

# LINLITHGOW & AVON VALLEY CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

## NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first ever Linlithgow and Avon Valley Parish news! There was no thunder or lightning as our 4 churches became a single parish on 1<sup>st</sup> November: the clock ticked forward and, quite simply, we were one. Does this remind you of the way God slipped in among us as a baby at Christmas? We have much to do, starting with getting to know each other; but in all the questions about our shared future, it's good to remember that God is right in our midst. You'll find more below about our work to express his love across Linlithgow and the Avon Valley.

**One quick alert** - as the heating system in St Michael's Church is still playing up, regulars at the top of the Kirkgate may want to wrap up well. Alternately, a warm welcome will be available elsewhere in the parish - full details under 'Pews News' below.



### Unity, Love and Peace

A large congregation joined Presbytery Moderator Rev Andrea Price in the recent Service of Union to mark the creation of Linlithgow and Avon Valley Church of Scotland. During the event held in St Ninian's Craigmalen on 13<sup>th</sup> November, Rev Dr Liam Fraser and Rev Thom Riddell officially became respectively minister and auxiliary minister of the new parish.

As well as welcoming Liam and Thom into their new roles, the congregation pledged on our behalf "In the presence of God and depending on his help, to be faithful to the covenant of unity, love and peace into which we are now entering, for the better service of Christ's kingdom and the glory of his name". Amen to that!



### Sing a New Song

Members from all our worship centres took part in the Sing a New Song event at Torphichen Kirk on Sunday 17 November, featuring worship songs composed by Gina and David Baker which have enriched worship in Torphichen Kirk for some time. We look forward to singing them across the parish. Ice cream and popcorn for afters was a delightful bonus!

### Avonbridge Anew?

Proposals for a major revamp of Avonbridge Church's interior were unveiled at a community engagement coffee morning in the church hall on 9<sup>th</sup> November. Building on community consultation led by Dan Rous, architectural drawings showed in 2D and 3D alike how the space inside the church could be opened up for both community and church use. Two further features of the drawings are attractive re-use of the wood from the pews into various architectural features – and the uncovering of the rose window that has been hidden since the 1960s!



Excellent tea, coffee and baking all contributed to an exciting morning as efforts continue to chart a positive future for Avonbridge Church.



### Session Underway

The single Kirk Session for the new parish is well and truly up and running, with its first full meeting taking place on Tuesday 26 November. Amid discussion and agreement about many practical details of our union, Liam read from chapter 40 of the book of Isaiah and reminded us that the God who knows the things that keep us awake at night is always with us.

One member of the new Kirk Session even attended the meeting by Zoom from a hospital bed - hence the

photo of Liam apparently chatting with a laptop.

### Linlithgow Advent Service

All are welcome to mark the start of the Advent season at the Linlithgow Churches Together joint service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December. Taking place at 6:30pm in St Michael's Kirk Hall, this year's service will be led by a team from St John's Church.



**Linlithgow Churches**  
Working Together



SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> – MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

DELIVERING TO EH49 POST CODES ONLY  
(LINLITHGOW, BLACKNESS, BRIDGEND, PHILPSTOWN,  
THREEMILETOWN & WHITECROSS)

ONLY 25p PER CARD

GUARANTEED DELIVERY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES



WILSONS  
Newsagent

## Scout Post

If you live in the western side of Linlithgow, you have already been visited by the Scout Post with the St Ninian's Craigmalen Christmas card. Any cards going to EH49 addresses can be delivered for 25p each – an amazing bargain when compared to the price of a stamp. Full details on the poster.



## News from Maisie

### Maisie Pandian writes from her Project Trust placement:

It's been a whirlwind 2 months since I arrived in the beautiful Ghana, filled with amazing sights, food and people. I am currently teaching English and Science to Primary 4-6. Along with my project partner Lena, I live in a converted classroom in the school, which means lots of little visitors during our free time!

On the weekends we are enjoying exploring with other volunteers, and attending a local church. Highlights so far have included 2 major festivals. For the children's one, we were dressed traditionally by some of the lovely locals and invited to dance in the parade. The President of Ghana appeared at the larger festival, and we even ended up on live TV!

As the year progresses, I'm excited to be able to explore more during the weekends and holidays, and to keep building the skills I am gaining during this amazing experience. I am so grateful for everyone's continued support, love and prayers and will see you all when I am back!







**ACTIVE LISTENING &  
ACCOMPANYING AND  
COMFORTING THE  
BEREAVED  
WORKSHOPS**

**This free training will be  
held in Cross House  
6<sup>th</sup> Dec and 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 10 am  
to 4 pm**

**Suitable for anyone working  
within a pastoral setting of  
any kind**

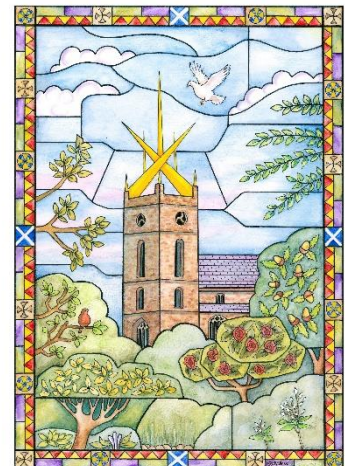
**Further information and to  
register contact Sheila Rae  
sheila.ruth.rae@gmail.com  
07719966273**



### **Christmas Shopping**

Aspire Linlithgow is here to help with your Christmas shopping! On Saturday 30 November, from 10am-12:30pm during the Advent Fayre, we'll have a bumper selection of jigsaws and games for sale in Room 1 of Cross House (looks onto The Cross). All stock either new, or fully checked with all parts present and correct. All donations go to our A House for the Town fund to save and transform Cross House.

During the St Michael's Festival of Christmas Trees on 6-8 December, our pop-up shop in the church will be selling prints and cards of Meg Wallace's beautiful spire image. Grab a bargain while stocks last – for this weekend only, the individually-signed A4 prints will sell for £80 framed or £40 unframed. All proceeds to Project 600 to rid the church building of pervasive water damage.



LINLITHGOW &  
AVON VALLEY CHURCH

## FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES



**FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER | 10AM-7PM**  
**SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER | 10AM-7PM**  
**SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER | 1PM-7PM**

**Quiet Hour: 10-11am | Saturday 7th Dec**

*Adult: £5. Child: £3. U5: free*  
*Family: £10 (2 adults, 2 children)*

*Tickets sold at door. Cash & Card payments accepted.*  
*All profits raised will be donated to Linlithgow Link, Rver Kids,*  
*and Bethany Christian Trust.*

Recognised as a Scottish Charity No. SC016185.



**Come and join us! All are welcome.**

## Blue Christmas Service

**December 18th**  
**At 7 pm**

**St Michael's Parish Church**  
**Linlithgow**

**This short meditative and reflective service is for anyone for whom Christmas is difficult. If wished, people can write a message to hang on the Christmas tree. Refreshments will be served and there will be an opportunity for conversation and fellowship with the ministers and with each.**



# CHRISTMAS CAROL EVENING

St John's Hall, Manse Rd, Torphichen

Christmas music and singing for all.

**Saturday 21st December**

Starts at 7.30pm (Musicians-please be there by 7pm)

Allow time for parking!

Musicians-please contact Innes Duncan on 01506 652169,  
[innesduncan57@hotmail.com](mailto:innesduncan57@hotmail.com) by one week before to have sheet music ready.

Loads of refreshments  
Everybody welcome



## Carols at Torphichen

For an informal Christmas singalong, head to Torphichen on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7:30. And in fact, it's a playalong too! If you can play any instrument to at least Grade 3 level, you'll be very welcome to join the gladsome sound. Innes Duncan will ensure there's music for you if you contact him [here](#) with details of your instrument.

Start 2025 with a Bang!

**Aspire**  
Linlithgow

**Orchestra**  
proudly presents

R. Strauss <b>SUNRISE</b> from <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>	C. Saint-Saëns <b>SYMPHONY NO. 3 "ORGAN"</b> as featured in <i>Babe</i>
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Conductor - Nicholas Wilks  
Organist - Kevin Duggan

**6pm, Saturday 4th January 2025**  
St Michael's Parish Church  
LINLITHGOW

Doors open at 5.30pm, entry by donation.

All donations go to Aspire Linlithgow's Project 600 campaign. Aspire Linlithgow is the major projects fundraising campaign of St Michael's Parish Church of Scotland (charity no. SC016185).



# PEWS NEWS

## Worship with Us

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

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

**St Ninian's Craigmalen 11am**

- also available on [Zoom](#)

**St Michael's 10am**

- also available on the church [website](#) and on [Facebook](#)
- Contemporary evening services in the Kirk Hall resume in January

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

- final service for 2024 on 15 December.

**Torphichen 11:15am**

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

## Christmas Worship

**Wednesday 18 December**

Christmas Carol Favourites at Avonbridge (7pm) – contact Heather Stephens [here](#) with your favourite carols!

Blue Christmas Service at St Michael's (7pm)

**Saturday 21 December**

Longest Night Service at Avonbridge (7pm) – a time of quietness and reflection

Carols at Torphichen (7:30pm)

**Sunday 22 December**

Nativity services at St Michael's (10am) and St Ninian's Craigmalen (11am)

Lessons and Carols at Avonbridge (10am) and St Michael's (7pm)

**Tuesday 24 December**

Christingle Services at St Ninian's Craigmalen (6:30pm) and St Michael's (7pm)

Watchnight Services at both Linlithgow churches and Avonbridge (all at 11:30pm)

**Wednesday 25 December**

Christmas Family Services at both Linlithgow churches at 11am.

**We wish you a blessed Christmas and a wonderful 2025!**



**NB: Please note that services that are uploaded to YouTube and elsewhere on the web also remain available for 1 week after each service**

**CDs of the Sunday service are also available to those without internet. Please check in with neighbours and friends to see if they would like a copy and contact the office:**

**[info@linavonchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@linavonchurch.org.uk)**

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

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

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**Linlithgow & Avon Valley Church of Scotland is a  
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