

CROSSWIND



The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

Aug 2023

Vol 26:2

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

REVELATION 3:20

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday, 27th August

10am in the Kirk*

and

3pm in the Kirk Hall

***livestreamed on St Michael's website and Facebook
Available to view later on YouTube**

Weekly Services

10am in the Kirk*

and

**9.45am (during term time)
in Springfield Primary School**

***livestreamed on St Michael's website and Facebook
Available to view later on YouTube**

Cover: Courtesy of Rev Dr Liam Fraser

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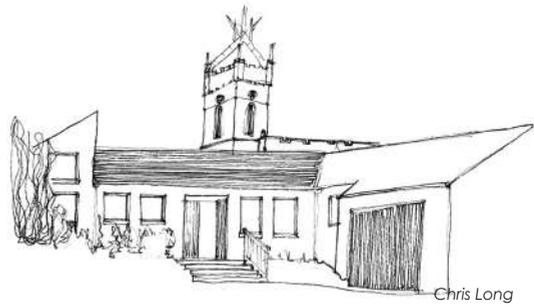
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The deadline for the November 2023 issue is 1st October 2023.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser

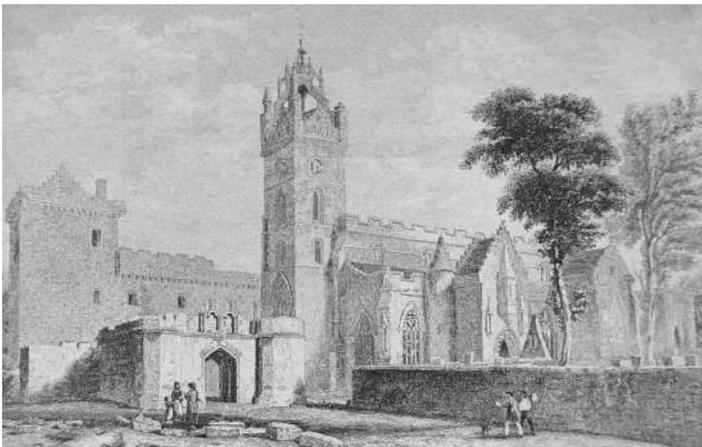
What does the Crown of St Michael's mean to you?

When the subject of the Crown comes up in conversation, I am always fascinated by the wide range of meanings people attach to it. For some it is crossed claymore swords, a reminder of Scotland's warrior past. For others it looks like lightning bolts. Many people think it belongs to the Palace (often referred to as a castle!), while some folk, not from these parts, think it is temporary scaffolding for the *real* spire to come!



While it's tempting to make light of some of these idiosyncratic interpretations, the different meanings people attach to the Crown are mirrored by its changing form over the centuries.

When the original tower was completed in the early 16th century, its stone crown – similar to St Giles' in Edinburgh or the Wallace Monument – was intended to emphasise the power of the Stuart royal family, and its right to govern an independent Scotland. It made a statement about the close connection between Church and Monarch, and the importance of the royal centre of power at the Palace next door.



The loss of the stone crown in the first part of the 19th century perhaps spoke to some of the growing insignificance of Linlithgow. No longer home to a – working – palace, and no longer a major centre of industry like Glasgow or Dundee, Linlithgow ceased to be central to Scottish civic life.



My predecessor Dr Steel's decision to restore the Crown in a modern style was not only characteristically bold, therefore, but also a statement of intent. That old towns – unlike old dogs – *could* be taught new tricks, and that our best days were still ahead of us.

While some residents may bemoan that the town is not what it used to be, in reality Linlithgow is *thriving*, with new, skilled people moving in all the time, who with those already here are renewing this ancient place and fitting it for the 21st century.

The restoration of our Crown is, for me, a symbol of this ongoing process. Not merely a repair or restoration, but a *renewal* and *reformation*. The scaffolding around the tower, and the new bronze cladding being added to the Crown, are symbols of a church and a community under construction. A symbol not only of St Michael's continued place in Linlithgow, but of our town's shared desire to preserve all that is good in our heritage while adapting it to changed circumstances.

All these – and many other things – can be symbolised by the Crown of St Michael's. What does it mean to you?

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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS...

by Linda Jamieson



What an incredible effort by the fundraising team in securing sufficient funds to enable the work on the Crown of Thorns to go ahead. Whilst there is still work to be done to meet the £395,000 +VAT target, we are confident that the remaining funds required will come from further grants and support from the congregation and wider community. This achievement is all the more remarkable given the economic challenges many are facing and the gloomy financial outlook.

A huge thank you to all our supporters: we could not have done this without you.

When we exclude the Crown of Thorns project, the first six months of the year show a small surplus as we continue to operate within budget. Our thanks to Tim Brown of the Stewardship and Finance Team for his work in preparing monthly income and expenditure figures and to the wider Stewardship and Finance Team for their work in ensuring St Michael's finances are monitored and managed effectively.

As we grow and our turnover increases, we are now implementing new accounting software to help us manage our finances. We are also making improvements to our governance and have recently appointed Ian Fowell as our Bookkeeper, on a volunteer basis, as part of this process. We have appointed The A9 Partnership Limited as auditors for our 2023 accounts. If you have some spare time and have financial and/or management experience, and would like to help us on a volunteer basis, please contact Linda on LJamieson58@aol.com to arrange a chat over a coffee.

Our 'Giving to Grow' contribution to the national church remains our largest expense. When we add staff costs, property repair and maintenance, council tax, insurance, energy costs and any other additional costs, we need to raise in excess of £350,000 each year. Our fixed energy costs will soon come to an end and this will undoubtedly increase our costs further. Your support makes our work possible, whilst also advancing the work of the Church of Scotland nationally. Christian stewardship is our response to God and all that he has given us.

I do hope that you and your families are well, and I thank you again for your continued financial support for St Michael's. We also rely heavily on our volunteers who work tirelessly in Christian faith giving generously of their time and talents – thank you.

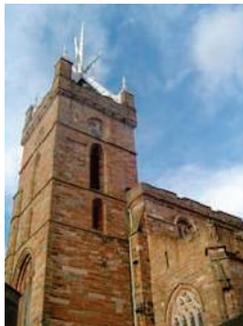
ADVANCING GOD'S KINGDOM

by John Reid, Session Clerk

Are we up for the challenge of advancing God's Kingdom, responding to the needs of the changing world?



Avonbridge



St Michael's

The pictures are of the four churches which form the Union outlined in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian's Mission Plan – Avonbridge, Linlithgow: St Michael's, Linlithgow: St Ninian's Craigmalen and Torphichen.

During the past six months four representatives from each of the churches have been meeting as a Liaison Team.

Who is in the Team? Two elders and two members from each congregation.

Who represents St Michael's? John Reid, Session Clerk and Stephen Marshall, both elders, Paul Mayland and Kathryn Young, members of the congregation. Alison Murray, Assistant Session Clerk at St. Michael's provides administrative support.

What is the purpose of the Liaison Team?

- 1) to support the four Kirk Sessions and their congregations by identifying and suggesting solutions in a systematic and co-ordinated way, to the changes required to achieve a smooth transition to the Union set out in the Presbytery Plan by 1 January 2025 and
- 2) to ensure that the arrangements which are put in place are what is needed to advance God's Kingdom, responding to the needs of the changing world.

What areas have been covered? Our conversations have been both wide and varied covering Outreach/Vision, Children and Young People, Worship Services, Pastoral Care, Staff and Volunteers, Estate, Management/Administration and Finance and Communication.



St Ninian's Craigmallen



Torphichen

How often does the Team meet? The group has had six meetings since January 2023, where we explored our strengths and challenges.

What happens to the Team's work? We presented our initial findings to each of the four Kirk Sessions during the month of June and have listened to the positive and helpful suggestions. We are currently pulling together a revised document that will provide the basis of our initial conversation with representatives of the Presbytery.

How well has the Team worked? It has been my privilege to chair the Liaison Group, to get to know and to appreciate the enthusiastic and considered views of fellow Christians as we advance God's Kingdom together, supported by the love of Jesus. At the beginning I was apprehensive; I was meeting strangers but realised very quickly that we were bound together by the love we had for our Lord Jesus Christ and I quickly became relaxed, knowing that I was in the company of friends. The sharing of our hopes and fears and the generous listening that was evident was refreshing and provided me with the assurance that the Spirit was with us and guiding our conversation.

What do the other Kirk Sessions think? I was delighted to learn from the group that the presentations they made to their respective Kirk Sessions had been appreciated and the feedback had been very constructive.

What happens next? Shortly, we will engage with our Presbytery colleagues who will guide and support us through the formal processes associated with Union, followed by a meeting in which each of the Kirk Sessions and congregations will participate.

How long will it all take? Union will be achieved by 1.1.25. Much is still to be accomplished; we have made a great start and provided ourselves with a sound platform from which to grow our vision. My request for the next stage is that we all listen generously to one another and pray that Christ be our shining light as we advance God's Kingdom together as one body.

What happens after the Union? We grow together as a united congregation, learning from each other's history and planning for a strong future of witness and worship to the community.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN ST MICHAEL'S

by Steve Chaffee



Remembering the past is a great way to be reminded of how much has been accomplished. It is so easy, in this line of work, to get into the grind of the week to week that you do not lift your head above the horizon to get the 'bird's eye view' (though 'God's eye view', is perhaps better!)

St Katherine's Aisle, under Tracy's and Elma's care, has consistently seen under 5s children playing safely under the eyes of their mums, dads, and carers. It has also allowed these parents and carers to engage in the service and be fed themselves. Joyfully too, I often recognise them from seeing them at Toddlers or Seedlings midweek. It is a

great sign that we are connecting with families in the community midweek and that this relationship building is helping bring families into the church.

Fiona has been leading the Babies and Toddlers mornings, and I have been on hand to help pretty much every single time we meet. Over the last year, it has grown in popularity – but more crucially – in creating a safe space for families to meet and wee children to become friends. It was a great joy of mine in May to be at the door into the Kirk Hall and to witness four families coming into the hall and they and their children all greeting each other like, well, one big family.

And as I serve coffee and tea at Toddlers, ample chances come up to talk about Seedlings and Messy Church. Seedlings on Thursday mornings has a consistent group of wee ones and their families coming – ranging from eight to twelve children each week! And Messy Church, which met on a number of Saturdays from Autumn '22 to Spring '23, has its own core group of about twenty-five people – a few of whom I met originally at Toddlers! (Coming up this year, our aim is to expand Messy Church to include more music and moving from snack time to meals again! Please reach out if you can help cook!)

Sunday Club has seen the addition of three dads (Chris, Graeme, and Brian) to the team! It has been so lovely to get to know them better, and to hear their ideas for how to run Sunday Club moving forward. At the end of this term we ran a special 'St Michael's Got Talent' Sunday Club – though I think few of us will forget Ryan's spirited delivery of the first verse of the Gospel of John in the Nativity too! So many lovely moments have come from this last year, and I look forward to more moments to come!



Bible Class and Youth Fellowship have had good positive growth too! We welcomed two more children up from Sunday Club and have seen the older ones in Bible Class preparing to leave for Youth Fellowship outright and to find other ways to be involved in the life of the Kirk. How many times now have Joe and Maisie played in the Family Band for the services? How wonderful to see it! I am finding though that Bible Class needs some more safeguarded adults willing to come along and be a second for me. If you'd like to come along and learn alongside us, please let me know!

Youth Fellowship, since I first arrived, has been asking to return to a weekly schedule. And, I am happy to be able to say we are planning to return to a weekly schedule in Autumn '23! This is thanks to a few more leaders coming on board. Upcoming for this term I have several fun conversations planned – but also want to invite congregation members along to be interviewed by Youth Fellowship, to hear about how being part of the Kirk has helped shape their own lives. So look out – an email or conversation might be headed your way!

What article about youth programming at St Michael's would be complete without talking about Holiday Club and our Schools' events, Christmas Unwrapped and Cracking Easter? Over the past year, between these last two events, we had over four hundred children come into St Michael's to hear and learn about the Gospel. (I have fond memories of taking the foot washing station in St Katherine's Aisle!)

Finally, in August 2022 we welcomed about fifty children into our Holiday Club. I am pleased to report that, as of writing this at the end of June, we have half that number already signed up for Camp Olympia this August! It takes a tremendous amount of work, and simply does not occur without the help of so, so many dedicated volunteers, but I am gladdened to reflect on all the good things from this past year – and all the ways we will build on them into the 23-24 year!

TWO STEPS BACK, THREE STEPS FORWARD

by Alan Miller



'When the road is rough and steep...' starts the well-known chorus, and at times recently that's what the Aspire Linlithgow fundraising programme has felt like. In February's Crosswind I wrote confidently that work on the Crown of Thorns, costing £300k +VAT, would definitely start in the Spring and finish by September 2023. Ah, the certainty of youth...

What's happened since then? When the project team formally tendered the work, the impact of construction inflation became all too clear, pushing the fundraising target up to £395k +VAT.

Then the supply of new cladding was imperilled by a corporate takeover and change in production. And we began to doubt whether a crucial grant to fund the work would come through in time to have the work started and completed over the summer.

The full opening line of that chorus is 'When the road is rough and steep, Fix your eyes upon Jesus'. Well, a fair bit of prayer went on and, as Archbishop William Temple once said, 'When I pray, 'coincidences' happen'. The fundraising total kept increasing; the crucial grant was approved just in time to get the contractor appointed and on site; and there was enough cladding left in the warehouse to meet our needs.

By the time you read this piece, the spire works will be well advanced, and all this might seem like ancient history. It's not, though, because it encourages and inspires us for what lies ahead. We still have work to do to complete the fundraising for the spire – but we have confidence that the money will come in, from further grants and support from the congregation and community.

And we also have a great deal of work ahead on funding for Cross House and the church. After 2 attempts, we have yet to get the green light from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to progress beyond the initial stages. Two steps back... but we're taking expert advice and taking a fresh look at how we can develop a heritage vision with community benefit – a vision that links Cross House clearly with the wider heritage of Linlithgow.



By the autumn, the Crown of Thorns spire will be fully refurbished and gleaming in its new golden-coloured cladding. What better inspiration could we find to keep looking upwards for God's guidance, even – or perhaps especially – when the road seems rough and steep?



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ST MICHAEL'S FORGOTTEN MINISTERS PART 2

by Bruce Jamieson

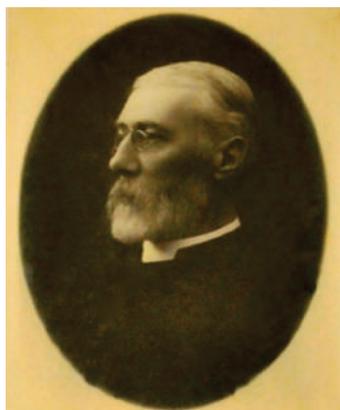
The Rev Donald Macleod left St Michael's in 1869 and three other ministers followed in quick succession: the Rev Archibald Scott (1869-71, during which time he wrote many theological books); the Rev Thomas Niven, (1872-76), the first minister to introduce hymn singing into the church – albeit unaccompanied, for the idea of an organ was still considered heretical and the Rev James Barclay (1876-78). He was the recipient of this invitation which I recently purchased on eBay – an invite issued by Alexander Seton of Preston.



James Barclay was a Paisley man, educated in his hometown and at Merchiston School in Edinburgh. He arrived at St Michael's, Linlithgow from St Michael's, Dumfries – in whose Kirkyard lie the mortal remains of Robert Burns.

The Reverend Barclay's main claims to fame were that he was instrumental in having the unsightly whitewash removed from the interior walls of the church and, in addition, he masterminded a bazaar which raised the money to install St Michael's first ever organ.

A congregational ballot in 1875 had decided, by 759 votes to 42, that instrumental music should be allowed in the church. An organ was duly installed at a cost of £900, an organist was chosen (at £60 a year) and an organ 'blower' appointed to work the bellows.



Rev James Barclay

It took three years from the congregational approval to the date the organ first played – in February 1878. There had been an appeal made to Presbytery against the decision which delayed matters and, in addition, it took some time to raise all the money required and to appoint the firm of Harrison from Durham to construct the instrument.

Whether the Rev Barclay had been somewhat dismayed at the time it took and the minority opposition to the project, the minister left in the same year the organ first played and transferred to St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh. After just two years there, he was called to St. Paul's Church in Montreal – moving from Scotland to Canada – the reverse of the Rev Dr Stewart Gillan's situation when he was appointed in 2004.



***St Michael's first organ, installed
above the west entrance***

LOCAL HISTORY ZOOM PRESENTATIONS

Bruce Jamieson is once again going to present four presentations covering various aspects of Linlithgow's local history. Each presentation, from September through to December, is fully illustrated with a live narration. As always, local charities will benefit from the 'joining fees.'

For further information contact
bruceajamieson@yahoo.com



GUILD MATTERS

LOOK FORWARD IN FAITH

Theme 2023-2024:

New Wine, New Wineskins

by Margaret Henderson

***'And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.'* (Mark 2:22 NIV)**

When you read the verse above, what was your first thought? Could it have been that the Guild had taken up a new hobby – vinification, the art of winemaking? I realise that in previous articles I have described the Guild as the 'radical arm of the Church of Scotland' but vinification would be asking too much even of the Guild I suspect!

We have reached the third year of our strategy, 'Look forward in faith' and what an interesting two years. In year 1, the theme of 'Lights and Bushels' was most appropriate as we used our gifts and talents to bring Guild members together again after Covid, a time none of us could have dreamt of and one which challenged us to keep in regular contact with members through the telephone tree and delivering small gifts to members. That year saw some new members and the return of former members.

In year 2 the theme which provided the basis for our meetings was 'Wee seeds, big trees.' This year saw the Guild grow locally and nationally and saw the launch of the Young Adult Guild (YAG) which meets online. YAG provides a platform for those aged 18-30 who are passionate about mission, fellowship and discipleship. To date they have discussed meaty topics including empowerment, peace and justice. Matthew Philip, a member of Craigbuckler Church, spoke at this year's General Assembly appealing to commissioners to encourage young people in their congregations to join a meeting to see if this is something they could get involved in.

Now we are at the beginning of year 3 and a new topic beckons. This is a difficult time for our churches as many congregations unite with neighbouring congregations which will inevitably see some church buildings close, some Guild branches disappear while others will merge into a new branch. 'New wine, new wineskins' is very appropriate as we move forward, embrace change and make the necessary adjustments. In the quote above from Mark's Gospel, Jesus is telling us that new



wine cannot be poured into old wineskins. If it is, as fermentation progresses, the gases produced lead to the wine expanding and old wineskins would burst, whereas new wineskins expand with the wine. As we here in St Michael's unite with St Ninian's Craigmalen, Torphichen and Avonbridge Churches changes will happen and the Guild is looking at the way forward. Changing how we do things is our 'new wine' and our hearts are the 'new wineskins.'

Some of the Leadership Teams from St Michael's and St Ninian's Craigmalen have met to talk through how we felt the union would affect our Guilds. For many years our two Guilds have met together to share worship and fellowship so we already have a good working relationship. We agreed that we would meet on alternate Mondays thus there will be a meeting every week and our members will be free to attend all meetings if they want to, or chop and change if they prefer. The Conveners of our two Guilds will issue a joint invitation to the members of Torphichen and Avonbridge, together with copies of our syllabuses, assuring them that they are welcome to join us as suits them.

Our joint Dedication Service will be held at St Ninian's Craigmalen on Monday 28 August at 7:30pm. The speaker has yet to be confirmed. This will be followed by tea/coffee and biscuits in the church. Please come along if you are free; you will be very welcome.

Our syllabus for the new session is still being put together but will be varied. The first full meeting will be in the Kirk Hall on Monday 4 September and will be fortnightly thereafter. This first meeting will be, wait for it, a Cheese and Wine Evening which should get us off to a good start. We are also looking at a visit to LinGin!

Other meetings will include speakers from Linlithgow Link, 1st Step, Mary's Meals and speakers from another two Guild projects. We are looking forward to hearing about The Fraternity of Dyers which is the last surviving fraternity in Linlithgow and has recently celebrated over 300 years in existence, with a special display in the Linlithgow Museum. Other evenings will feature Desert Island Discs, Dublin, the Azores and a few surprises.



Remember the Guild is open to everyone. You may not want to become a fully-fledged member but there may be some topics which are of particular interest. You will always find a warm welcome but not always be greeted with a glass of wine never mind a wineskin!



Parish Register

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one



May

Jennifer Wardall to John Hall

June

Freya Dickson to David Sexton

July

Zaneta Smirnova to Jamie Corr

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

May

George Christie, Linlithgow

June

Catherine Tannahill, Linlithgow
Alan Young, Linlithgow



July

Pauline Ross, Bo'ness

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

May

Lyra Faichney, Bathgate
Aurelia Renton, Gorebridge

July

Jack Middleton, Bo'ness



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

by Certificate of Transference

Doreen Baxter, Polmont

by Resolution of Kirk Session

John and Julia Muggleton, Linlithgow
Steve Chaffee, Children & Young People's Outreach Worker



FLOWERS IN ST MICHAEL'S

by Sandra Stewart



'What beautiful flowers!' An often-heard exclamation in St Michael's over the years and following the pandemic one which is great to hear again. It's been lovely to come together once again as a team and remind ourselves what a privilege it is to have such a beautiful setting in which to arrange flowers which can provide a focus for reflection or for prayer during services, and a welcome to visitors, particularly if they come seeking solace.

This flower ministry is thanks in large part to the members of the Church Flower Group who give of their time and talents to create wonderful displays for our Sunday services and special occasions such as Easter, Harvest

and Christmas for the enjoyment of the congregation and the enhancement of worship. We are fortunate to be supported in this work through the generous donations by members of the congregation who are often donating to celebrate a special occasion or to remember a loved one. We have a calendar which hangs near the West door, and anyone who would like to contribute towards the flowers for a particular week just needs to add their name to this and pop a note into the Church Office with the details.



You might be surprised to hear that most of the members have no formal training in floristry, but they do take pleasure in arranging the flowers and enjoy the fellowship of the group. We're very supportive of each other, and for big occasions, we work as a team. We'd



love to spread the message that everyone who can put flowers in a vase is welcome to join the group and, with encouragement and guidance, everyone can arrange flowers as there are no rules! We also welcome the support of members who prefer to help prepare the flowers or keep things neat and tidy while others arrange – there is a job for everyone!

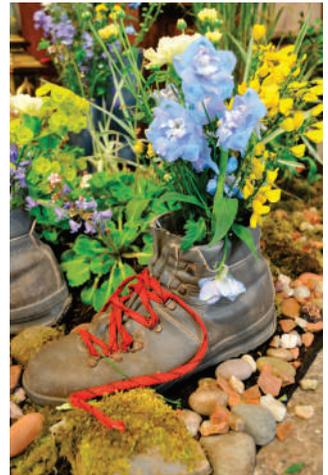


The cost of flowers is always difficult on limited budgets, even more so now and it's something we are acutely aware of.

Where possible the team make use of foliage and flowers from their own or neighbours' gardens and even the churchyard and, if not, we support our local florist when we can. It is amazing how few flowers you need when you have lots of foliage from the roadside!

We're also experimenting with more sustainable alternatives to floral foam and imported flowers. We have moved to biodegradable oasis but appreciate there is more to do to become more ecofriendly whilst not diminishing the appearance of the end product, so we are experimenting with other materials, such as chicken wire, metal pins and natural items like pliable twigs. Also, it's a balance as we don't want to deprive people of valuable trade, and home-grown flowers need to be replaced far more often.

The Pastoral Care church posy group is closely linked with the flower group and shares many members – a great place to start on a smaller scale and then build up confidence. We also know that these posies mean so much to the recipients, bringing comfort at difficult times and the knowledge that others are thinking and praying for them.



It's several years since we last had a flower festival in St Michaels (2015) and following on from previous success in using this as a mechanism for fund raising, plans are afoot to make that happen once again around November time. This time in aid of the Aspire Linlithgow project, we will be reaching out to our own congregation and organisations in and around Linlithgow to support the restoration of this amazing structure.



So, lots to think about and many ways to get involved and perhaps try something new. We are always happy to hear your feedback on how you think we are doing or your suggestions for how we could do things a bit differently.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me, Sandra Stewart.

Dates for your Diary

COFFEE MORNINGS *10am to 12 noon in the Kirk Hall*

Sat 21st October Stand up to Cancer

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

Sun 3rd Sept	7.30pm	Antonine Ensemble
Sun 1st Oct	3.00pm	Occasionally@stm's – piano recital
Sat 7th Oct	7.30pm	Flutes Unlimited Concert
Sun 8th Oct	3.00pm	Occasionally@stm's – piano recital
Sat 11th Nov	7.30pm	Linlithgow String Orchestra concert
Sun 12th Nov	7.30pm	Linlithgow Arts Guild – Chamber Music concert (Trumpet/Piano)
Wed 15th Nov	7.00pm	Far from The Madding Crowd Literary Event
Sat 9th Dec	4.30pm & 7.00pm	NYCoS Christmas concerts (TBC)
Sun 10th Dec	7.00pm	Linlithgow Reed Band Christmas concert
Sat 16th Dec	TBC	Linlithgow Ladies Choir Christmas concert

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sunday Evening Contemporary Services at 6.30pm, Kirk Hall, Cross House
Dates: 24th Sept, 29th Oct, 26th Nov,

1st – 3rd December: Christmas Tree Event (Church)

All events are conditional upon what Scottish Government / Church of Scotland COVID guidelines and regulations are currently in place.

WEBSITES

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

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



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ST MICHAEL'S AND BETHANY CHRISTIAN TRUST

by Marshall Green

The history

In 1983 Alan Berry led South Leith Baptist Church, where he would regularly encounter people who were homeless and looking for help. He realised the need for a lasting solution beyond handouts at the door. Together with his wife Anne, and the support of the wider church, he founded Bethany Christian Trust to address the homelessness and poverty they witnessed in their local area of Leith, Edinburgh.



They started with Bethany Christian Centre, a residential unit designed to offer care and support to 28 men and women without a home. From these small beginnings, Bethany Christian Trust has grown to support around 7,000 people across the country each year.

As our services have developed, so too has our community of supporters, partners, volunteers and staff, all committed to loving and serving those in need in Scotland. Since we began, Bethany's work has grown to include over 30 services, 200 staff and almost 3,000 volunteers.

St Michael's contribution has been to the **Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre** which provides emergency accommodation with support to anyone who would otherwise be rough sleeping in Edinburgh.

Operating from an Edinburgh city centre hotel from October through to May, the Welcome Centre provides each individual or couple with their own bedroom and ensuite facilities. 24/7 care and support are provided by the professional Bethany staff, as well as specialised support from 26 visiting partners, with a focus on rapid re-accommodation. Each day there is breakfast, lunch and a hot nutritious evening meal provided by Edinburgh and Lothian churches.

Feeding of the '2000'!

'As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things'. Mark 6:34

We all know the rest of the story when Jesus fed 5000 with 5 loaves and two fish! An impossible task with so little food!?

That Jesus did so much with so little should be an encouragement to St Michael's and the teams of volunteers who have gone to Edinburgh on 4 or 5 occasions every year for 10 years and, who feed the homeless with our 'loaves and fishes'.

Bethany would like to thank all who've so generously given their time, resources and donations to support this work.

We have bought, prepared and served a total of around 2000 two-course meals to the homeless of Edinburgh.

'We cannot thank you enough!'

Closer to home Bethany Christian Trust has a residential unit in Bathgate, called Kharis Court (meaning 'grace').

Here, young people aged 16-25 who are at risk of or facing homelessness are welcomed into secure and supportive accommodation.

Kharis Court provides a safe space for young people at risk to develop essential life skills and prepare for independent living.



Residents of Kharis Court planting new flowers in the garden

Nadine's Story

Nadine tells us how she found herself in dangerous circumstances at a young age, and how the support she has found at Kharis Court has enabled her to find community and plan for a brighter future.

'I was thankful enough that I had a bed to sleep in, and it was warm, and I could go down to the kitchen and have a full meal. Staff are really good, very friendly... they make you feel like a part of their family.'



At Bethany, we believe no person should grow up worried, unsupported and alone. Kharis Court in Bathgate provides a safe and secure home for young people in need. To find out more about Kharis Court, scan this QR code.

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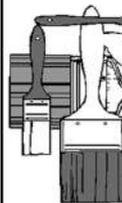
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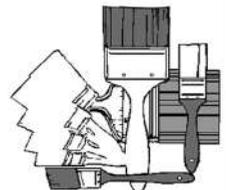
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JABESH GILEAD — A TOWN REDEEMED

by Paul Davidson

I love stories where the exploits of minor characters have their story threads woven into the tapestry of the larger narrative. And I particularly love finding these threads in the Bible, where stories of disaster and redemption are played out over a timescale of many years. One such thread I came across recently in my Bible readings is that of the town Jabesh Gilead – beginning in Judges and concluding in the books of Samuel.



We first come across Jabesh Gilead at the end of the book of Judges (chapters 19-21). This is not a pleasant passage to read, containing as it does a Levite who cuts his dead concubine up into pieces and sends them to all Israel after a particular heinous event. This brings eleven of the tribes of Israel to war with the tribe of Benjamin, resulting in the death of thousands of people. And because the town of Jabesh Gilead had not heeded the summons to send soldiers to fight against Benjamin, twelve thousand fighting men were sent to kill everyone living there (sparing only unmarried women, who were then given as wives to surviving Benjaminites).

The town must have been repopulated, because at the start of Saul's reign in 1 Samuel 11, Jabesh Gilead is in trouble again. This time it's from Nahash the Ammonite who has threatened to gouge out the right eye of every man living there. The townsfolk appeal to Saul for help, who in turn cuts up a pair of oxen and sends pieces to all parts of Israel, saying that is what will happen to the oxen of anyone who does not come with him to fight for Jabesh Gilead. By doing this Saul rallies an army from all Israel and Judah to the cause, coming to the rescue of Jabesh Gilead. This leads Saul to say '*...this day, the Lord has rescued Israel*'. Notice Saul says 'Israel', not 'Jabesh Gilead' – this uniting of Israel makes a refreshing change to Judges, which finishes with the verse '*In those days, Israel had no king: everyone did as he saw fit*'.

And the story doesn't end there. You can read how Jabesh Gilead repaid their debt to Saul at the end of his reign (1 Samuel 31), and how they are blessed at the beginning of David's (2 Samuel 2 1-7). A minor character in the grand scheme of the Bible, but important, nonetheless.



SINGING AND PLAYING THROUGH 2023 IN LINLITHGOW

by Bill Jones

Whether it is the choir singing anthems and leading the hymns in the weekly services, or the same St Michael's community joining in with the monthly Sunshine Singalongs or reflecting on the excellence of the Linlithgow Ladies Choir, the enthusiasm of the Linlithgow Rugby Club Choir; the abundance of vocal performances (not least in the past two months in St Michael's) from visiting soloists and choirs, the early days of our new children's choir and, particularly, the inspiring collaboration that produced the memorable performance of Handel's *Zadok the Priest in March*, it is abundantly clear that the community is in good voice.

In the Autumn following the announcement of the death of the Queen, I suggested to the Reed Band's Jonathan Molloy that we might take advantage of their annual spring concert in St Michael's Church and invite the Linlithgow String Orchestra, the Ladies Choir and other choirs to collaborate in a one-off performance. After several weeks of rehearsing separately, the whole group of an estimated 150 singers and musicians came together to produce an exhilarating and joyous account of Handel's famous coronation anthem, *Zadok the Priest*, (first performed in 1727 and thereafter at every British royal coronation) in the church. It is true that people are still approaching me weeks later to talk of their delight in being there to listen or take part.

Hilary and I introduced a new community children's choir in March this year and since then we have met weekly on Mondays during term time. Numbers are presently small, but our young group (ranging in age from 7-11) have been enthusiastic and full of joy in their singing efforts. We would love to hear from parents of children who would like to join us when school resumes. The emphasis in our rehearsals is on developing singing technique, teamwork and vocal range and quality, and it is very much intended to be a community group open to all.



Not only do we have the afore-mentioned Linlithgow Reed Band which has developed an admirable structure of development for its junior players, our Linlithgow String Orchestra has demonstrated in its most recent concert in the Burgh Halls an eagerness to put the younger players centre-stage: two highlights were the trio of Linlithgow Academy pupils, James Veitch, Madeleine Veitch and Arthur Flint, playing a beautiful version of 'Orkney' and also Arthur's fantastic account of Telemann's viola concerto.

Earlier in the year we put on our first children's informal concert in which we aim to provide opportunities for young musicians to perform as soloists or within a small group. The relaxed atmosphere maximises the enjoyment for performers and audience alike. We plan to put on another similar event in the autumn.

I am also reminded of the excellent Red Door Concerts at the Episcopal Church, the efforts of local folk groups, the Linlithgow Jazz Club and of the outstanding programme of concerts organised by the Linlithgow Arts Guild.

Altogether there are many reasons to be optimistic about future music-making in Linlithgow.

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ONWARD AND UPWARD!

by Brian Lightbody



As Alan says in his article, it was a close-run thing in making our critical summer weather window to carry out the vital repairs and refurbishment of the Crown of Thorns. We knew that we couldn't do the work over the winter and no one was confident that the structure could withstand a further year's deterioration. However, our biggest single grant came through in the nick of time with only a few days left to our deadline! Our Fundraising Team has done a terrific job.

The scaffolding required had proved extremely complex and expensive and we had to re-tender that part of the work to bring the price down. However, we were pleased that the successful overall tender eventually came from Matheson Ltd from Falkirk who had actually been the original cladding contractor for the Crown in 1964. Their current

Managing Director is delighted to be restoring a project carried out by his father and grandfather.

Technology has come a long way since then and the original fixing method for the cladding, relying on small aluminium screws and a lot of mastic, is being replaced this time by a standard standing seam secret-fix roofing system, not available then. We also now have available a gold colour-fast bronze alloy material to replace the faded original aluminium and replicate the original colour.

So we can now return the Crown of Thorns to the sculptor, Geoffrey Clarke's original vision, this most prominent and powerful work of public art, seen daily by the hundreds passing our town by rail or on the M9, a symbol of our faith and a constant reminder to us all of our Lord's sacrifice for us on the cross.

A VISIT TO NUNRAW ABBEY

by Doreen Baxter

On the morning of the first Sunday in June, instead of being in St Michael's, I was worshipping at the Sancta Maria Abbey in Nunraw in East Lothian.



In 1945 the Abbot of Roscrea in Ireland visited Scotland to look for a place in which to revive monastic life in this country, and he chose the old manor at Nunraw. The following year, negotiations proceeded rapidly and seven founders from Roscrea took possession of the manor and celebrated the first Mass. Soon afterwards, another group arrived, which brought the number of monks to 26, and the new community lived in the manor house while the new permanent monastery was being built nearby. At the end of October 1962, they moved into the new monastery.

Fairly recently a guest house was opened at one end of the Abbey, and that is where I stayed during my visit. It was ideal with comfortable rooms, plentiful healthy food and amazing views over the beautiful surrounding countryside. The staff were friendly and helpful, and all the other guests were regular visitors to the Abbey. I hope to return in the not-too-distant future and enjoy the wonderful sense of peace that was almost tangible!

So, why was I, a Scottish Presbyterian, in a Catholic Monastery? I was invited to a special service by my friend and former colleague, Michael, who was taking his final vows as a monk. The service began with the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' and two readings, from Deuteronomy 4 and the 23rd Psalm, followed by a prayer. There were two short readings from Romans 8 and Matthew 25.

Michael was then asked a few questions by the Abbot and made his vows, after which he signed his Solemn Profession and was prayed over by the Abbot and the Prior. Mass followed with the hymn 'O Bread of Heaven' as Michael's cloak was removed, and he was given the monk's cowl.

The service ended with the Recessional hymn 'Now thank we all our God'. It was a very moving service and, for me, a unique one.

YESTERDAY ONCE MORE

by Iain Harrison

Background to 1973



In Scotland in 1973 changes took place that still impact on us today. In shipping, two companies David MacBrayne merged with the Caledonian Steam Packet Company to form Caledonian MacBrayne now known as CalMac and forever in the news. The result of this merger was that the Paddle Steamer Waverley was no longer required and it was laid up. Fortunately it was purchased by

The Paddle Steamer Preservation Society the following year for £1 and is still with us today.

In the world of politics, more of this later, Margo MacDonald, who died recently, won the Glasgow Govan by-election much to the surprise of her rivals. Radio Clyde started broadcasting from Clydebank and in the pop charts in August 1973 Donny Osmond and The Carpenters were neck and neck at the top. The Church of Scotland introduced The Church Hymnary 3rd edition – an entirely new compilation.

What was happening in Linlithgow though and in our Church 50 years ago? Another dig into the Kirk Session Minutes provides some of the answers.

Cross House

It was agreed that redecoration of Cross House be looked at – in particular repairs to the ceiling in the Adam Room. The advice of The Historic Building Council and the interestingly named Advisory Committee on Artistic Questions of the Church of Scotland would have to be sought.

New Organist

Getting an organist proved an issue in 1973 following Mr Ward stepping down in April. Attempts to find a replacement dragged on but in November a contract was agreed with the new organist, Mr Tom Inness.

Christians and Politics

It was noted by The Kirk Session the outcome of the report of the Church and Nation Committee re Christian involvement in politics. Interestingly of the 50 Presbyteries who had considered the report 26 had approved and 2 had disapproved. Presumably the other 22 sat on the fence or are still considering it!

The Moderator agreed that 'politics presented a difficult tight-rope for ministers' but the feeling was that ministers should give room for politics in sermons.

New Manse

At the end of 1972 planning permission for the new manse behind Cross House was submitted. This must have been granted pretty quickly (but it is not in the minutes) as it was agreed early in 1973 to put the existing manse up for sale.



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From Pentecost to the New Jerusalem

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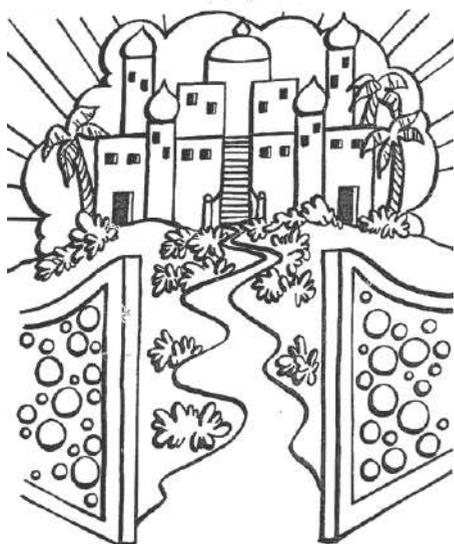
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sapphire
topaz
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Symbol Sudoku

Place the four symbols (which appear in the upper half of the window) in the grid so that every row, column and bold square contains only one of each.



THE PAWN (MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS)

Earlier this year, freelance poet and published author, Ruth Twyman Lockyer visited Linlithgow including St Michael's. After hearing about Mary Queen of Scots and her connection with the church, she was inspired to write the poem below. We thought the congregation would be interested in reading her work.

She was a pawn,
Although, within six days, she was a queen.
Within the red stone palace walls,
Replenished by her grandfather,
She lived and breathed.

Her mother's love
Could not protect her from the storms of politics.
But she could safeguard her soul.
Christened at St Michael's on a windy morn,
Heaven was guaranteed.

Pillar to post,
She was her country's greatest prize.
Alliances were promised everywhere.
She had but little say. Nobody cared
About her fragile heart.

And there it is.
Tis better to be born into obscurity;
To have no value to the outside world,
But to be everything that you can be
To those who love you best.



COME AND SEE

by Rev Thom Riddell

In the first chapter of his Gospel, John records the first meeting between Jesus and the men who would become his disciples. The men had previously been followers of John the Baptist, who had baptised Jesus the day before. John proclaims Jesus as the Son of God, the one they have all been waiting for and exhorts his followers to go to him instead. Two of them ask Jesus where he is staying and he replies, 'Come and see', and they go to spend the rest of the day with him.



Andrew, one of the disciples, seeks out his brother, Simon, and tells him they have found the Messiah. He encourages him to 'Come and see'. The next day, in

Galilee, Jesus calls Philip to follow him. Philip goes to find his friend, Nathaniel, to tell him about Jesus. When Nathaniel expresses his doubts, Philip tells him to 'Come and see'.

The spread of Jesus' message to the world began with people, who had spent only a short time with him, wanting their friends to have the same experience; wanting them to know Jesus. To 'Come and see'. Perhaps this is a model for us as we seek to bring the Good News of the Gospel to others and share our experience of his saving grace.

Often, we struggle to know how to respond to those who have no knowledge of Jesus. We might encourage them to read the bible or talk about the beauty and wonder of the world and God's act of creation. We might suggest that they should come along to a worship service.

None of these is wrong, but the first invitation of Jesus was 'Come and see'. By the way we live, the choices we make, our actions, our words, the love we show for each other, we can also say 'Come and see'. As we sing in the chorus, 'We are one in the Spirit' and 'They'll know we are Christians by our love'. We can invite others to experience the love of Jesus and begin a living relationship with him.

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for calling us to experience the transforming presence of Jesus. Help us, by our love for each other, to encourage others to 'Come and see' the difference he can make to their lives. In his precious name we pray. AMEN

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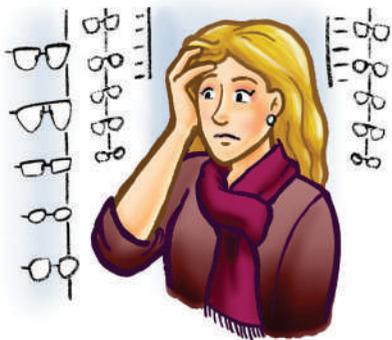
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