodbye to our Associate Minister, Cheryl, we wish her well and have asked her to be 'under the spotlight' – something she herself started for Crosswind – before she leaves.



Describe your role as Associate in just three words. Wonderful, meaningful, exhausting!

What is your first memory of St Michael's? I came 'secretly' as a visitor on Palm Sunday 2013. I remember thinking how beautiful the church is, but sadly how few were enjoying its beauty!

For what in your life do you feel most grateful? My faith, my health, my family, my female friends and the freedom I have to vote, to study and have a voice.

Do you have an all-time favourite hymn? If so what is it and why? 'It is well with my soul/When peace like a river.' If Horatio Spafford can write those words faced with what he had lost, then I jolly well need to take a leaf out of his book. Inspirational man!

If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability, what would it be? To eradicate envy and jealousy. There is something in envy and jealousy that most definitely spreads and creates untold damage in relationships and is the root of so much that is wrong in our world.

Given the choice of any twelve dinner guests in the world, whom would you choose? Graham Norton, Malala Yousafzai, Dr Goedele De Clerck, Barack Obama, Katherine Ryan, Boy George, Warls-Dirle, Billy Connolly, Dalai Lama, Archbishop of Canterbury, Ertharin Cousin and my son Jack.

What film can you watch again and again? Sliding Doors

What don't we know about your time with us? Maybe that I was involved on the Board of Directors with Women's Aid now known in Falkirk as CEA 'Committed to Ending Abuse'. I am committed to ending emotional, verbal, psychological and sexual abuse – a remit also from our General Assembly.

Tell us something we don't know about you. I have a phobia of escalators. Irrational and ridiculous I know, but it makes connecting through airports very difficult not to mention department store shopping!

If you could learn one new skill, what would you learn? Negotiating escalators? Or I'd love to play the clarinet or the flute.

What's on your playlist right now? Handel's Messiah, some Genesis, Mozart, Aron Wright, and Stormzy's Blinded by your Grace.

What's your favourite Bible verse? Right now it's 2 Kings 20

'Hezekiah turned from Isaiah and faced God, praying: Remember, O God, who I am, what I've done! I've lived an honest life before you, My heart's been true and steady, I've lived to please you; lived for your approval. And then the tears flowed. Hezekiah wept.'

If you weren't a minister what job would you do? I can't imagine not being a Minister, I love my job with all my heart, but if I had to, I'd study medicine and become a Paediatric Neurosurgeon. I find the brain fascinating. However I'd be retiring by the time I would qualify!

Best advice you've ever been given? Never give advice unless asked for it or if it's a matter of life or death!

How do your friends describe you? Hold on, I'll ask... 'thoughtful, hardworking and good fun.'

What do you value most in a friendship? Simply journeying through life with friends. I'm blessed to have so many.

Top three websites? Ebay, Bible Gateway, Facebook.

You have to spend a month on a desert island. Name three items (not people) you would have to take with you. Toothpaste, music and my Bible.

And last but not least. What's your favourite knock knock joke?

'Yes.'

'Will you remember me in a month?'

'Yes.'

'Will you remember me in a week?'

'Yes.'

'Knock knock.'

'Who's there?'

See you have forgotten about me already!

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CHURCH SERVICES AT SPRINGFIELD

by Bill Duncan



The service at Springfield Primary School, similar but different from that 'up the hill', provides a vital contribution to the variety of worship available from St Michael's Parish Church. It is important that the church caters for people who feel comfortable in different situations.

Undernoted is the result of a recent survey. Those attending Springfield were asked to give reasons why they did so. There was a variety of answers, other than to worship and praise, but there were several common threads:

Friendly, informal format. This came over very strongly. One member said, 'It's like a big family. We know when people are new and welcome them. If someone is absent we enquire if they are OK, etc.' Others said: 'smaller numbers make it easier to get to know people', and 'there is a real church family atmosphere which makes the time of worship very enjoyable'.

Locality. One member said 'It's closer to home and I am always late!' Some other remarks were: 'it is convenient and the time of service suits me', 'I can walk there easily since my op.', 'dead flat/no hills'.

Type of Service. Comments: 'The variety of leaders giving the address makes for really interesting thoughts – they all have different styles'. 'I always feel part of the service, and enjoy the worship in a more informal atmosphere'.

The Springfield family service takes place in the hall at Springfield Primary School at 9.45am on Sunday mornings. It is mainly conducted by a team of church elders. Until she left, Cheryl took the service once a month, and Stewart and Thom also take the service several times during the year.

The service includes everyone and children are always given something to do, linked with their talk, during the talk to the adults. They also take the offering and then skip down the aisle!

You will have noted the emphasis on a friendly, informal atmosphere; many of the congregation stay behind for teas/coffees and biscuits after the service. Although most worshippers are from Springfield, a number come from different parts of Linlithgow and surrounding areas.

Something to think about. If for some reason you haven't been to church for some time, you may think about coming back via a smaller, more informal venue – that is Springfield. The survey will have given you a feel for the nature of the services there.

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

by Anne Law



We only need to open our newspapers (if you still read such a thing!) or look at our phones or tablets to learn of the world's inequalities. However, one thing that we all have in common throughout the world is the amount of time that we have each day – just 24 hours. Our society seems to move at an increasingly alarming rate and we never find enough hours in the day to do what we want, or indeed what we need to. How many times do you hear, or say, 'I don't know where the time goes'? Or at work you reach the day's end thinking you could do with another couple of hours to get through everything you had planned to do!

We all feel ever more pushed for time and there never seems to be enough hours in the day. Technology has brought us great benefits, but also huge pressures. Do you remember, like me, when your in-tray at the start of the day became your out-tray at the end of the day? Now your e-mails to a customer, or supplier, or colleague will ping back and forth incessantly throughout the day. And we wonder why we are stressed!

My father started work in 1938 as a Telegraph Boy for the Post Office in Glasgow when telegrams were the quickest way to convey urgent information. I'm sure that no one could have imagined 80 years ago that in our generation we would be using a small hand-held phone to create our own little telegrams – now called text messages.

In 2018 our stewardship campaign will once again be about time (is it already three years since we did this?). How can we put God's gift to us of time to better use in His world? The world asks us to be busy, but we also need to use our time to simply be with God – to be still, to listen for and to God. As we are all too aware, one of the most precious gifts that we have received from God is time.

One of my favourite Bible verses is Psalm 46 v 10: 'Be still and know that I am God', such reassuring words. The chapter starts and finishes with the same sentiment – God is our refuge. Perhaps our challenge in 2018 is to do less and listen more.

Lest we forget...

photographs by Ian Musgrave and David Robertson

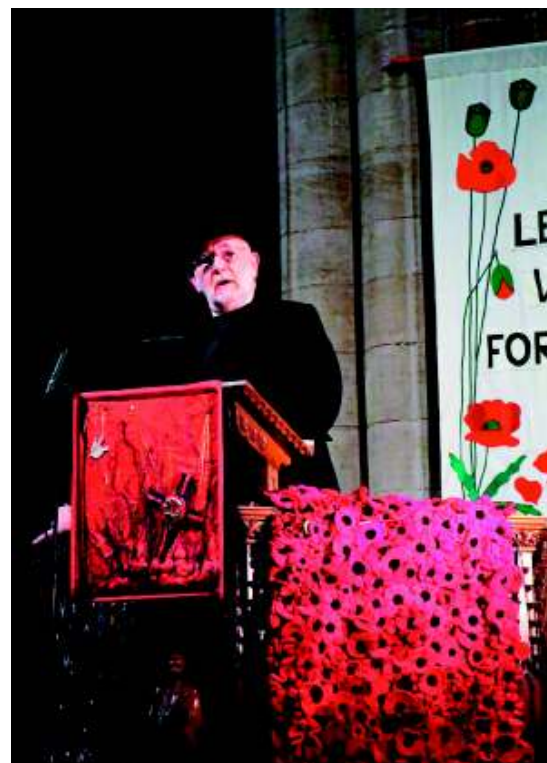
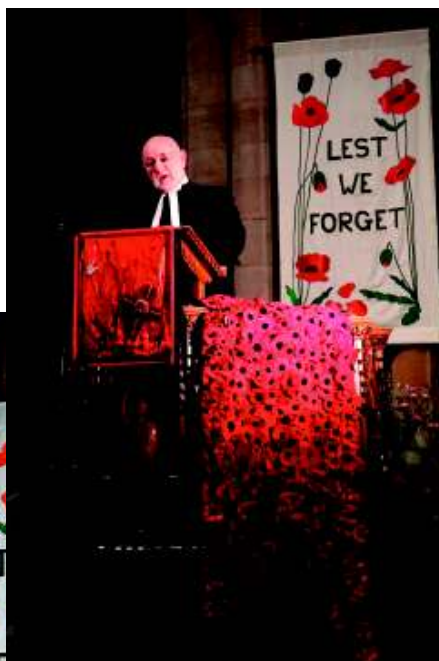


Commissioned by the Society of Friends of St Michael's Parish Church, 'Lest we Forget' marked the Society's 75th anniversary, the 100th anniversary of the battles of Arras and Passchendaele and the 775th anniversary of the consecration of St Michael's Church.

Written and narrated by Bruce Jamieson, it highlighted the impact of the 'Great War' on Linlithgow accompanied by music of the time performed by Andrew Sutherland, Sarah Gillan and the Rugby Club Choir. Trumpeter, Jonathan Molloy and piper, Ewan Crawford, also featured. Thom Pollock appeared as various contemporary characters and a cast of other voices read the letters and comments of local people.



Lighting, sound and other effects were supplied by John Barker assisted by Marshall Green, Phillip Ratcliffe and Stephen Blake.



Puzzles for a Winter's Day

S	N	O	W	B	A	L	L	R	W
N	A	S	H	G	N	I	I	K	S
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M	N	C	E	A	A	C	O	A	T
A	N	R	I	I	C	C	Z	R	S
N	A	D	E	C	S	E	E	E	O
E	E	G	D	E	L	S	N	T	R
R	J	E	S	E	C	E	E	L	F
B	O	O	T	S	E	V	O	L	G

Can you find these wintry words in the wordsquare?
They may run in any direction.

boots
cold
frost
gloves
ice
scarf
sledge
snowman

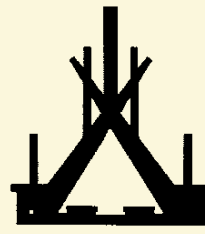
coat
fleece
frozen
hat
icicle
skiing
snowball
winter

In Genesis 8:22 God promises that:

As long as the (treha) endures,
(mestedie) and (resvath),
(lodc) and (eath),
(remsum) and (trewin),
(ayd) and (githn)
will never cease.

A Wintry Riddle

My first is in winter but also in spring.
My second's in choirs and the carols they sing.
My third's in the mist and the drizzle and rain.
My fourth's in the ice on the cold window pane.
My fifth is in snowball and the snowflakes that fell.
My sixth is in sledging and snowmen as well.
My whole is a sign of a cold winter's day,
Hanging around as you go out to play.



PARISH

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one

September

Fiona McFarlane to Scott Stevenson
Jane Tierney to Peter Cocker



October

Caitlin Campbell to Ross Barker
Lindsay Bannerman to Dominic Savage

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

September

Katie Jane Orr, Bo'ness
Nairn Robert James Dooley, Broxburn
Murray Alan Faulds, Bailielands



October

Orla Poppy Darragh, Braehead Place
John Alexander Cumming, Torphichen
Cameron Thomas David Keltie, Grangemouth

REGISTER

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life



September

James (Jimmy) Hume, Preston Terrace

William (Norman) MacAllister, Linlithgow Care Home
(formerly Kinloch View)



October

Edward (Eddie) Paterson, Holmesview Nursing Home
(formerly Braehead Road)

November

Mary Hamilton, Madderfield Mews



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

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

3rd February	Chogoria
10th February	Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club
10th March	Friends of Girlguiding West Lothian
17th March	4 th West Lothian Scouts
14th April	Guild Afternoon Tea (2.30pm)

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

24th February	2pm	Music Buds Concert
3rd March	7pm	Edinburgh Royal Choral Union
10th March	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild – Chamber Orchestra of Europe

NEED A ROOM FOR YOUR EVENT?

Looking for a venue for a children's party?

Need a room for a meeting?

Have you thought of using the Kirk Hall or Adam Room or one of the smaller meeting rooms in Cross House? The rental rates are very reasonable.

Please contact the Church Office to discuss availability – phone 01506 842188 or email info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk.

WEBSITES

www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk – Go to our new website to 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 – offers information covering many concerns. Wondering where to access support for yourself or another? Look at the website or phone 842646.

ARAB CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by Allan Kennedy

Just before starting to prepare this article, I was attending my son's Boys' Brigade dedication service at St Andrew's in Bo'ness. One reading came from Judges and told of the stories of Gideon's faith. As it described the Midianites, it reminded me that this area of the world is no stranger to conflict and suffering.



The current situation dates back to 1947, when the UN attempted to create separate Jewish and Arab states, with the city of Jerusalem having international status. The Jewish councils agreed, the Arabs did not, the state of Israel was formed, and conflict and periods of peace have continued to this day.

Israel, as defined by the UN, occupies parts of its neighbouring countries – the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. The West Bank and Gaza are now recognised as constituting Palestinian territories, claimed as the state of Palestine.

In recent years, Israel has increased building settlements and, with a growing population in these occupied lands, has destroyed Arab homes, refused Arabs permission to build, restricted movement of goods and people and, in the West Bank, built physical barriers to control the area. Gaza is effectively sealed off by land and sea, and conditions are described as a humanitarian crisis. Therefore tensions have been racked up.

On the Palestinian side, Hamas controls Gaza and Fatah controls the West Bank. Rule in Gaza is extreme with no tolerance of other religions. Though Fatah is more secular, the rise of Islamic radicalisation throughout the area is increasing differences among the three main religions.

Into this Jewish/Islamic conflict come Arab Christians. As far as the Israeli side is concerned, their status as Arab/Palestinians is important, not their religion. For the Palestinian authorities, extremism encourages more discrimination towards Christians, and more hardship towards the occupied territory results in groups 'sticking with their own' and splintering.



As Fiona said in her article in the last issue, many organisations are attempting to help these groups trying to live a Christian life in the Middle East, both spiritually and practically.



Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) defends everyone's rights to freedom for their own religion or beliefs. Though helping all religions, they work mainly with Christians, as worldwide they are the most persecuted. CSW provides training in both human rights laws and freedom of beliefs, using their advocacy skills to increase others' knowledge of their rights. Though not specifically working in this area just now, they provide help for anyone who asks.



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

Open Doors has worked in over 50 countries for over 60 years, supplying Bibles, training church leaders, providing practical support and supporting Christians suffering due to their faith. They also mobilise awareness campaigns in UK churches of the world problems.

They are known for their yearly World Watch List, which lists countries in order of the scale of persecution. Recently, provoked by the issues in Iraq and Syria, they have launched a global 7-year campaign to mobilise Christians to 'Bring hope to the Middle East'. This supports those suffering from extremism, war and displacement but wishing to stay on and stand up for their communities.

Embrace the Middle East is the oldest of these groups. It helps people of all faiths to free themselves from lives of poverty and injustice. Its Faith in Action strategy wants to transform, strengthen, encourage and challenge so that Middle East Christians can bring positive change to themselves and their communities.



How can we help? Firstly, be aware. The world is a smaller place now, and we must realise that this is no longer far away from us.

Try to understand that Christians live in areas of the world where their faith can result in discrimination, hardship, poverty, threats, injury and death. Offer support. Investigate these organisations. Take part in campaigns; add your voice or signature. Speak to the International team, or come to us with ideas. And pray. When I know that other people pray for me, it helps my faith, so consider what that must do for these families and individuals, if they know that we are adding their hopes and fears to our own discussions with God. Praying links all Christians of all denominations, in all parts of the world.

Let me leave you with this example, from World Mission E-news.

God of Abraham, you are the father of us all, and we remember now your children living in a land where your son was born. We pray for peace for all. Where there is fear and violence create trust and love that people can build a future together. May people live together in harmony according to your will. Amen



by Anita France

Just before last Easter Peter and I were in Perth on our way from China to visit grandchildren in Adelaide. The geographically knowledgeable among you will have realised we were in Perth, Australia. As usual, we looked around for a church to visit on the Sunday and discovered a United Churches church (the United Church in Australia is a combination of Protestant Churches). We saw outside an advertisement to venture in to see the Stations of the Cross. We'd seen these Stations before, of course, but only in Roman Catholic Churches, so we wandered in to have a look. It looked amazing. All round the Church and sometimes in the middle were art works of various descriptions. Some pictures, models, video loops, and lots of others, including a row of nails, six inches long hanging on fishing line, facing you as you turned round – a sudden shock when you turned your head and saw it.

A booklet guided you round the exhibits in the correct order and told you something about the artist and exhibit. It was, to be honest a bit of a maze, but fascinating to view. Some exhibits left me cold, others really shocked me, some aroused my sympathy, but most of them made me think.

Afterwards I thought what a wonderful Church we had in St Michael's for such an exhibition but, if I was organising something like that, I would do it differently from the Church in Perth. Their exhibits were by famous artists from all over Australia. I thought that was a waste of an opportunity to show what local children can do.

The story of Jesus' last hours told by the children of Linlithgow, how wonderful that would be, but unless I organised it no-one would. So I am. I've contacted the schools in Linlithgow and at the time of going to press have had some replies showing interest. Hopefully next Easter from Saturday 24 March till after Easter Sunday, you can come and see what the children of Linlithgow, encouraged by teachers, and groups and members of St Michael's, can show you about the last hours of Jesus' human life, his death and resurrection. If there is anyone reading this article who would like to take part please let me know. I would love to hear from you.



Contact Anita on 01506 847195.

PRAYER QUILTS

by Sheila Rae

Our small group of quilters has worked together over the past few months and has produced a wall hanging entitled 'Peace around the World'. This now hangs in Room 5 in Cross House. The object in producing this was to test how we worked together as a group, were our measurements all the same or were they different because we were, perhaps, using different makes of rulers.

Any little problems have been ironed out and we have completed our first lap quilt in response to a proven need for a specific individual. You may remember, from past articles about the Prayer Quilts, that when a specific request is made to the group, then a small lap quilt is made and the layers joined by knots, and as each is tied, a prayer is said for the intended recipient, making it a very personal response to an individual need.



If you feel that you would like to contribute towards this ministry, then small donations of either money or fabric would be gratefully received and put to good use.

If you know of anyone for whom such a quilt would be helpful, please contact the Pastoral Care Team Convener, Tom Brown, in the first instance for further information. (Tel: 01506 842508 or t.m.brown@blueyonder.co.uk)



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THE GIRLS' BRIGADE

by Clare McLay

When did it start? Girls' Brigade was founded 125 years ago in 1893. We are having **Big** celebrations this year.

How was GB started? Girls' Brigade was formed from merging Girls Brigade (Ireland), Girls Guildry (Scotland) and Girls Life Brigade (England).

What were the uniforms like in the beginning? More formal with hat, crested-blazer, shirt, tie and tunic. Not very practical for the sort of activities we get up to these days.



What are the uniforms like now? A crested GB jumper, white polo shirt, black trousers and black shoes. Girls wear an armband on their left arm showing their company and their awards. On company nights girls can wear comfy joggers and trainers – easier for running around.

What age can you join GB? GB starts from Primary 1.

Does Girls' Brigade exist elsewhere in the World? Girls' Brigade Worldwide exists in Europe, Asia, Pacific, Africa and Caribbean-and-Americas. There are over 3000 companies in 52 countries in the world, with over 126,000 Girls' Brigaders worldwide.

How often does GB meet? GB meets every Wednesday in term time, September to May, from 6.30pm. We have 3 church services a year and outings with the whole division in West Lothian.

What do girls do after leaving GB? At age 16 Brigaders can become trainee leaders and start a leadership programme online. Then they can continue



to be involved in a GB company after they leave school. Also at age 16 a Brigader can start Queen's Award – the highest achievement in Girls' Brigade comprising 7 parts and taking 2 years. They have until they are aged 25 to complete it. We continue to offer the Duke of Edinburgh Awards holding a monthly training night and several day walks during the session to train for their long expedition in the summer.

What is the Aim of the Girls' Brigade? It is to help girls become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence and a sense of responsibility to find true enrichment of life.

Tell me about the GB Badge. In the centre is a cross – the symbol of Christ and His church. Below is a lamp – that His glory may shine out upon the world. Above is a crown – that we may own Christ as our King. Behind is a torch – the flame of Christ's living spirit and our devotion to Him.



What sort of things do you do each week? Games – favourites are Farmer Farmer, The Bear and the Honey Pot, Line Tig, Ladders, Steal. We make crafts which include cutting, gluing, colouring in, painting, circuits, dance, cups, wink murder, Seven and we love baking, icing, decorating and cooking.

At GB camp we get to share a whole weekend with our GB pals and sleepover at Lowport Centre. We have done activities including jungle bashing, forest skills, lighting a bonfire and toasting marshmallows, quiz and movie night. Last year at camp one girl wrote:

'Dear God, Thank you for my lovely day and all the fun things I have done. I hope you are proud of me. Amen'.

This year our outings include Miracles Disco, Jumpstation and a trip to Blair Drummond. We have parties in Autumn, Christmas and Summer. At the end of our most recent party one very cute little girl came up and gave the leader a hug and said *'Thank you'* which made everything worthwhile.



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THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2018

by Barbara Thomson

A heri grontapu di Gado meki bun doro, doro!

The interdenominational movement of the Women's World Day of Prayer invites everyone to attend one of over 5,000 services being held on Friday 2 March with the title '**All God's Creation is Very Good!**'. (Well done to anyone who was able to translate the title from the Dutch!) We will join an estimated 3 million people around the world that day in a service which has been written this year by the women of Suriname, a small country on the north-eastern coast of South America. It is the smallest country of that continent and has a population of around 565,000.



With its vast rainforest and wealth of resources, Suriname asks us to pray for conservation and the protection of wildlife, through an awareness of pollution, misuse and abuse, as well as for the situation in Suriname and concerns for the future. Starting in Samoa as the sun rises, and ending as the sun sets off the coast of American Samoa, the service will have been translated into more than 95 languages and 1000 dialects as we are reminded that we have responsibilities in caring for this wonderful world we live in.

How good is God's creation now? That question is the core of the service and we are asked to meditate on and respond to it with a personal commitment to care for creation. It is also an opportunity for the World Day of Prayer motto 'Informed prayer and prayerful action' to be affirmed in our church community. What is it that we, as members of St. Michael's, can do to keep God's creation good?

This is not simply a day of prayer for women, but for everyone who cares about our world and those who live in it. Why don't you come along this year? The service is organised by Linlithgow Churches' Forum and members from all the town's churches take part. The speaker this year is Father Paul Kelly. After the service, refreshments will be served in the church.

Please put the date in your diary: **Friday 2 March, 7.30pm, St Michael's Parish Church.** There is also an abridged service in St Michael's Hospital at 2.30pm.



100 years ago

18th Dec. 1917 [Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Wright – Their son being reported missing in France.] At a meeting of Kirk Session held this evening, reference was made to the very anxious and trying time through which you are being called at present to pass, and on behalf of all your fellow office bearers I was instructed to convey to Mrs. Wright and yourself an expression of their deep and heartfelt sympathy. It is the prayer of every member of Session that news may yet reach you from beyond the sea which will lift the heavy load that is lying on your heart.

The Moderator stated that the Presbytery intended holding a conference and a celebration of Communion in the Parish Church in January next. In connection with the Service, commanded by the King to be held on 6th Jan., the Moderator stated that arrangements were being made for holding a United Service, and it was suggested that this Service be held in the Parish Church in the evening. In view of the Lighting restrictions, the Moderator and Mr. Montgomerie were appointed to consult with the Police authorities.

50 years ago

Sun. 29th Oct. 1967 The Moderator reported that it had been ascertained that entry to Cross House would be given to the Congregation on 5th Jan. 1968.

The Church Treasurer reported that, as regards the proposed appeal for £10,000 for repairs, reconstruction and furnishings etc. for Cross House, the Committee recommended that the major part of that sum should be the subject of a direct appeal to the Congregation on a basis of £15 per family. It was hoped that the sum of £7,500 would be raised in that fashion, and the Committee, who had agreed to co-opt to their membership the Assistant Minister and representatives of the Women's Guild, Young Mothers Fellowship and the Sunday Schools, intended to examine possible methods of raising the balance of £2,500.

Tues. 21st Nov. 1967 The Moderator explained that the Rev. G. MacMillan had expressed willingness, if acceptable to the Session, to remain as Assistant Minister of St. Michael's for a further period of one year from April 1968, and to act as Warden of Cross House.

[Church Organist] It was noted that Mr. James Ross had accepted the appointment of Organist and Choirmaster and would commence duty on 3rd December 1967.

25 years ago

Tues. 20th Oct. 1992 [*Placement abroad*] A letter was received from Mr. William Ross who, along with his wife, had volunteered their services to the Church of Scotland World Mission and Unity and were now on a placement for six months to the Sea of Galilee Centre in Israel. Kirk Session agreed this period of leave of absence and that the Session Clerk write and convey their good wishes to them both.

[*Television programme*] The Moderator advised that I.T.V. would be visiting the town in the making of a programme in the "Highway" series with Sir Harry Secombe. This would occur in mid-November. Part of the programme would be filmed in the Church.

Tues. 2nd Feb. 1993 [*Church and Community*] The Committee reported that a total of 89 Christmas parcels had been delivered plus others to Brae Court at a total cost of £310. The assistance of the Work Party by way of a donation of £100 was much appreciated and acknowledged by Kirk Session.

[*Romanian Christian Youth Exchange*] Mr. Marshall Green updated Kirk Session on the arrangements for this exchange. Good progress was being made with the proposed Easter visit to Romania involving fifteen young people from various churches in and around Linlithgow along with six adults. On this occasion materials to be taken out would focus on medical and dental supplies.




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LIFE AND WORK AT LYPP

by Russell Shields

Nearly six months ago my time as the Children's and Youth Worker at St Michael's came to an end. I had the opportunity to develop new skills within youth work and, with a great amount of understanding and support from the church, I made the transition to become the Youth and School's Worker at Linlithgow Young People's Project. I miss many things from working at St Michael's – I knew I would – but at the same time I'm really enjoying LYPP and looking forward to the many things that we are working on.



I started at the end of the summer holidays when we were finishing off our summer programme. This included a 12-hour beach trip starting at 12noon, visiting one of our groups in Bridgend and helping manage a skate park project that had run all summer. This was followed by nearly two weeks of no groups as we did our annual clear and redecoration of the Lounge, giving the place an entirely new look and feel, and planning for last September's LYPP Open Day. So the start of my time here was very different to what I would expect from a normal week, but it was a great chance to strengthen existing relationships and meet new people.



Since then things have been a bit more normal. I've spent a lot of time in the Academy helping with different groups. Including other things, I've led S1 PSE classes, a stress workshop for the current S4s, I help with a school lunch club and I organised a community project. This was for a

small group of young people who researched and compared their school experiences to that of the residents at Brae Court.

Outside of the schools I head up the programme for the Lounge. This has included running the Tuesday Night Lounge where we've looked at things like human needs, managing risks and bullying. We've also had guest speakers in to talk about drugs and alcohol, and what different organisations are doing for the 2018 Year of Young People. This group meets on Tuesdays from 7-9pm in the Lounge; we also provide a Drop-in on a Friday afternoon from 1-4pm, both for S1-S6s. Fridays have less of a programme but give young people a safe space to have fun with their friends, have someone to talk to and to develop skills, such as cooking (through our Foody Friday project) or various skills through our Upcycling project. All these things run through the school term with special events and trips during holidays. Keep an eye out for our Easter events.

All of this comes under my remit but I work alongside some very skilled people. Elaine, our project manager, leads us towards improving and developing our work. She is very passionate about accrediting young people with recognised



awards for the things they are involved in through LYPP. Graeme is developing our work out in Bridgend while keeping me right in the new role. Katherine started working here at a similar time to me and is helping us improve our mental health provisions and resources. They all do much more than I've just mentioned and we are lucky to have a great, wider team of sessional staff and volunteers as well. We could not do what we do without everyone involved.

Although we have achieved much in the past 6 months, we're constantly looking to the future. Now, with a larger team than we've had for a while, we

can get more involved in community events. 2018 – the Scottish Year of Young people – will also be a big year for us. We have plans in the pipeline for 2018, and we hope that they will have a massive impact on the lives of the young people in Linlithgow and surrounding areas. At the time of writing this I cannot mention any specifics, as we're still planning this, but if you're interested in what we're doing or would



like to know how you can support us with this work, then please call us; 01506 202610; or email, mail@lypp.org.uk. Check out our website, www.lypp.org.uk. Like us on Social Media, www.facebook.com/linlithgowyoungpeoplesproject/ www.instagram.com/lypp_lounge/. Or feel free to (metaphorically) pin me down in the street.

We'd love to let you know about what we're doing and how you can help. You can also sign up for our newsletter that comes out approximately 3-4 times a year, telling you about what we've all been focusing on.

I hope to see you soon – and have a great 2018!

Russell

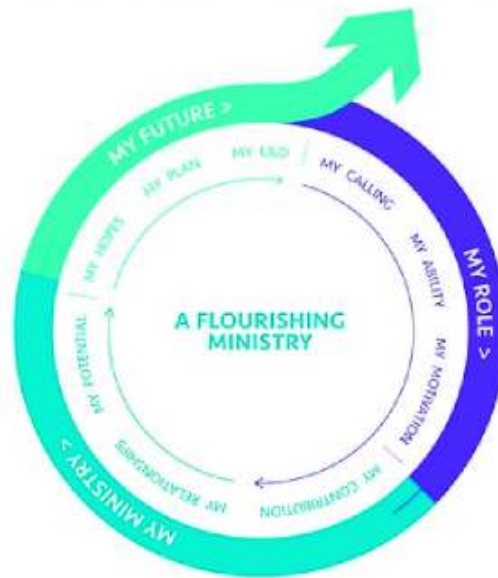


MINISTRY MATTERS

by Rev Hilary Beresford



Whether ordained or lay, child or adult, we each have a calling, a ministry that is from God. This diagram comes from the Church of Scotland ministry development department. But it could come from another organisation. It is simple, yet to be effective it requires us to be honest with ourselves and with God's plan for us; and that requires work!



'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' NRSV

or

'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.' The Message

Matthew 11:28-30

As we begin this New Year, may we all take time to review our calling into the ministry or ministries we have, and so declare before God our hopes and our goals for the future. For we are a priesthood of believers, each being called by God to be a child of God, with a purpose to be a shining light of His love, mercy and grace to those we meet, with those we eat with, and with those we rest with. May God bless you and your ministry.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Ministry

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Rev Dr Stewart Gillan
tel: (01506) 842195

Auxiliary Minister

Rev Thom Riddell
tel: (01506) 843251

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Margaret Henderson
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Anne Sutherland (3-11yrs)
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Rev Dr Stewart Gillan (YF S3-S6)
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Girls' Brigade

Clare McLay
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Events Co-ordinator

Stephen Blake
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