

# JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year and welcome to your first Linlithgow and Avon Valley Church newsletter for 2026! In a world that seems so full of chaos and strife, maybe there's all the more reason to be grateful for the steadfast care of our Heavenly Father. Read on for several places to find faith, hope and love right in our midst.

## PEWS NEWS

### Worship with Us

**Avonbridge 10am** (except the second Sunday)

- 10:30am Agape Breakfast on the second Sunday of each month

**St Michael's 10am**

- Also available on the church [website](#) and on [Facebook](#)
- Sunday evening contemporary services take place in the Kirk Hall, Cross House at 6.30pm. Next service is **25 January** and fortnightly thereafter.

**St Michael's at Springfield 10am**

- You are invited to enter the school hall by the main door.

**St Ninian's Craigmalen 11am**

- Also available on [Zoom](#)

**Torphichen 11:15am**

- Evening services at 7pm on Zoom – click [here](#) from 6:50pm.

CDs of St Michael's Sunday services are also available for those without internet access. Please check in with neighbours and friends to see if they would like a copy and then contact the [church office](#)

### Write for Rights Success

On 7th December at each service, there was an opportunity to write cards to 11 individuals identified by Amnesty International, whose rights have been abused. Many thanks to all those who wrote a total of 92 cards and who donated to cover postage. Your words make a difference, providing comfort to the individuals and showing authorities that the world is watching

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## Happy Hampers

A huge "Thank you" to everyone who contributed to Aspire Linlithgow's luxury hamper event either by donating some of the items to be included in the hampers or by buying tickets for the draw. Special thanks to Champany Inn who donated the wine.



The sum of £3,538 was raised for Aspire Linlithgow's A House for the Town campaign to transform Cross House.

## Church of Scotland Stamp Appeal Ending



**Collect your stamps to support the work of the Al Ahli Hospital in Northern Gaza.**



The hospital is the only Christian hospital in the Gaza Strip and Gaza's only cancer hospital. It serves in time of calm during the occupation and despite all, and through all the bombing since Oct 2023, the hospital has continued to serve the population in whatever way they can with the small resources they have and with staff working hours under difficult conditions.

The hospital is run by our partner church, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

**HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:**  
Post your stamps to Stamp Appeal 2025, Keith Scott, Dene Hard, Garelohead, Helensburgh, G84 0EL.  
For other options and more information visit: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/stamps](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/stamps)

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353  
[www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

 [www.facebook.com/churchofscotland](https://www.facebook.com/churchofscotland)  
 [@churchscotland](https://twitter.com/churchscotland)

After 56 years the Stamp Appeal is ending, having raised thousands of pounds a year for projects around the world. In this final year the focus is on Al Ahli Hospital, the only Christian hospital in Gaza. See [Stamp Appeal | The Church of Scotland](#) for more info.

Apart from St Michael's, where there are collecting boxes in the church and in Cross House, it'd be great if one person in each church could collect all stamps and then arrange to forward them to [Allan Kennedy \(07512 127219\)](#) by the end of January, for onward transmission.

## Ceilidh on Saturday 24th January



### Alpha is Go - Come and Join In!

Our parish Alpha course began this week, but there's still plenty of time to join in. Meeting every Tuesday evening from 7-9:15pm in St Michael's Kirk Hall / Cross House, the aim is to explore the basics of the Christian faith in a way that's actually relevant to 2026. Just honest questions and even more honest answers. Even better, the evening starts with puddings and cakes, the way every good conversation begins!

Sign up [here](#) or contact [Russell Hogan](#) for further details.

### Wednesday Night Fun and Games

Girls Brigade meet every Wednesday night during term time in Longcroft Halls, Philip Avenue, Linlithgow. The 3 groups Explorers (P1-P3), Juniors (P4-P7) and Brigaders (S1 upwards) all now meet from 6.30pm-7.45pm. We have great fun playing games, listening to stories, doing crafts and activities and learning new songs



For further information please contact our [Captain Andrea Smith](#), or come along on a company night to see for yourself.



### Online Prayer - Time to Try Something New?

You will be very welcome to join our parish's online prayer time, held on Zoom each Monday from 8.30-9am. You can say your prayers out loud or remain silent. There's always so much to pray about! Please contact [Alison Miller](#) for details



A weekly online prayer group meets Mondays 0830-0900

If you would like to join us, please email [Zoom1@linavonchurch.org.uk](mailto:Zoom1@linavonchurch.org.uk)



## Learning and Growing Together

In our large parish, it can be easy to feel a bit isolated. There are several home groups that offer ideal opportunities to get to know new people and to talk about different aspects of our faith. No-one is an expert: we all learn from and support each other. Contact [Alison Miller](#) or visit the [house groups page](#) on our website.

## Land Proposals

You may have seen recent publicity about the proposed development of land at Wilcoxholm, to the east of Linlithgow, for housing. The church has owned land at Wilcoxholm for hundreds of years. The area to the north of Edinburgh Road is zoned for housing in the West Lothian Development Plan.



After a decade of engagement with the Kerr family, who own the adjacent (much larger) area of land at Wilcoxholm, the parish's land group have reached agreement for that area of our land to be marketed, together with the Kerrs', for sale to housing developers. The detail of the development proposal will be a matter for the developers.

If development goes ahead, the church will receive a significant payment. Two-thirds of that will however go to the Linlithgow Parish Trust, just as two-thirds of the agricultural rent does currently. The Parish Trust support the poor locally. Any proceeds from sale are likely to be some years off.

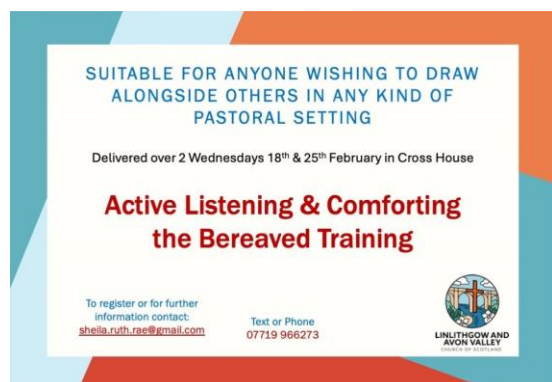
## Christian Institute: 'Guarding Lives' Events

A bill to legalise assisted suicide is likely to come to a final vote in the Scottish Parliament in the next couple of months. [The Christian Institute](#) opposes the proposals and is holding open meetings, to which all are welcome, as follows:

**3rd February** at 7.30pm - 9pm in Holyrood Church, Edinburgh EH7 5EP

**5th February** at 7.30pm - 9pm in Cornerstone Offices, Stirling FK9 5JB

**16th February** at 7.30pm - 9pm in Falkirk Free Church, Carron FK2 8SN



## Active Listening & Comforting the Bereaved Training

Delivered over two Wednesdays, these free training days complement each other but also work well as stand-alone days. They would particularly benefit those working or volunteering within a pastoral setting. The aim is to equip those willing to invest their time and compassion in the lives of others with the necessary understanding, awareness, attitudes and skill. CPD certificates will be available. Contact [Sheila Rae](#) for further information.

## Mouse Infestation

Mike the mouse, a carving on one of the elders' seats at St Michael's church apse, has long caught the imagination of tourist visitors to the church. Peter France, who runs the very popular church shop, has now sourced some replica carvings. They're scampering out the door as fast as they are restocked, helping bolster income from the shop. Aren't they cute!



## Pray Every Day

**SUNDAY** Pray that our minister Liam will have a fruitful time during his study leave, praying also that Thom Riddell and others will receive grace and support to carry the workload during this time.

**MONDAY** Give thanks for the work of Tracy Curle who has stood down as our Children and Young People coordinator. Pray that a successor may be found.

**TUESDAY** Give thanks for all the families who bring their children to church, and pray that even more may do so in 2026.

**WEDNESDAY** Pray for those organising and attending the Alpha course starting on 20th January, that they may grow in the love and knowledge of Christ.

**THURSDAY** As our parish faces a huge financial deficit this year, please prayerfully consider our giving and our spending in order that inroads may be made in dealing with this.

**FRIDAY** Pray for peace in the Middle East and in Ukraine. Prayer that God would stay the hand of those who continue to wage war and that He would bless the peacemakers.

**SATURDAY** Pray that all those leading services across all of our congregations will know God's presence and guidance in this important task.

## Share Your News

We're always very happy to hear your feedback on the newsletter, or to receive word of anything recent or upcoming to be shared across our parish. Please contact our [newsletter team](#) by **Sunday 15th February** to make the next issue.



We take our members' privacy seriously, and the information provided will be retained by us for as long as it is required for the purpose for which it was collected or unless you tell us otherwise. A copy of our full Privacy Notice, and other Data Protection information can be found at: [Data Protection | St. Michael's Parish Church](#) or [Torphichen Kirk - Privacy](#). We hope to update the Facebook pages for St Ninian's Craigmailen, and Avonbridge in due course

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

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