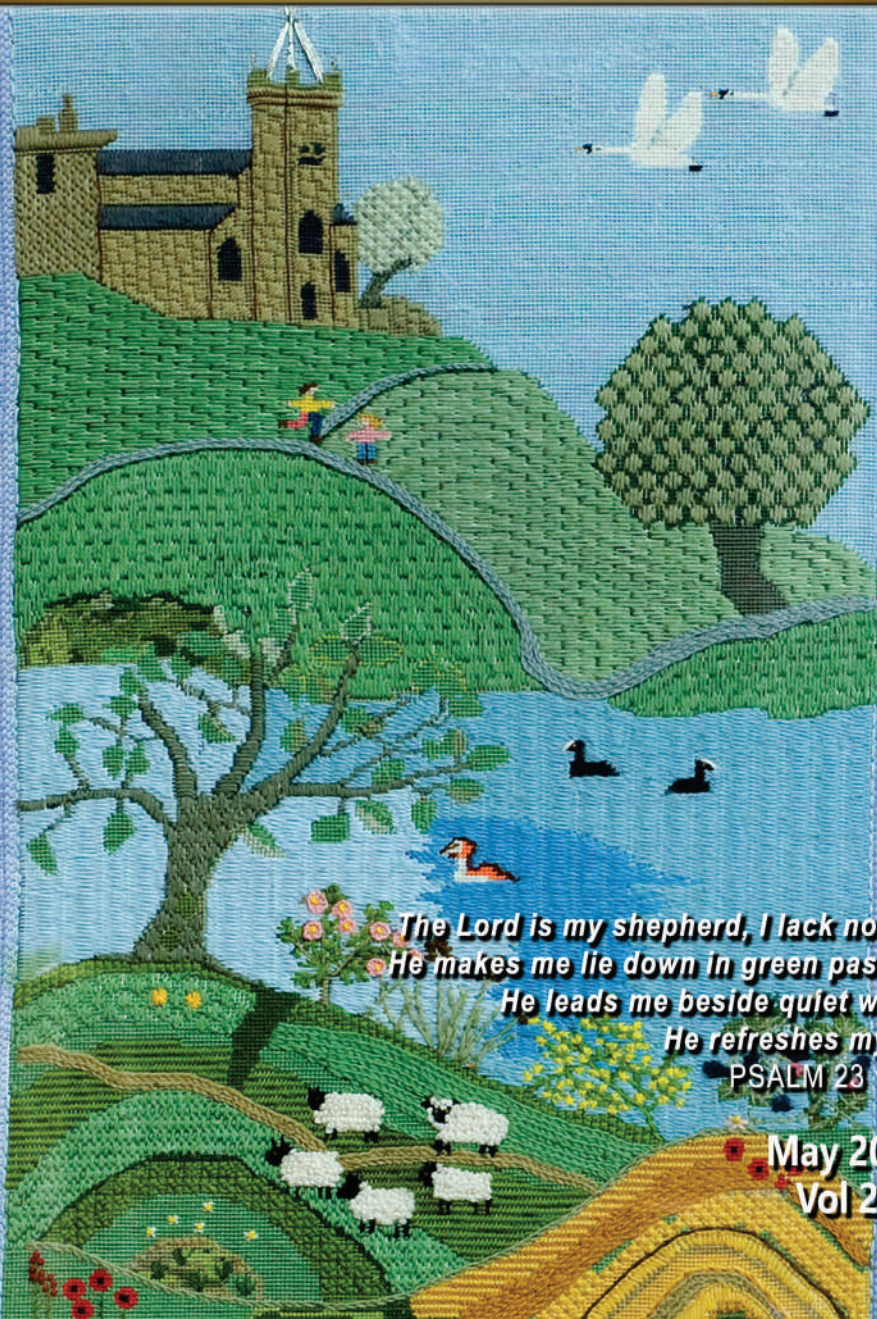


CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church



*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing,
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He refreshes my soul*
PSALM 23 v1 & 2

May 2021
Vol 24:1

CONTENTS

View From The Manse	
	<i>Rev Dr Liam Fraser ... Page 3</i>
Put on Hold	
	<i>Rev Ali Pandian ... Page 5</i>
Social Justice	
	<i>Ken Mackenzie ... Page 8</i>
Queen's Men	
	<i>... Page 10</i>
Annual Accounts 2020	
	<i>Anne Law ... Page 12</i>
Seedlings – A Year Online	
	<i>Trish Archibald ...Page 14</i>
Parish Register	
	<i>... Page 17</i>
Building a Good Habit!	
	<i>Paul Davidson ... Page 18</i>
Update from the Property Team	
	<i>Jim Rae ... Page 20</i>
Reaching Out	
	<i>Alison Miller ... Page 22</i>
Guild Matters	
	<i>Margaret Henderson ... Page 24</i>
Streaming Ahead	
	<i>Phill Ratcliffe ... Page 26</i>
How Can I Help You?	
	<i>Anne Sutherland and Alan Miller ... Page 28</i>
Pentecost	
	<i>Maureen Blake ... Page 30</i>
Lockdown Singalong ... At Home	
	<i>Norma Costley ... Page 32</i>
COP26 and All That?	
	<i>Rev Ian Paterson ... Page 34</i>

SUNDAY SERVICES



Communion

Sunday 30th May

**Streamed live via the St Michael's website at 11.45am
Have bread and wine/grape juice ready at home.**

Weekly Services

**Every Sunday at 11am on Facebook and YouTube
or listen by phoning 01506 306036**

Services in the Kirk

**As Covid restrictions change, arrangements for these services also have to adapt. Places are currently limited and must be booked via the church office.
Look out for announcements in the regular newsletters, the local press and on social media.**

Cover: A detail from the 20th Century tapestry. Courtesy of Gordon Young

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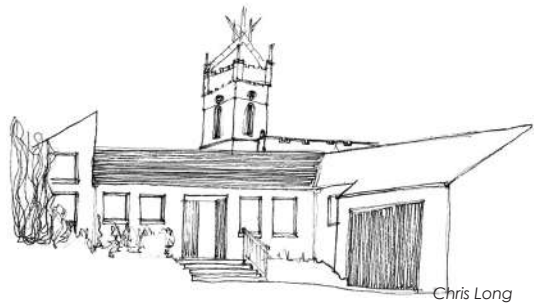
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The deadline for the August 2021 issue is 3rd July 2021.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam Fraser

I have a problem with Christmas trees. After the twelve days of Christmas are done – we are very traditional in our house – we are faced with the conundrum of what to do with the tree. This year I had great plans for it: to replant it, to saw it up for firewood, or – less creatively – dispose of it at the tip. Yet the pressures of ministry are such that it ended up being unceremoniously dumped at the bottom of the Manse garden, where it has slowly browned and disintegrated, amid discarded autumn leaves and mounds of nettles.



This is a far cry from how it started life, and what its cousin trees are still experiencing. They are currently gracing Alpine hillsides or Scandinavian forests in verdant splendour, never changing, a constant presence on the landscape. The drifting seasons may bring slight changes to them, but the trees still stand: green, and vibrant, and flourishing.

Yet is it the same for us in the seasons of life? For while we may marvel as Winter becomes Spring, or lament the coming of the colder months, we have no control over them. They come and go whether we approve or not, whether we like it or not. Yet the Christian life is different. Part of the freedom that comes with faith is the ability to find peace, irrespective of the seasons of life. The ability not to be tossed about by circumstances, but – rooted in Christ – to prosper and grow in season and out of season.

This is summed up well by an old Scots metrical psalm, which – in the gendered language of the time – says this of the faithful person:

He shall be like a tree that hath
Been planted by a river,
Which in its season yields its fruit
And its leaf fadeth never:
And all he doth shall prosper well,
The wicked are not so;
But like they are unto the chaff,
Which wind drives to and fro.

We've never known a more changeable season than this. Yet Christ's Cross, unlike a felled and forgotten Christmas tree, stands forever, and anyone who grounds themselves in it and the Resurrection will find a source of life that is not dependent on circumstance. They will find themselves – like the evergreen in the forest – alive in every season. Sometimes we all feel like that discarded Christmas tree at the bottom of the Manse garden. Yet at any time of life, no matter our age, we can replant ourselves in Christ, and see green shoots, however small, begin to burst forth.

How do we root ourselves in Christ, I hear you say? Through prayer. Trees put out roots into the dark soil in order to flourish and grow, and we put out roots into God through the darkness of prayer. Prayer is not a matter of grand utterances before the Supreme Being, but the simple act of sharing our thoughts, feelings, and experiences with God. When we share these, knowing that God is far more interested in us than other people are, and that he forgives all, we begin to feel stronger and more secure, like a mighty tree, planted by a river.

So before you read any further in Crosswind, put the magazine down, close your eyes, and simply share with God how you are feeling right now. You can think in words, in lyrics, or in pictures, whatever is best for you. Only remember that, because of Christ and the life he gave at Easter, you are loved unconditionally, and that God is able to bring good, even from the harshest of seasons.



PUT ON HOLD

A HEALTHCARE CHAPLAIN'S RESPONSE TO COVID 19

written by Rev Ali Pandian in May 2020

To our patients and their loved ones

Put On Hold

rituals around dying

The swaying between belly laughs and broken sobs that bind loved ones

together around a bed

The said and the unsaid

The mundane and monumental

Shared together

The touch that reminds of roles reversed

And comforts more than the deepest duvet

Put On Hold

the preparing of your precious loved one when they die

Combing hair, choosing an outfit

Put On Hold

sharing stories

Planning funerals all together

Passing round photos and tea and biscuits

Seeing distant kin and regretting together, reminiscing together

Over steak pie

Now for many Put On Hold or cancelled altogether

Replaced with 'zoom' calls and knitted hearts that symbolise separation

Bags handed in, gloved hand to gloved hand at ward doors

And messages passed on through others from masked face to masked face

Or one by one accompaniment instead of a team

Your team

The ones who remind you who you are

Yet you, I, we, are all about connections

And connecting

So in the 'On Hold' moments I will join you where I'm welcomed

I will sit in the awful pause and try

not to run away; not to dismiss; not to hurry on

And, in my role as meaning marker I will do my best to accompany you

To acknowledge the significance in a way that we work out together

And to help you consider the Possible as well as the Put On Hold

I'll Hold On to hands that double layers of gloves can't stop me feeling

I'll Look Larger into eyes that tell me of COVID19's companion called Grief

I'll Listen Louder to stories that have less ears to hear

And I aim to continue to show you that

You Matter

Whatever lies ahead

That remains

To our staff

Put On Hold

That sense of knowing that this is how we've always done things

Put On Hold

Fixed events in the calendar

Caring without any element of fear

The assurance that those who love your patients most will be present, despite that often being their deepest desire.

Put On Hold some of your most natural coping strategies when times are tough.

But Hold On to knowing that you do not go there alone

Hold On to the reason you came into your job

To the sense that for many, however uncomfortable it is, you are viewed as heroes

Hold On to that which you know to be true of yourself

Hold On to your team

To the humour that unites you together in a way others might not get

To the parts of the job you thrive on

Embrace good sleep, good food, good people surrounding you whether virtually or in the flesh

Hold On to fresh air and fresh energy when it comes

Hold On to all that keeps you well.

I will try to be there, as part of a team,

To listen to your fears without trying to fix you

To offer a hospitable space that is safe

To attend to your most basic of needs when we are together

I know that your trust is not given lightly and I will do my best to honour it when it is given

And I aim to continue to show you that

You Matter

Whatever lies ahead

That remains



'Hold tight to God, your God, just as you've done up to now.' Joshua 23:8 (The Message)

To myself

Put On Hold

Parts of my identity
The clothes that I chose to work in
The facial expressions I offered being seen in all of their unmasked shades

Put On Hold

Some of the tunes my heart sang to be part of the choir for –
The one about the commitment for no patient to die alone
The open hand offered to another at close proximity grappling with pain,
past or purpose

Now for me put on hold or cancelled altogether
Smothered by the new necessities
The new normal: uniforms, masks, gloves, aprons, goggles and visors
procedures and policies

Or are they?

For in the space I give myself
Counter cultural time and space
To dwell in my own darkness
To grieve; to grasp

To wonder what is key to the work I do

For me

For them in all their preciousness

For the powers that be

In *that* space

I sense a new song stirring
Quiet and unsure of itself
A loving lilt that whispers

Hold On

To the things I know to be true
To the connections that sustain me
To my faith

To all those I hold dear: To my sense of purpose
To that which I can offer our patients and their loved ones, our staff
To my team; to creativity; to laughter; to nature

To the knowledge that difference can ignite a spark of positivity

To the possibility of new doors opening wide

To the hope that speaks of better days

And grasping on to this gentle melody of mine

That can abide amicably next to the necessary

I am equipped to encounter the other

with all they choose to share

Of their music in this moment

That won't be

Put On Hold

SOCIAL JUSTICE

by Ken Mackenzie

To write about Social justice we have to have some idea of what it means. I looked it up and found this definition. 'Social justice is fairness as it manifests in society. That includes fairness in healthcare, employment, housing and more'. This is vague and yet massive, covering all aspects of our relationship with society and our local community.

Two words enter my thoughts as I write, Love and Hope. 'You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself' Matthew 22 v39. I think that it is fair to say that St Michael's has a long tradition of caring for the poor and underprivileged of the Royal Burgh. Nevertheless, when you look back in history it would appear that wealth accumulation was more important than distribution! The tradition is still strong. We have a strong membership and a great many of us have worked as individuals, with other churches and groups in the local area and further afield. We have only to think of the groups that we support on a regular basis such as Bethany, the Foodbank and LYPP.



Sadly we are seeing an increasing need for aid from these agencies. We have a good record of our youth groups and organisations doing community work for their awards and achievements. We recently had a very successful appeal for clothing for infants. St Michael's was important in the formation of Linlithgow Link with the first chair being Ian Paterson and of the Day Care Centre when the founding chair was myself. Both organisations are continuing to work well through the current pandemic. As a Social Justice team we have held Homeless Sunday services and informed the congregation about refugees and poverty. The Church of Scotland also has a proud record of campaigning for such things as the Real Living Wage and Against Child Poverty. It is possible that this campaigning role is likely to become more important Post-Covid.



So what of the future and is there any Hope, my other word? I write mid-pandemic and at Easter. Easter gives us Christians hope of new life after darkness and hope after despair. There appears to be hope and light at the end of the tunnel with the roll out of the vaccine, although it is still a very long tunnel. What may life look like after the pandemic? We will be looking at the needs of the community and planning accordingly.

We have, however, identified a need that we have started to address. Unemployment is a route into poverty and the corresponding exit is re-employment. We have started working in partnership with St John's and an organisation called Christians Against Poverty (CAP). When I say started, I mean we are undertaking training for our future roles as job coaches. CAP is an organisation that was started 25 years ago by businessman John Kirby. This was in response to the poverty he witnessed in his hometown of Bradford. It is also fair to say that his route to success in business was a fairly rocky one.



The aim of CAP 'is the relief of poverty for persons in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (it now has an International Arm) who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by reason of their social and/or economic circumstances, by providing and promoting the provision of advice and other services'. There are four arms to CAP. These are debt centres (303 in the UK); job clubs (149), life skills groups (75) and fresh start groups (118). All of these are recognised and recommended by the DWP.

We considered these and felt that the best fit was to establish a jobs club. There are plenty of debt agencies in West Lothian and a CAP Debt Centre is being established in Livingston in conjunction with the West Lothian Foodbank.



Life skills and fresh start from addiction, etc are already covered in Linlithgow. The jobs club is an eight-week course to help with self-esteem, plan a new direction and help with applications and CVs. The hope is that the group will form a little community and with mentoring give on-going support to each other.

Our training should be finished by May. We will be up and running during the summer and we will be looking for volunteers to help with creating the community spirit required to make the groups successful and who may be willing to train as job coaches. Further information from me via the church office. Another organisation I would like to mention is Safe Families and we have had speakers from them on Sundays. They are now working in West Lothian.

'Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.' *St Teresa*

QUEEN'S MEN



The highest award in the Boys Brigade is called The Queen's Badge.

In order to achieve the Queen's Badge, a young person must complete the following activities:

- They must have previously been awarded the President's Badge
- Attend a candidates' meeting
- Participate in skills based training
- Take responsibility within the BB or Church
- Provide voluntary service or support to others outside the BB or Church
- Develop interests (Skills, Physical, Expedition)
- Participate in a completion residential
- All activity must be recorded, and signed off.

In 2019, over 75,000 voluntary hours were completed by the young people who were working towards their Queen's Badge.

2nd Linlithgow were very fortunate to have 3 young men achieve their Queen's Badge for Session 2019/20 – Callum White, Matthew Callaghan and Peter Molloy.

Congratulations to Callum, Matthew and Peter.

Here is what Matthew and Peter have to say about their achievement.

My Queen's Badge was an experience I would recommend to anyone in the position to do so themselves. It gave me more confidence in both myself and my faith. It also allowed me to gain friendships throughout Scotland across various companies, friendships which have lasted despite busy schedules. Anyone who gets the chance to complete the challenging badge despite its hardship – the rewards are worth the work.

Matthew Callaghan



I am really proud to have achieved the Queen's Badge. I remember sitting on the hall floor as an Anchor Boy at the annual display and seeing the seniors receive their badges and thinking 'Wow! Maybe I could do that one day!' To achieve the badge, you have to put in a strong commitment to many different activities, such as sport, volunteering or learning a new skill.

I particularly enjoyed being a helper with our company's Junior Section during my final year. The boys were always so full of energy and this enthusiasm makes every night varied and great fun. This also allowed me to master the art of making an origami frog during one of their craft sessions: perhaps one of the less transferable skills I gained, but maybe it will come in useful in the future!



Peter Molloy

Overall, the Queen's Badge was a satisfyingly challenging and extremely worthwhile experience: it is so much more than just gaining a badge and has definitely made me a more confident and rounded young person, which is certain to stand me in good stead for the future.



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ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2020

by Anne Law



The following formed part of a narrative delivered to Kirk Session to accompany the annual accounts which were approved by the Trustees on Tuesday 7 April 2021. The accounts will be available on our website.

So – who among us will ever forget 2020? A pandemic that closed our doors, kept us all home, damaged the economy, devastated families, and brought dire warnings about the ability of our NHS to cope with the level of illness and incapacity that would be brought to our own doors.

In in the context of St Michael's, our doors closed in March 2020, occasionally re-opening between lockdowns and closed totally since Boxing Day 2020 until Easter weekend.

And what has it meant to St Michael's in terms of our annual report and accounts? Loss of income and reduction in expenditure, resulting in a deficit of £5,825. I think we have been very fortunate. In normal times more than 70% of our regular monthly income is received through standing order payments, and therefore we have much less reliance on weekly money in the collection bag than many congregations. During lockdown that loss of Freewill Offering (FWO) income was of huge concern, alongside loss of income from weddings and the £20k that we derive from Cross House rentals. No income from the church at all – no concerts, no events. FWO losses in 2020 amount to £45,000 but standing order income rose by £20,000. We have lost £7k from weddings, £11k for Cross House and probably in the region of £10k from visitors' donations in the fabric box.

We received a very generous donation of £25000 towards the reparation work on the spire which shows in restricted funds in the accounts.

In terms of other expenditure when we were in lockdown, only essential property maintenance could be done and therefore again we 'benefitted' (if you want to look at it that way) from little in the way of property expenditure. The Property team had a budget last year of £43k and spent £15k which greatly helped the situation. That of course cannot last.

Our ministry and mission contribution to the national church is our largest outgoing at £165,000 and had to be met. This has been a rollercoaster ride over the last 3 years going from £152K in 2019 up to £165K in 2020 and back down to £145K in 2021. We have heard that a new calculation system is being developed by the stewardship team in the church offices, which may feature a cap of the contribution expected from higher earning churches such as ourselves. This would most likely be of benefit to St Michael's, but no further details are currently to hand and no timescale has been revealed, although it is anticipated that 2022 may see a new calculation.

We furloughed our cleaners when we were able to and saved some money through the government allowances but we always made up the salaries to 100%.

Other major expenditure in 2020 – inaccurate billing by Scottish Gas during 2018 and 2019, when they were using the wrong meter, resulted in us facing large bills in 2020 to catch up with the previous undercharging.

It has been mentioned in the Risk Management section for several years that our donations rely far too much on a small number of very generous donors. If anything this situation is getting worse as the more generous donors continue to review their donations on a regular basis, whilst those giving a lot less do not review their offerings at all. The contribution from this very small group represents more than 20% of our regular income. By contrast about 25% of the total funds contributed through standing orders are for £20 per month or less.

In summary we have been very well supported financially through this pandemic by the contributions from our congregation. There are many uncertainties ahead in terms of generating income and funding our aspirations. In the Stewardship and Finance Team we look forward to contributing to those financial plans, once they are to hand from the consultants engaged to draft them.

In closing there are a number of individuals to thank. Tim Brown does all the monthly and annual reconciliation work and that is a huge piece of work. Andrew Jones looks after Gift Aid in a very thorough way. Thank you also to team leaders for their control of expenses, and most importantly to our congregation who have maintained such generosity for the work of the church. Also, to Richard Baird at A9 for his team's work on our monthly accounts and his work as our Independent Examiner.

As Brian Dixon in our team says – There has been good husbandry all round in such demanding circumstances.



SEEDLINGS – A YEAR ONLINE

by Trish Archibald

When news of Covid-19 first reached us, I never could have imagined how much it would affect every part of our lives. For our Seedlings Toddler Church things have been very different indeed.

When it became clear we could not meet together in the Kirk Hall, I decided to make a short Seedlings video to share online to keep our Seedlings families busy during the first lockdown. That was back in March 2020. I only ever saw this as a very temporary stop gap until we were back together in the hall, thinking maybe I'll make 3 over 3 weeks and then that will be the end of Seedlings online because we will all be back together. Hmm...



Fast forward a year and Seedlings is still online weekly, with our spotty bag, story, little talk, prayer and a craft to try from home. We have worked our way through many stories, parables, and the Seedlings spotty bag has had more surprises inside it than I can remember! Even though I have been doing this for just over a year now, and we are all far more familiar with things being online, it still feels a bit strange. Talking to a screen cannot ever compare to the sheer joy of talking to real live, happy, boisterous toddlers and their lovely families! It doesn't compare to the enjoyment of being a part of our Seedlings team, working together in the hall week in week out. It doesn't compare to singing along and trying to shake our shakers in time with Jean Meldrum's piano.



One good thing to come from Seedlings online is that it is reaching far more people. Some weeks we have had over 500 views of Seedlings online, we regularly get over 200 views each week. Isn't it amazing how God can use anything!

I am grateful to God for the provision of the technology to be able to do these things. One thing that has given me great encouragement this year is that the events that have taken us by surprise are no surprise to God. A great example of this is the laptop I'm typing this article on just now! Back in February 2020, it became clear I needed a new laptop to do my job as the one I had been given when I started at St Michael's was no longer working properly. The Kirk Session kindly agreed and I received this laptop JUST before the first lockdown happened. It has been used this year more than any other laptop I have ever used in my working life! Seedlings online or any of our other online youth and children's work would not have been possible without it. It's amazing how God knows what we need before we do.

Seedlings is an absolute joy to be part of because of the wonderful team, the fantastic mums, dads, grans and grandpas and the FABULOUS children! I am very hopeful that Seedlings, along with our other groups, will be able to meet again in person in the not-too-distant future. Until then, the Seedlings and the spotty bag will be online!



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PARISH REGISTER

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

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William (Bill) Vallely, Kingsfield
Judi Mackie, Brechin (formerly Blackness)

March

Christina (Kirsty) Donaldson, Edinburgh Road

April

Robert Menzies, Springfield Road



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

By Certificate of Transference

Maysie Milne
Norma Goodlad
Jo Mayland
Paul Mayland



WEBSITES

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

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

BUILDING A GOOD HABIT!

by Paul Davidson

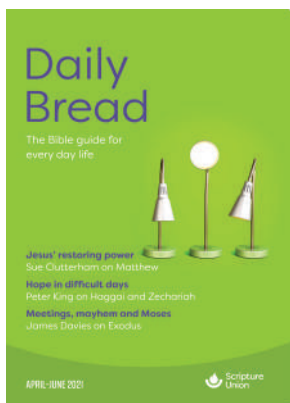
Hopefully you were able to get access to February's Crosswind, and enjoyed reading the Gospel of John throughout Lent. I found it really helpful, doing the readings regularly and getting the full context of what John was saying. I will admit it wasn't always easy, and the Gospel of John in particular can sometimes require some explanation!

If you enjoyed the discipline of daily readings, and would like to continue that, here are some suggestions for guides/plans you could use. A lot will depend on what you prefer – a verse with a thought for the day, or a longer reading with an explanation. Some of the resources are free, while some have an annual subscription. Some are available in paper format, but many are also available on websites, via email or Android/iOS apps.



A great place to start regular Bible readings is with Scripture Union's **Word Live**. It has a reading followed by an explanation of the text, and also an opportunity to think deeper if you wish. It's available on the SU website and it's possible to receive it daily as an email.

Scripture Union also publishes **Daily Bread** and **Encounter with God**, which are daily guides available in paperback for an annual subscription.

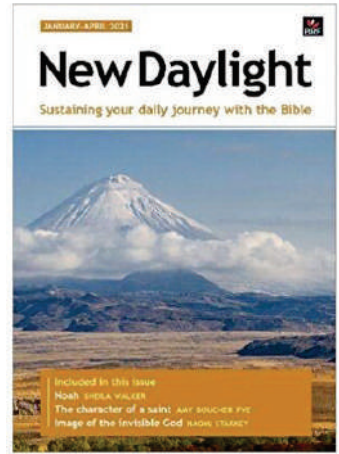


United Christian Broadcasters (UCB) publish **Word for Today**. It is short and easy to take in – a verse or two, followed by some thoughts. A good way to start the day, if you receive it by email.

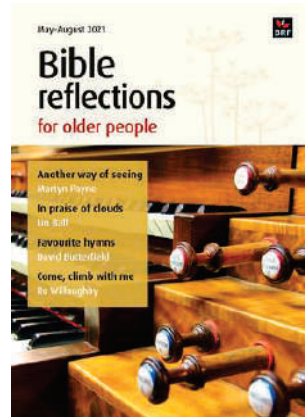


The Bible Reading Fellowship has a range of options, including:

New Daylight – for everyone on their daily journey with God.



Bible Reflections for Older People – designed to bring hope, assurance and sustenance.



I hope you find these suggestions helpful!

GUIDELINES

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY'S MINISTRY AND MISSION



Guidelines – aimed at church leaders and students, providing more in-depth study for today's mission and ministry.



The Upper Room – focuses on finding God in daily experience.

Day by Day with God – written for women, by women who have found the Bible a source of strength and inspiration.



You may be familiar with **Our Daily Bread** – the notes which were available in the Church building when we were able to meet together. It has a short reading, followed by some thoughts on the reading and an opportunity to reflect and pray. They are available on the website, via email, in print or on a mobile device app.



UPDATE FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM



by Jim Rae

During the Covid-19 pandemic it has only been permissible to carry out essential maintenance and testing on gas appliances, lightning conductors, fire and security systems, fire extinguisher and general fabric safety checks. Property condition fabric inspections have continued on a weekly basis to check closed church buildings to ensure that any issues with water ingress, stonework deterioration, security or damage are dealt with quickly.

Essential church roof repair work, consisting of roof slate, minor lead work repairs and health & safety issues, detected during a recent survey, have now been rectified.



Work carried out last June on the Crown of Thorns is being revisited during late April to determine if further structural deterioration has occurred. It was clear from those initial invasive inspections that structural timber repairs and rusting steel fixings to the Crown would require further checking if repair funding was not in place by the spring of this year. A funding submission to Historic Environment Scotland is due to be made by the end of May, but it is unlikely that we will have a decision before late September. To start high level work during Autumn, when weather conditions are unpredictable, would give safety concerns and for this reason the project will not start until Spring 2022.

The 2030 Vision sets out the plan for the development of Cross House. This is in conjunction with information collated from original redevelopment consultations with the congregation and user organisations. Page Park Architects, along with several professional consultancy practices and our own Client Design Team led by Brian Lightbody, are involved in producing initial project proposals. At the time of writing, members of the architects' design team are scheduled to visit Cross House to view at first hand our Grade A listed building. First draft designs have been viewed and commented on by the Client Design Team and will continue to be developed from the site visit information and survey. An external funding strategy is being developed by SKS, the appointed consultants, to assist in financing this project.

The church project team, led by Robin Watson, is developing the below ground rainwater and toilet drainage scheme, rainwater gutter lead lining, external and internal stonework restoration, new internal roof timber insertion and they are looking at possible options for a reduced carbon footprint heating system. The projects are at various stages, with three having been tendered for initial budget costs, one at tender stage and one scheme at very early discussion stage.

As lockdown is relaxed the Property Team will embark on a maintenance catch-up at all properties, beginning with the Kirk Hall window frame and rainwater gutter painting and car parking area tidy up. The Manse garden will require general maintenance and there is a planned initiative to develop and clear the lower areas of the grounds.

Lockdown has prevented a lot of activity that we once took for granted, so if you wish to increase your get-up-and-go, please get in touch with the Property Team as we will always welcome new members to help carry out our maintenance work.

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REACHING OUT

by Alison Miller



St Michael is kind to strangers. It's a motto that we as a church have always tried to fulfil.

As I write this, we are marking the anniversaries of the WHO declaration of a global pandemic, and the start of the first lockdown in the UK. Our world has changed around us. We have all felt lockdown, loss and loneliness at some level. The church building has had to be closed for most of that time. However, the church people have been keeping busy and reaching out with God's love.

Here are some of the ongoing activities, some more visible than others:

- over 50 online services with an average of 350 views each and 4 communions on Zoom
- regular children's and young people's Zoom meetings and work with schools
- weekly online Wednesday Prayers
- Boys' Brigade online
- 5 small groups meeting regularly
- monthly Singalong for Memory videos shared with individuals and Care Homes
- monthly 'Chapters' book group meetings
- teams from St. Michael's cooking meals for Bethany Christian Trust.
- an online quiz raising money for Tear Fund
- an online ceillidh showing that St Michael's has talent
- regular property inspections
- food bank operating remotely from a garage
- regular online meetings of elders' teams
- weekly choir practices on Zoom
- recording Mascagni's Easter Hymn involving 48 singers from local choirs
- and there may well be others! (apologies to any I have missed)

A great big thank you to all the ministry team, choir, AV team, Crosswind team and all the many others who make all this happen.


Our Pioneer Worker Lorraine is already reaching out to the people of Linlithgow. Do read the monthly Newsletters and Crosswind and check the church website and Facebook page for updates and invitations. Please get in touch if you would like more information about

- Monthly book groups
- Photography church
- Outdoor church (when restrictions allow)
- Any other new developments

If you would like more information, or would like to become involved with anything on this page please email connect@stmichaels-parish.org.uk or phone 01506 844992.



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GUILD MATTERS

ONE JOURNEY, MANY ROADS Theme 2020-21: The Extra Mile

by Margaret Henderson

On Monday 2 March 2020 the members of St Michael's Church Guild met to hear one of Linlithgow's own, Norman Cummings, share some of his life story with us. This, our last meeting before Lockdown, was a very enjoyable evening when we laughed hilariously at some of Norman's stories and exploits. Our opening prayer was as follows:

Gracious God,

As we meet here together this evening and come before you in prayer,

We remember that your care for us remains strong.

You called us blessed and promised to be present with us wherever we are.

Despite our ways, we remain right with you.

Forgiven, loved and free, may we worship you this evening ready to seek your will for us.

We praise you, Father God, for keeping your promises.

We praise your Son, Jesus, for calling us friends.

We praise the Holy Spirit who lives amongst us guiding and strengthening us every day.

We are all different but to you we are simply your children and that is a privilege almost too big for us to comprehend.

Help us to be friends to each other even although we are so different.

May creed, colour, class and gender be cast aside.

May we join hands and help each other in our common search to walk closer with you. Amen.

This prayer reminds us that our Heavenly Father is always with us, keeping His promises, guiding and strengthening us no matter what, especially at difficult times such as we are currently experiencing.

The fellowship we share as members of the Guild means we have friends who support and care for us at all times. With this in mind, the Leadership Team decided that it was essential for us to keep our friendship alive during the pandemic, so we set up a Telephone Tree with members of the Leadership Team being allocated three or four Guild ladies to phone every two to three weeks to chat and to ask if help was needed. These phone calls are still happening one year later and have proved a lifeline to many who stay by themselves.

At Guild meetings, every member gets a copy of Guild Matters which is basically our Guild newsletter. We decided to continue sharing news in this way but also to include a quiz, some funny stories, a Bible reading for reflection and a prayer for members to use. Our members have enjoyed knowing that they are not forgotten.

As well as telephone calls members received bags of homemade tablet and cards at Christmas. We didn't forget our friends of St Ninian's Craigmillen with whom we share a Christmas meeting; Christmas cards were exchanged which was very special. In February we marked St Valentine's day by delivering bags of heart-shaped shortbread biscuits to all our members.

But membership of the Guild is not just about ourselves. We have continued to raise funds for the remaining two Guild Projects - The Sailors' Society and Journey Together Empowering Teenage Mothers in Zambia.



In the session 2020-2021 we have raised £1,200 to be split between the two projects. The Sailors' Society also asked if Guild ladies would knit beanie hats to be distributed to sailors who arrive from warmer climates and so far, St Michael's Guild has knitted in excess of 200 hats. These have been sent to the chaplain at Invergordon who has given them to grateful sailors arriving at that port.

At the time of writing, we would normally be preparing to hold our Annual General Meeting. In April 2020 this was done by newsletter and sending out copies of the accounts because it is important that all members are given an opportunity to contribute to their Guild. The accounts for this year are prepared and will be distributed to members in this way again. Quite when we will be able to meet again face to face is unknown, but rest assured the Church of Scotland Guild in St Michael's is going strong and we WILL be back.

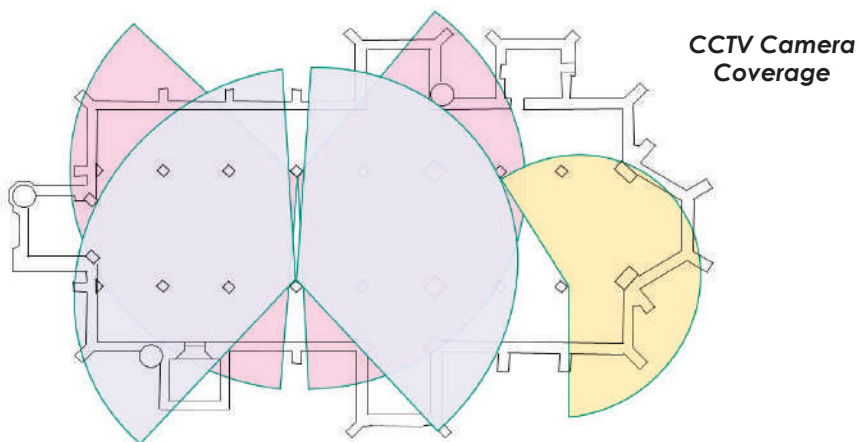


STREAMING AHEAD

by Phill Ratcliffe

The 'screening' services in the church using a projector and portable screen, pioneered by Marshall Green in 2006, was extended over the years to include special events and concerts. At Christmas and Easter, the camera and screens helped to provide backgrounds and detail to the school plays and shows helping parents gain a greater enjoyment of their children's participation. Operation during the Christmas panto and passion plays also helped audiences to get a closer view of the 'action'.

In 2014 the church was re-wired and, whilst parts of the floor were lifted, the opportunity was taken to add data cables in anticipation of future visual image systems. With the benefit of two legacy donations, funds were made available to purchase three remote controlled cameras and a number of large flat screens around the building. The communications team visited a number of churches and discussed what and how to provide a bespoke system for St Michael's, along with gaining approval from the Committee on Church Art and Architecture (CARTA) who control additions to listed buildings.



With the reviews concluded, installation began in May 2019 and lasted for around two months. The Friends of St Michael's offered to fund the control desk which was one of the items of concern for CARTA who desired that the impact of the equipment should not detract from the visual impression of the building.

A team of three from the Projection and Audio Teams operated the panel with individuals dedicated to sound, cameras and the slide shows. With small, dedicated screens for the organist and the microphone operator, the team was able to provide live internal presentations for a number of events, as well as the regular Sunday services.



In early 2020, when attendance at church services was prohibited due to the Covid-19 pandemic, equipment for sending the camera images to the church website, 'live streaming', was purchased. However, the hard lockdown in March reduced the number of individuals in the church, preventing the use of the new facility. At this point Stephen Marshall stepped in and put together an alternative scheme using pre-recorded sessions (see article in Feb 2021 Crosswind). Relaxation of the lockdown rules in the summer of 2020, allowing more people in the building, enabled the Communication Team to finally commission the live streaming equipment and several Communion services along with some funerals and the Town Remembrance Service were broadcast.

The continued lockdown in early 2021 has largely prevented further training and development of the facility, however, preliminary discussions are in progress on how best to utilise the system. It is possible that live streaming could become part of the regular Sunday landscape, with pre-recorded sections intermixed with live output from St Michael's. The option to provide streamed events such as weddings, Christenings and funerals is possible now, however, more exciting options might include the option of 'twinned live events' with other churches, as well as using the screens to provide immediate feedback from those in the building. As the 2030 vision is developed, the involvement of interactive systems is likely to grow in significance, as will the need for communications experts to run them. It is hoped that those with a passion for new ways of interaction will be encouraged to join the team.

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

by Anne Sutherland and Alan Miller

While this is a question we might have been asked in this last year during the pandemic, it may also be a question we have asked others, as good neighbours, ensuring that those around us are safe and have food supplies in their homes.



It's a question Christian Aid have been asking now for the last seventy-five years. Prompted by the need of refugees after the Second World War, Christian Aid began by raising £80,000 (over £3 million in today's money) for emergency supplies in mainland Europe. This enabled partner

churches in Europe to ask the question, but also to act, changing the lives of so many.

A decade later, Christian Aid Week was launched as a way of raising additional funds. Initially, the extra money was used to fund work with refugees in Europe but also in Palestine, Korea and China. For many years the people of Linlithgow have responded with enormous generosity to door-to-door collections during Christian Aid Week. Sadly, this year, as last, such collections are not possible due to pandemic restrictions. However, we do again have the e-envelope available through churches and Facebook for donations, and for forwarding to friends so they can do the same.

By the 1960s, Christian Aid created the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) to ensure development agencies worked together in times of humanitarian crisis. And there have been many crises: twenty years later Christian Aid fed hungry people during the Ethiopian famine and those experiencing drought in Mozambique; twenty years later still, more than 500,000 people were reached with food, shelter and healthcare after the Asian Tsunami.

Christian Aid is active politically, being a founder member of The World Development Movement to lobby politicians; something really important today as the UK government moves to cut overseas aid. Christian Aid is currently working to have the debts of low- and middle-income countries cancelled, so that they can spend more on tackling Covid-19 and on

essentials like health and education. Petitions are available online to sign!

Christian Aid began its work in response to a crisis after the war. As the pandemic adds new pressures on poorer countries through access to vaccines, Covid-19 has simultaneously reduced the ability of all charities to raise funds via traditional methods. How can you help? Please go to www.donate.christianaid.org.uk where you can add Gift Aid – or donate through the e-envelope and pass it on to everyone you know!



**Your love protects
Please donate now.**

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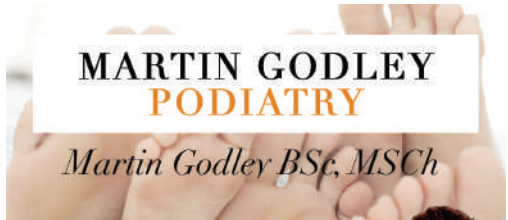
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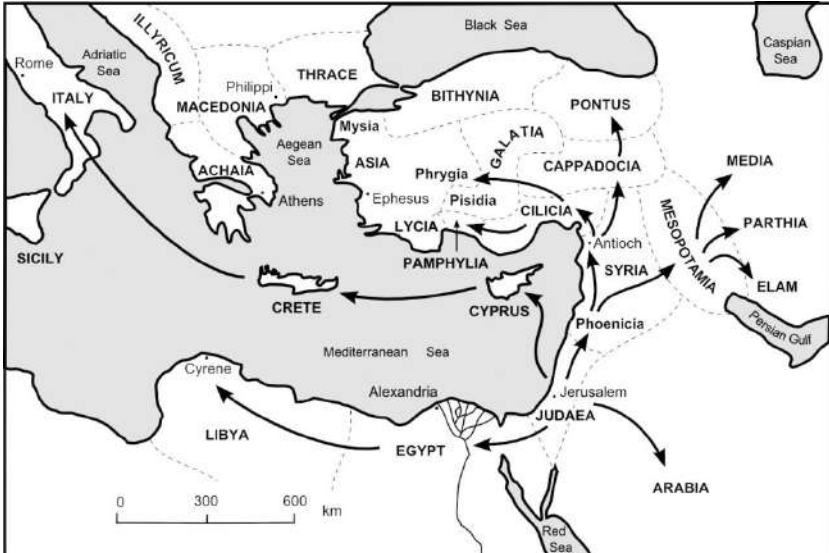
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There were people from many countries and nationalities in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. Can you find them in the wordsquare?

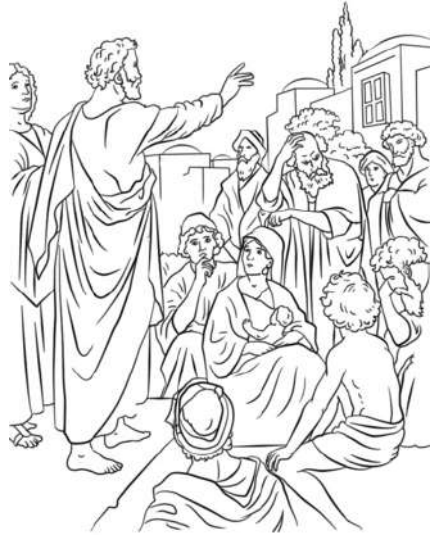
- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| Arabia | Asia |
| Cappadocia | Crete |
| Egypt | Elam |
| Galileans | Jews |
| Judaea | Libya |
| Media | Mesopotamia |
| Pamphylia | Parthia |
| Phrygia | Pontus |
| Rome | |

The left-over letters spell out the people's amazement as they listened to the disciples who had just received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Can you find the countries in the list above on the map?

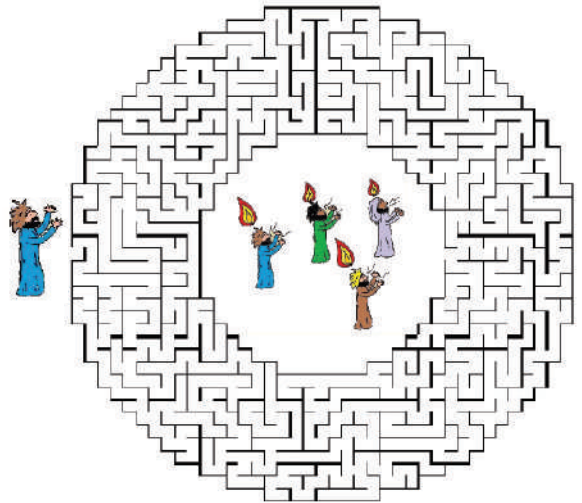


'They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages,
as the Spirit enabled them to speak.'
Acts 2:4 (Good News Bible)



Find 10 differences between these pictures.

Which two flames are identical?



Help the disciple find his way to join the others.

LOCKDOWN SINGALONG ... AT HOME

by Norma Costley

As a result of Covid-19, the Sunshine Singalong for Memory has not been able to meet in person since March 2020. We have remained in touch with our visitors during lockdown by recording a video message each month which lasts 6-8 minutes and includes two or three favourite songs, usually around a theme.

Helen Gait, our pianist, records the accompaniments. Those singing play Helen's music on an iPad while their singing is video-recorded on an iPhone. This requires more skill than you would imagine, as it can be difficult to get the correct balance of piano to voice and to record without any mistakes! My very patient husband has the task of recording for me and to his delight, it sometimes requires quite a number of 'takes'! Once recorded, Ivan Coyle or Marshall Green add the words. Finally, Ivan edits the video and uploads it to the church's YouTube channel.

**An April message
from the
Singalong Team!**

**Young Berlin's
Easter Parade**
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JUDY GARLAND - FRED ASTAIRE

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN
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Presented by
Gene KELLY and Debbie O'CONNOR
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**LOUIS
ARMSTRONG**
WHEN YOU'RE SMILING

Sunshine sing-along
Every second Thursday of every month
12 - 1.30pm
KIRK HALL ST
MICHAEL'S PARISH
CHURCH.

Come and join us for a light lunch and then an hour of singing your favourite songs. A warm welcome awaits you. No church connection needed. Just turn up on the day. Disabled parking in the Vesnel Car Park adjacent to Kirk Hall. We hope you come along!

Ivan provides a YouTube link which I send by email to the care organisations who would normally attend and either by email but mainly by text to our local visitors. Many find it easier to click on a link in a text on their phone to watch the video. We reach over 90% of our local visitors in this way. The video appears on the church website and Facebook page. Our video clips are also being used by Ali Pandian and other site chaplains at Wishaw Hospital. In addition to the videos, we keep in touch monthly with our visitors by phone.

If you know of anyone living with memory loss who would like to receive the videos either by text or email, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01506 843255. We would be delighted to include them in our group.

We realise that nothing can replicate the fellowship generated when we meet together in the Kirk Hall over lunch and the way in which singing favourite songs together brings life and pleasure to those who attend. However, poor substitute as they might be, you will see from the comments below that these video messages are well-received.

'Mum wanted you to know they have watched the February message several times as they love it so much. They sang me a duet of 'If I was the only girl in the world' to show what they have been singing along with. Thank you again!'

'Brought a smile to our faces and lovely memories of the Singalong and all the lovely people we meet there.'

'Thank you for sending the links. I will of course be encouraging our residents to join in with the singing. Hopefully it won't be too long until we can all get together for what will be a much-needed Singalong!' (Linlithgow Care Home)

'Thanks to you all for the March Singalong which I enjoyed joining in. ... will be viewing it at the Day Care where I believe they all sing together. Stay safe!'

'Dad really enjoyed the wee Singalong and gave you a round of applause. He always recognises you. Thanks for keeping us cheery!'



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COP26 AND ALL THAT?

by Rev Ian Paterson

COP26? What does the forthcoming U.N. Conference, to be held in Glasgow, on the subject of global warming and climate change, have in common with the great east window behind the Communion Table in St. Michael's? Simply that the theme of both is **Creation and our care of it**. COP26, regarded as, potentially, one of the most important ever held by the UN, will be discussing how the world's governments can reduce, drastically, carbon dioxide emissions and the resultant global warming and catastrophic climate change.



The east window, also with its theme of Creation, is based on Psalm 104. It is a call to thank God for this world, to enjoy and use it, but to remember that we do not own it to do with it as we like. We are trustees and stewards and must care for it rather than abuse it. Take time to study the window with the words of the Psalm before you. It is a great Psalm and an inspiring window commemorating Victorian distinguished biologist and oceanographer, Sir Charles Wyville Thomson, Professor at Edinburgh University and scientific Director of the Challenger Expedition which, over four years, charted the south seas. Excitement about it was on a par with that of space travel today! Thomson lived at Bonsyde House.

Dare I suggest that we make our own preparations for COP26, first, by informing ourselves about the facts. Many books will help us, notably the teenager, Greta Thunberg's **No one is too small...** and David Attenborough's **A Life on our Planet** which not only describes the damage nations are doing to planet earth, but also tells us how we, as individuals, can help turn the tide.

Second, we can pray for the conference and participants, as any hesitation in taking difficult decisions can lead only to disaster when lives of millions will be endangered and it will be too late for an about turn.

A Prayer: Creator God, thank you for all the provision you have made for us and all your creatures. Forgive us for ways in which we have spoiled your handiwork, disturbing the delicate balance of your natural world. Give us a sense of creation's harmony, reverence for the beauty of nature and generosity in sharing and replenishing the earth. AMEN

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