

CROSSWIND

The Journal of St Michael's Parish Church

May 2024
Vol 27:1



And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

MATTHEW 27 v29

MW

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday, 26th May
10am in the Kirk*
and
3pm in the Kirk Hall

***livestreamed on St Michael's web-
site 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

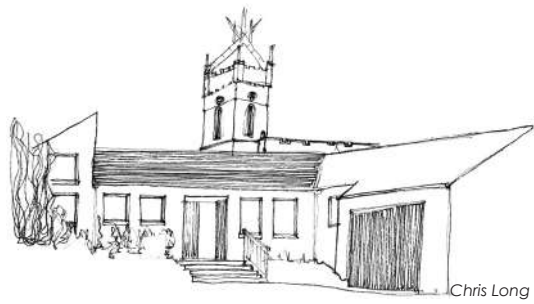
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The deadline for the August 2024 issue is 1st July 2024.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam Fraser

The work has been done, the tools downed, and the scaffolding slowly removed, to reveal – the new Crown of St Michael's.

This has only been possible because of the hard work of countless individuals, the generosity of the town and region, and substantial grants from public bodies and charitable trusts. We will thank all of them fully at the Thanksgiving and Dedication Service, to which you are all invited.

For now, however, I want to reflect on what makes the Crown of Thorns, and the church to which it is attached, special and worth preserving. Because, across the nation right now, hundreds of churches are not being preserved, but are being sold off to become homes, warehouses, and even pubs and clubs. So what makes the Crown and St Michael's different?

Well, no doubt a large part of the Crown's importance comes from the long association between St Michael's and Linlithgow. As the oldest extant building in the town, St Michael's represents Linlithgow's illustrious and tumultuous history, running from the English occupation during the Wars of Independence, to the birth and baptism of Mary Queen of Scots, the occupation of Cromwell's troops, the welcoming of Bonnie Prince Charlie, and a host of other momentous moments in our nation's history. St Michael's is a cipher for all of this.

Yet while the desire to safeguard our heritage is important, it can present us with a temptation. A temptation to look back, to live in the past, to embrace nostalgia rather than the future that God is preparing for us and all people.

These concerns are reflected in the words of my predecessor Dr David Steel, who was responsible for the creation of the modern Crown. Dr Steel said of the work:

It was all too easy to regard St Michael's as part of the ensemble of the ruined Palace, a place with a past, but irrelevant to the present, and with no future... This may not influence the mere antiquarian who would look at the church as an ancient monument, but it is a matter for serious consideration to those who regard the Church, under God, as eternally relevant. And there is nothing so up to date as the eternal.



While the heritage of Church and Crown is important, it does not exhaust the Crown's meaning. Because for us in the Church, the Crown signifies the crown of Christ the King, and the truth – so often denied, even within Christian communities – that it is Christ, and not we, who are in charge. By renovating the Crown, in the midst of a secular age, we are re-committing ourselves to that truth, and pledging ourselves to live by it.

Yet the reign of Christ is not only over the Church, but over the whole world. And what does that reign mean? It means the reign of truth, and goodness, and love, and mercy, and forgiveness. The reign of all that is right, and decent, and fair and noble.

At our best, the people of Linlithgow know that this is the kind of world we want to live in. Through the community life of the town, and the charitable work that takes place in it, so many of us know that we only find personal fulfilment in relationship with others. Each of us brings a piece of the puzzle, another brick, another offering or skill, that when brought together, create something greater than any of us could achieve alone.

The Crown of St Michael's, renovated through the generosity of the people of Linlithgow, stands as a testament to this truth. Every pound, and every gift donated, not only represented another piece of the work done, but a statement of intent. That this was not someone else's work to do, but our work. For the Crown belongs to all of us. It reminds us of ourselves, but not only that, the best part of ourselves, the better angels of our natures.

For in these individualistic days, when so many are concerned with what their personal legacy will be, whether it be fame, or wealth, or acclaim, the restoration of the Crown reminds us that the greatest legacies are not those we complete alone, but the legacies we build together. Because when we work together, as a Church and as a community, we can achieve far more than we could ever do alone, and help and encourage each other to be the best we can be, loving our neighbours, and working in partnership to bless the town, the region and the world.

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THE 'ONLINE CHURCH' – WHAT IS IT?

by Ruth Middleton



by Jim Rae

Many will remember how it felt when the Church was closed during the pandemic – how we missed being in Church, worshipping and praising God with others and meeting each other afterwards.

Now, we are fortunate to have Livestream, which may be used by some out of curiosity about the Church, occasionally by others, but by some who are unable, for various reasons, to be back in Church at all. Figures

suggest that 20-25 join the live service regularly every Sunday across both the website and Facebook, and also that 50-60 people log on weekly on catch-up, either on the website or YouTube.

In a recent discussion in the Pastoral Care Team, we wondered about the 20-25 people watching each week and whether they were those who, having attended Church regularly for years, could not now manage to get back to Church and miss it a lot. We asked ourselves how that felt, was there anything else we could do for them, either on the Livestream or otherwise, and who were they?

If you are one of those people, and if you are happy to let us know who you are, we would be glad to find out. You can do this in the first instance by contacting the Church Office who will pass the names on to Ruth Middleton, a member of the Pastoral Care Team, who will contact you if you wish.

Equally, if you watch on catch up, whether regularly or occasionally for whatever reason, and would like us to know who you are, please contact us in the same way.

It is our hope that by knowing who are joining us regularly online, in spirit if not in person, it will help us all to be more aware of being part of the Body of Christ in St Michael's which we value so much.

This will not affect the delivery of a CD with the recording of the service to those who do not have access to the Livestream.

Contact: Church Office: info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk or phone 01506 842188
or Ruth: ruthmiddleton12@btinternet.com

CROWN OF THORNS RESTORATION

by Brian Lightbody



Courtesy of Martin Brown

It's taken longer than we planned, it's been much more complicated than we anticipated, and it has cost more than we originally envisaged, but the work to restore our iconic Crown of Thorns spire is now virtually complete!

As many know, the Crown was designed by sculptor Geoffrey Clarke RA and erected in 1964, replacing the original 15th-century stone imperial crown spire removed in 1820. Clarke's design was inspired by the crown of thorns Christ wore on the cross. Constructed of laminated timber clad in anodised aluminium, it was hugely controversial at the time, but it has become the most recognised symbol of our town, seen by hundreds every day from the M9 or railway. You now cannot imagine the skyline of Linlithgow without it.

Originally gold coloured, it had quickly faded to a dull grey and in 2020 we noticed that some of the cladding fixings had corroded or were missing, and we suspected serious water penetration. A cherry-picker inspection removing some of the cladding confirmed our fears, and revealed serious rot in the timber structure. It was clear that, without repair, the Crown would not survive much longer.

While fundraising started, we appointed architects and engineers to produce detailed remedial proposals. The agreed solution was to remove the cladding, cut out all the rotten timber, manufacture new laminated timber sections and splice them in with epoxy resin adhesives and carbon fibre rods. We also strongly believed that, if we were going to restore the Crown, we should return it to the gold colour the designer intended. We found a gold colour-fast bronze cladding material that would do just that and obtained support for our plans from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and from the local Planning Authority. To avoid the problems with the original fixing method relying on screws and mastic, we adopted a standard secret fix standing seam roofing system to renew the cladding.

With fundraising going well, generous support from church members, the wider community, local firms, and an offer of grant assistance obtained from HES, we went to tender. That's when things got interesting! The tenders were over £100,000 above our budget – a combination of extraordinary cost inflation in the construction industry following Brexit, Covid and the War in Ukraine, extremely high scaffolding costs reflecting the complexity of the installation,

and an unwelcome complication with the gold cladding. When we started the project there were two manufacturers of the bronze cladding material. Just as we went to tender the German supplier bought the Scandinavian one and closed it down, moving all production to Germany, making the delivery period at least five months and the cost uncertain. The project was in some jeopardy.

However, one contractor managed to locate an existing stock of just enough cladding to do the job; we simplified and retendered the scaffolding to reduce the price, and we approached the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland and several other grant bodies for help. We set a deadline of the end of June 2023 to obtain the necessary funds, or else wait another year with no guarantee the Crown structure would survive that long.



*Courtesy of
Images Above*

With three days to go to our deadline a substantially increased grant from HES was confirmed and we were good to go! It has not been plain sailing. The scaffolding proved to be complex and slow to erect, pushing the programme for the remedial work into the worst of winter weather. Also, we had only been able to inspect part of the structure from original inspections in 2020 and, with all the cladding stripped, we discovered that the damage was significantly greater than hoped.

Working through a Scottish winter also proved extremely challenging. At low temperatures the epoxy resin adhesives wouldn't cure, so the timber repair contractor had to develop innovative ways of keeping it warm. In driving rain and high winds, the cladding contractor couldn't cut and fix the cladding accurately or safely. Wind speeds over 90mph were measured at the top of the tower! However, with careful planning, and considerable ingenuity and commitment on the part of the timber repairer and the cladding contractor, work continued. At times it was a bit like the Jenga children's game where you must be very careful removing a piece in case it brings the whole structure down!

We are extremely grateful to all those who contributed so generously to the cost of this unique project and to our expert team of consultants and contractors who made it happen. The journey we started four years ago has reached completion and our iconic Crown of Thorns spire has been returned to its original splendour!

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

by Steve Chaffee



The cold winter months have passed us! And, as in all things youth work at St Michael's, I am thinking ahead for the future work of St Michael's in Linlithgow.

Jolly Babies and Toddlers, both run by Fiona McCracken, are vital for bringing children and families into Cross House and ministering to them in the practical form of coffee/tea/biscuits, and community for young parents and grandparents helping to watch their grandchildren. I am fortunate to spend time with Fiona supporting her as a regular volunteer for Toddlers – all the while meeting with young families in and around Cross House. This, naturally, leads to conversations

with parents and grandparents about baptisms, church and community involvement, upcoming Messy Church events, Seedlings on Thursdays, and more!

And, in a more fulsome way than before, I am pleased to say that there has been increasing 'through-traffic' from Jolly Babies, Toddlers, Seedlings, to Messy Church, Sunday Club, Holiday Club, etc. I am delighted to tell you that, thanks to an extremely generous donation to the youth programming of St Michael's, we have been able to purchase the core books and some props for a Godly Play curriculum. This is an investment in the future of children, teens, and parents at St Michael's as Godly Play's method allows for deeper and deeper engagement in Bible stories over years. Soon, I hope to introduce Godly Play stories into a few Sunday Club sessions, but we can also deploy it to Messy Church, and, in time, to other local churches.

In the past months, as I write this, I have taken members of Bible Class and Youth Fellowship on two evening outings to Magnitude Worship Nights at Ps & Gs in Edinburgh, with another trip planned on 19 April. These nights allow the teens to cohere together better, and – as always – produce great conversations on journeys to and from Edinburgh. These will culminate in taking some teens along to Magnitude 2024 at Lendrick Muir, a huge outdoor Christian music festival and retreat. I can't wait for it!

With the Contemporary Service on in the evenings, the YF leadership team and I decided to host YF from immediately after the Contemporary Service, at 7.30. This means that every week I get to see a lovely moment of teens who have come to the Contemporary Service catching up with older members of the congregation while other teens arrive for YF. I have a deep love and appreciation for intergenerational church – so much so that I think we should drop 'intergenerational' entirely. Church should always be intergenerational!

In Lent, YF has been watching a selection of Youth Alpha videos, considering the ways in which the Christian faith intersects with their own identity. It's a valuable way to ask seriously those defining questions which we have all asked on our spiritual journeys. Before Easter, we were very fortunate too to welcome about 186 P6s from Linlithgow Bridge, Linlithgow Primary, St Joseph's Roman Catholic, Low Port and Springfield Primary Schools to St Michael's for Cracking Easter! A team of volunteers from St Michael's, St John's, and LYPP came together to deliver six bases, each examining parts of the Easter story for these young people. It is a 'win-win' event: we have a chance to 'tell the old, old story', Russell from LYPP gets to meet students who will soon be eligible to come to Lounge on Fridays, and the schools can progress their RME requirements! Briony and I recently started writing a new Handbook for Cracking Easter and Christmas Unwrapped which will make it easier to organise and deliver the content of each base.

And, of course, now it is time to start thinking about HOLIDAY CLUB. Save the Date(s): 5-9 August will be the St Michael's and St John's Holiday Club. On 12 May at 1pm, Briony and I will be hosting an informational meeting for anyone who would like to be involved with the Holiday Club, from being on a table leading a group, to leading games, to helping prepare snacks, to helping with crafts, and more! There are plenty of ways to join in – and I hope to hear from you soon about being involved, or that you are praying for us, the team, our preparations, and those young people and families who will come to Holiday Club. See what I mean? St Michael's has always been a kind of 'hub' church.

In the coming months as the Presbytery Plan comes into place, this truth will only be enhanced. It is my hope, joy, and privilege to be working with our people and the people to come, to permit St Michael's to grow into the regional hub for events like Cracking Easter, Messy Church, Holiday Clubs, and Godly Play styled Bible stories for years and decades to come.

God's blessings be on you and on those you love.



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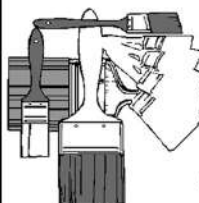
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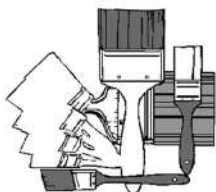
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MECHANICAL REPAIRS, DIAGNOSTICS AND SERVICE

OUTDOOR CHURCH

by Alison Miller

Outdoor Church Linlithgow



So, what is Outdoor Church, apart from being outside of the church building? What do we actually do?

Outdoor church is:

- Gentle, thought provoking, interactive and fun.
- Worshipping God in his Creation.
- Thinking, walking, being quiet
- Chatting with others

· Listening to short readings, which may be poetry or a prayer which reflect the day's topic. These might be taken from the Bible, or other sources.

· Collecting items from the world around us, sometimes this can be a litter pick, sometimes to create a temporary collage

· Maybe some drawing, or writing

· Enjoying some hot chocolate or other beverage on a cold day

It is not:

· A church service as you might know it.

· Loud, noisy or embarrassing

We have explored topics such as: Autumn; the stars and the universe (in dark November); Love and Lent.

All are welcome young and old, and dogs. Our gatherings are very flexible, and we adapt to the abilities of those who arrive on the day. Some may prefer to walk further, others to have a quiet seat and reflect on the beauty around them. It can suit those who don't want to be in a church building; who like a more reflective or active approach; who want something a bit different.

This is an ideal opportunity to meet up with members of our future church union on neutral ground, so our future meeting points will vary.

The next Outdoor Church will be on 2nd June at 2pm at St Michael's graveyard. We'll be thinking about 'Feeling Safe' and how God is our refuge and our strength. Why not come and try? You would be very welcome.



THE UNIFICATION OF FOUR CHURCHES

by John Reid, Session Clerk at St Michael's



The journey towards the unification of the four churches reached a milestone on Saturday 13th April, when the Kirk Sessions and Congregational Boards of the proposed Union met together for the first time in the Longcroft Halls. It was also a first for the Moderator of the proposed Union, Rev Dr Liam Fraser, to address the gathering. There was a total of 89 at the conference and the atmosphere was one of anticipation and excitement at the prospect of hearing the story to date and an outline of what next.

Elaine Stewart, Session Clerk of St Ninian's Craigmalen, welcomed the group and opened the proceedings with prayer. Liam set the context for the Union referring to the **numerical decline of the Church; fewer people attending worship or engaging in Christian life events; shortage of leaders and finance and Presbytery and Parish reorganisation.**

He went on to outline Five Marks of Mission. The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

He went on to express how he thought these aims could be met within our proposed union, by ensuring that we had **accessible worship; listening and capturing information from the community we serve; providing practical service; discipleship and pastoral care** and finally **sharing the Gospel.**

By reminding everyone of what binds us together, the scene was set for what we should be striving to achieve within the proposed union.

I, as chair of the Liaison Group, provided some background information to the setting up of the Group that was commissioned by the Kirk Sessions and met for the first time in January 2023. It comprised of sixteen people, four from each of the churches, eight Elders and eight Non-Elders.

The group produced a workplan that identified eight areas that they would research and make recommendations to each of the Kirk Sessions/ Congregational Boards. This, however, was the first time that the Liaison Group had presented to all four churches at the same time. They covered **Outreach and Vision, Children and Young People, Worship and Discipleship, Staffing (paid and voluntary), Estate, Finance, Management/Administration and Structure** and finally **Communication**.

Liam then walked the conference through the next stages of the process. He referred to two documents: the Basis of Union and the Basis of Team Ministry that would be populated by the members of the Liaison Group and presented to each Kirk Session and Congregational Boards for consideration.

He reminded the audience that the decision is by majority of each Kirk Session then each congregation. He also indicated that the latest date for the conclusion of this process would be November 2024. He reminded the conference that the proposed union would be served by two Full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament (FTMWS) and two non-stipendiary part-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament (OLMs or Auxiliaries). He indicated that one of the FTMWS would live in either the St Ninian's or Torphichen Manse.

He highlighted the extensive change that all within the union will experience. The proposal to offer Elders several options, including remaining as a Trustee Elder, remain as an Elder, but not as a Trustee who serves on Kirk Session, or demit as an Elder. These are just a flavour of the decisions that will be required to be addressed during the next stages of the journey.

I invite all of you to pray for the next stage of the journey seeking the support and guidance of our Lord in all our deliberations. As we acknowledge and cherish our past achievements let's all **Look Forward in Faith**.

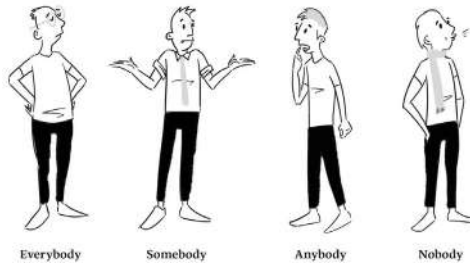


BE A SOMEBODY!

– ST MICHAEL’S NEEDS YOU!

by Ann Mellon

I wonder if you know that little tale, about four characters called Somebody, Everybody, Anybody and Nobody. The four are asked to do a task and the tale includes the very well-observed line... 'Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it; Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it!'



St Michael's is fortunate to be an active church, with a lot going on which contributes to its role as an important part of the Linlithgow community. But how often do we think as we take part in the many activities in the life of the church – 'Oh, Somebody will do it!'

Maybe you've been at a service at St Michael's on a Sunday morning after enjoying a concert in the church the previous evening – just how did the set-up for the concert change for the morning service?

Well, Somebody did it! There's a team helping with Events which could be a concert, a wedding or a funeral or special church service. The Events team opens up the church, welcomes those involved in the Event (some of whom may never have been to St Michael's before) and ensures that everything runs as smoothly as possible. Then at the end when everybody's left, they're responsible for getting the church back to how it was. Could you be a Somebody in this team? Anybody could do it!

Maybe you've enjoyed being able to follow details of a service more clearly on the screens in the church or been able to watch the Sunday service on-line. The Audio Visual team enables all that to happen – co-ordinating screen shots, words for hymns and making sure the congregation can hear those who are speaking. Perhaps a Somebody could train you to be part of the team? You'd be supported all the way and only 'let loose' when you feel you're ready. Or perhaps you can think of a young person looking for a volunteering opportunity for a Duke of Edinburgh Award or to add to a Personal Statement?

Maybe you remember how your son was fizzing with energy and enthusiasm when you picked him up on a Thursday night from the Boys' Brigade? Or remember the fun and friends you made as part of a BB company? There's a team of volunteers who supplement the BB officers on a regular basis to ensure that everyone is safe and has a good time. Energy and enthusiasm is contagious! Perhaps you could be the Somebody that catches some of that and develops friends and support in the BB team.

Maybe you've had visitors to Linlithgow, been keen to show them our historic church and have been greeted with a warm welcome from the Open Church team. Anybody who can 'be kind to strangers' could be an Open Church volunteer – you don't have to be a historical or architectural expert! When the work on the spire is finished, we're hoping to open the church on weekdays again for the many visitors to Linlithgow, and for local people looking for a special place for reflection. So there will be lots of Somebodies needed – for as few or as many shifts as you would like. Maybe you're a practical person and can help with all kinds of odd jobs and everyday repair work that the church and Kirk Hall buildings need to ensure that they keep functioning and safe for the congregation and community to use. There's a small team who do this day-to-day work who would welcome Anybody to join them.

Maybe you'd like to be a Somebody who is part of a team of people providing refreshments after church services, at the Jolly Babies groups for new mums on a Wednesday, at Toddler groups on Tuesdays and Fridays, at Seedlings on Thursdays or the Thursday for Coffee group or at Messy Church.

Maybe your gift is in communication – Somebody who could join the team that puts together the church magazine or co-ordinates the St Michael's website.

If you've got a few hours of free time or a particular skill, your help will be very much appreciated as part of our Christian Stewardship of time and talents. Being a volunteer can enable you to get to know other church members better – especially in a big church like St Michael's, whether you've been here for long time or are new to the congregation. Volunteering can improve happiness and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. It can give you a sense of purpose and improve your self-confidence and self-esteem. Or as St Francis said so simply 'In giving we receive'.

Be a Somebody. Anybody can do it.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering at St Michael's, please speak to one of the Elders at the door on Sunday mornings or contact the Church Office info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk or by phone – 01506 842188.



Parish Register

FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life



February

Shona Muir, Winchburgh
Dr David Selfridge, Linlithgow
Dave Keillor, Falkirk

March

Evelyn Masson, Edinburgh
Thomas Scott, Linlithgow
Annie Robertson, Linlithgow
Catherine (Irene) McDougall, Linlithgow

April

Margaret (Moir) Goll, Linlithgow
Robert (Angus) Robertson, Linlithgow
Janet (Jan) Campbell, Linlithgow
Jim Johnstone, Linlithgow

BAPTISMS

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism

February

Grace Pryde, Edinburgh

March

Mireia Royales, Bo'ness
Theo Adkins, Laurieston
Mary Neilands



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

by Profession of Faith

Ian Burns
June Burns
Jerrold Fraser
May Grafen

Margaret Hogan
Russell Hogan
Mary Neilands
Marion Prentice
Donna Swan



by Certificate of Transference



Christina Anderson
Elspeth Anderson
Tom Davidson
Sheila Davidson

Hugh Lamont
Sheena Lamont
Williamina Walker

ST MICHAEL'S PRAYER CHAIN

by Ruth Middleton

St Michael's Prayer Chain has now been operating for well over 20 years. Presently it consists of 13 people who are available to respond to requests for urgent prayer made to either Ruth Middleton or Sheila Rae by email or phone – see contact details below. These requests are then passed on down the chain by phone as quickly as possible thus giving immediate comfort to those in distress. It is always encouraging to hear from those for whom the requests are made, of the difference it has made to know of our prayers and for us to hear of the outcome.

If you would be interested in sharing in this prayer ministry, or finding out more about it, please contact Ruth or Sheila who will be delighted to hear from you.

Ruth Middleton – Email: ruthmiddleton12@btinternet.com
Phone: 01506 670980 or 07530 974692.

Sheila Rae – Email: sheila.ruth.rae@gmail.com
Phone: 01506 847538 or 07719 966273

A HOUSE FOR THE TOWN... A HOME FOR OUR CHILDREN

by Fiona McCracken, Early Years Worker



belong: verb: to be in the right place or a suitable place, or to feel happy or comfortable in a situation

(The Cambridge Dictionary)

In an article in NextGenPro, Becky May states that toddler groups in the church have 'immense value in transforming the lives of entire families and hold the potential to begin lifelong discipleship journeys'. In Psalm 8 verse 2, we read how God feels about the youngest members of our community: 'Through the praise of children and infants You have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.'

St Michael's has a long history of including children and young people at its heart – Toddlers was established 35 years ago to support mums by offering opportunities for children to play together and for mums and carers to meet with other mums and carers before the provision of universal nursery education. Today, two central pillars of early child development – attachment and play, are under serious strain due to seismic changes in young children's lifestyles during the last 35 years. 'Twenty-first-century parental working patterns have led to a massive expansion of out-of-home childcare, from an increasingly early age, and higher road traffic has combined with fragmenting communities to deny little children access to active, self-directed outdoor play. The implications of these changes for all aspects of development – physical, social, emotional, and cognitive – are immense.' Sue Palmer <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/a-modest-proposal/>

These factors make our early years work even more significant. Gretchen Rubin says, 'The days are long, but the years are short, and the moment is now.' So, what can we do to support young families in our Church and in our town? To help them belong. Romans 12 v 9-13 states: 'Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality.'

I believe that these verses give a framework for what we are trying to do here at St Michael's. We currently have an amazing team of volunteers who give their time in a variety of ways: setting up and clearing away; serving tea,

coffee, biscuits, soup, etc; chatting and getting to know our participants. Our main aim is to provide a warm welcome and some hospitality. Our stay and play sessions at Toddlers provide opportunities to strengthen and improve confidence; help attachment; provide interactions with a variety of people and help with a gentle introduction to transitions.

Jolly Babies is a supportive environment where mums can get to know one another, ask for help, and find out more about what support is available within our church and the local area. We are very blessed to have these successful groups running which are hopefully demonstrating God's love at the heart of our community. Steve and I, along with the Children and Young People team, are always looking at ways in which we can improve the integration into the wider church family.



We have two events coming in early June. On June 1st, from 10am-12noon we are holding a coffee morning in the Kirk Hall, hopefully to encourage a new generation to take part in the fun and fellowship these events can offer. I would be grateful for any donations of home baking or help on the day! On June 9th we are holding a Family Celebration, which will include a service in the Church, refreshments then some activities in the Kirk Hall, concluding with a picnic together to enable a review of the year's activities and raise awareness of all aspects of church life in St Michael's.

From June 16th onwards there will be a programme of fun but thought-provoking activities on offer for our children every Sunday, building on our theme of 'Belong'. I would be grateful for your support with any of these activities and ask you to remember us in your prayers. *'Father, as we seek to nurture, develop and encourage our children and families, would you challenge us with your love, deepen us with your grace and teach us with your wisdom, so that through us your kingdom comes and your will is done, Amen.'*



If you have any questions or would like to help in any way, please contact me on fiona@stmichaels-parish.org.uk or feel free to drop in, during term times, to Toddlers (Tuesday and Friday 9.30-11.30 am) or Jolly Babies (Wednesday 11 am – 1 pm) and see what we do.

Dates for your Diary

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

Sat 1st June

Toddlers

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

Sun 2nd June	5pm & 7.30pm	NYCoS Summer Concerts
Sun 9th June	2pm	Hilary Crighton Pupils Concert
Sun 21st July	3pm	Occasionally@stmichaels – Organ recital
Sun 8th Sept	7.30pm	Antonine Ensemble
Fri 13th Sept	7.30pm	Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Sun 22nd Sept	3pm	Occasionally@stmichaels – Recital, Nordic singers

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tues 18th Jun		Marches Day
Sat 22nd Jun		Gala Day
5th to 9th Aug	10am – 12 noon	Holiday Club (in Cross House)

'An audience with Mary Queen of Scots' performed by Jane Collier

Fri 27th Sept	3pm	in Cross House
Sat 28th Sept	2pm & 7.30pm	in Cross House

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.



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ST NINIAN'S CRAIGMAILEN PARISH CHURCH

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR JOURNEY

*by Elaine Stewart, Session Clerk**



The roots of St Ninian's Craigmalen Parish Church can be traced back to the 'Preaching Stone' on Craigmalen Farm when a Sabbath Day's preaching, led by Mr John Hunter, a Probationer, was granted and held on January 14th 1739. Mr Hunter preached his first sermon from the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37, verse 26, 'I shall make an everlasting covenant with them to ensure peace and prosperity. I shall greatly increase

their numbers, and I shall put my sanctuary in their midst for all time.' A relative of Mr Hunter is in fact an Elder in the current congregation.

A church was built in 1742 but the congregation split in 1747 resulting in one group worshipping in different places before building a Church in 1772 between Avon Place and the High Street in Linlithgow (West Church). The other group continued to worship at Craigmalen Farm, however they too moved to Linlithgow in 1806 and the following year built the East Church which was situated above the Railway Station. The breach was eventually healed in 1820 when they became one denomination again, but the congregations in Linlithgow maintained their separate identity.

The Church at Avon Place/High Street (West Church) was replaced in 1834 (by the building which later came to be known as Craigmalen Church). In 1847, by a further act of Union, the East and West congregations became part of the United Presbyterian Church. Meanwhile, in 1843, following the Disruption within the Church of Scotland, more than 1/3 of its ministers broke away to form the Free Church. Thus, a Free Church congregation came to exist in Linlithgow.



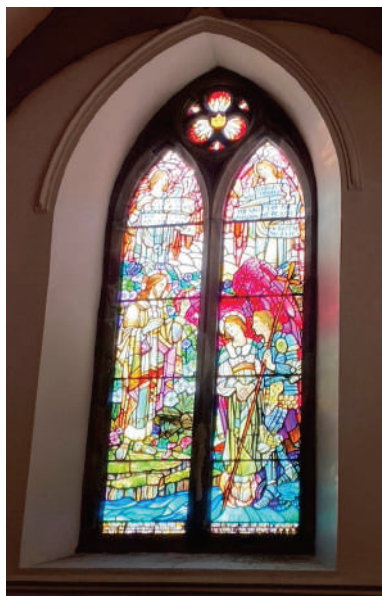
Craigmalen Church

Courtesy of Linlithgow Heritage Trust

A church was opened in September 1844 which was situated at the junction of Falkirk Road and Bathgate Road and stood until 1971, when it was demolished. In 1872, the above Free Church Congregation decided to build a new church. Ground was feued from the late Thomas Chalmers of Longcroft and building commenced in 1873 - the Feu charter was dated 14th March 1874. The exact date of completion is uncertain but a Communion Service was held in 1875 in what was then known as the High United Free Church. In 1900, the United Presbyterian and Free Churches united to become the United Free Church of Scotland resulting in there being three UF Churches in Linlithgow - the East, the West and the High (the current building).

On 1st March, 1917, the East and West Churches united and became Craigmallen United Free Church. When the United Free Church rejoined the Church of Scotland in 1929, the then two congregations became St Ninian's Parish Church (formerly High United Free) and Craigmallen Parish Church. The Churches remained as such until 2nd June 1954 when they became the present united congregation of St Ninian's Craigmallen.

On 2nd June 2014, the Church celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Union and prepared a time capsule to be opened in 2074 containing a number of items and a letter. The 70th anniversary will be celebrated this year, which is also 150 years since the Church was built. The current building has changed over the years - the Transept was added in 1900 and the pulpit, which was originally in the centre of the Chancel Arch with a hall behind, was moved to its present position in 1957. The Church has beautiful stained-glass windows and some plaques each of which tell a story, and a War Memorial in memory of the men of the congregation who gave their lives for our freedom in the Great War, 1914 to 1918. An interesting journey and only God knows how it will continue. It is in Him that we put our trust.



*summarised from an article produced in 1975 by the late George Arthur, Roll Keeper



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WILL YOU BE KIND TO STRANGERS?

by Vicki Carlin

As many of you will know, the motto of our town is 'St Michael is kinde to strangers'. This is depicted in several places around the town including the statue outside Pacitti Jones offices (formerly RGM), several plaques marking points of interest along the High Street and the statue outside Low Port Primary School.



St Michael is often portrayed as slaying a dragon – God depicted by St Michael defeating Satan, depicted by the dragon. There are several examples of this imagery inside the church – below the Creation window, in the stained-glass window beside the War Memorial and above the War Memorial itself. There are probably other places too if you look carefully enough.

I was speaking to a young visitor about the Creation window, explaining about Charles Wyville Thomson's epic journey around the world to record the depths of the ocean. I mentioned that his ship was called 'The Challenger' and he immediately responded by saying 'That makes sense, the deepest part of the Mariana Trench is called Challenger Deep.' I had never heard of the Mariana Trench and, when I got home after my shift on Open Church, I spent an hour with a cup of tea and my friend Google discovering all about it and realising that I can still learn from a 9-year-old!

I often discover new information when on Open Church duty. Sometimes, it is the knowledge of the person I'm on duty with and sometimes it results from a conversation with a stranger. There are 1000 years of history to discover, along with the many interesting plaques, windows and tapestries to learn from.

Are you ready to discover more about St Michael's and at the same time be kind and welcoming to strangers? By the time you read this, hopefully the work on the Crown of Thorns will be complete and we can resume opening the church every day for visitors. Some people have recently come forward to join us as Open Church Volunteers and we are very grateful to them, but the more people volunteering the easier it is to fill the rota. All are welcome to volunteer be it once a month or once a week – no regular commitment is required.

If you are interested in discovering more about Open Church Volunteering, please contact Vicki Carlin at vickicarlin6@googlemail.com or 07913485776 or David Timperley on 01506 845623 or 07880807487

COME IN, COME IN

by Betty Johnstone



Come rain, hail, wind or snow, the welcome is always warm on the second Thursday of every month. Smiles greet you at the door of St Michael's Kirk Hall, hands outstretched to help you in.

'How are you doing? Where would you like to sit?'

Greetings and exchanges with friends old and new and then lunch of sandwiches, sausage rolls and delicious home baking, plus lots of tea and

coffee. (Sometimes in summer there is ice cream!) Flowers on the tables add to the welcoming atmosphere.

Lunch over, tables cleared, the pianist strikes up a rousing chorus of 'Come in, come in, it's nice to see you ' and we're off. What a joy it is to share in the singing following the words on the screen. Music and laughter and timpani accompaniment truly lift the heart. The songs are usually themed for the month and range from Old Tyme Music Hall to modern love songs and everything in between.



The team who works so hard to put all this together is a blessing to us all. Events like this don't just happen, it takes time and dedication, a commitment to serve, all freely given. Donations are always gratefully received especially those from the wider community.



If you are caring for someone with Dementia please bring your loved one along. My husband who has been suffering from this terrible disease for a long time tells me, 'This is a Happy Place.' What more can we ask?

Sadly, Betty's husband, Jim, died shortly after she wrote the above piece, but she is happy for her article to be included in Crosswind. We thank Betty for this and send her our condolences at this sad time.

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH'S

AV SYSTEM

by Chris Collen

An aspect of the church that experiences most criticism is our Audio Visual system. The system naturally breaks into two – sound and vision.

The Sanctuary in St Michael's is a beautiful place that regularly receives plaudits for its glorious acoustics. However, while the acoustics are wonderful for music, they are hopeless for speech. When the church was built, services were very different to the dour Presbyterianism it became. There was chanting in Latin from the altar (where the Communion Table is now) but very little speech. Even now, people feel that the Benediction spoken from the Communion Table is much clearer than speech from the pulpit – probably because the shape of the choir allows projection of the voices.

A problem is the echoing nature of the building. When we were installing the current sound system, one supplier fired a starting pistol in the nave and measured the echo time as 7 seconds. There are no soft surfaces to absorb sound – in fact if you were to design an echo chamber it would probably look very like St Michael's. Many people required to speak in the church during concerts, etc insist that they can be heard if they speak naturally. They can't! Those with hearing aids who listen on the loop have an advantage. Because the sound comes straight from the microphone into the ear, there is no echo, so that even American accents can be heard clearly!

The V of AV refers to Vision. That splits into two parts. There are three cameras positioned round the church allowing coverage of most areas. These cameras, operated from the AV desk, allow flexibility. There is a small glitch in that after a lot of zooming in and out, the system freezes up. That is why you occasionally see the screens going blank – it is only the operator following the time-hallowed fix of switching it off and on again.



The fourth feed to the screens is from the laptop. Words of hymns are held in a database on the laptop and should agree with the words sung by the choir. The minister also supplies slides to illustrate the sermon and the operator moves them along following the script. Problems can arise when the minister departs from the script!

We are always looking for people to join our team. If you are interested, please speak to anyone on the desk or myself.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE – HOW DID WE DO IN 2023

by Linda Jamieson

I do hope that you and your families are well.

I am delighted to share that from a financial perspective, 2023 has been a very successful year. We could not achieve the following results without the help of our members, volunteers, donors and supporters. Thank you so much.



As I write this article at the end of March, the annual accounts for St Michael's for the year ended 31 December 2023 are in draft format. An audit has just been completed and the figures together with audit findings will be discussed at the April meeting of the Kirk Session (Trustees of the charity).

The draft figures show an overall surplus for the year of £88,935, achieved with the help of legacy income totalling £107,403 and an increase in regular giving by standing order and weekly offering. Our general income has increased by some £134,736 and our restricted income has increased by £86,693, resulting in overall income of £717,021. This means an uplift of just under 45% on the previous year.

The fundraising team led by Alan Miller continues to work hard to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet the final costs of the Crown of Thorns work. Our thanks to all donors, including our members, the wider community and grant funders who have helped us raise an incredible £230,000 in 2023. We hope we can rely on your continued support.

Our general running costs for 2023 include our 'Giving to Grow' contribution of £149,000 to the national church and this remains our largest expense and something that is outwith our control.

Costs in maintaining our property including repairs and maintenance for the Church and Cross House amounted to £44,500, down some £25,000 on the previous year, as a result of some work being carried forward to 2024. The upkeep of two Grade A listed buildings presents us with great challenges in meeting the associated costs in their care and maintenance. However, let us not forget the enormous opportunities in their use. When we add staff costs, council tax, insurance and the many other costs associated with the running of St Michael's, our general expenditure for 2023 is £340,000 (excludes Crown of Thorns expenditure of £266,000) compared to £362,000 for the previous year.

The overall decrease in costs can be attributed to property costs carried forward to 2024, and a decrease in 'Ministry and Mission' contribution. Staff costs have increased. We have budgeted for spending in the region of £100,000 for the general upkeep and maintenance of our buildings in 2024. This does not include any special projects to deliver major works. We will continue to monitor our costs closely, and look at ways we can reduce expenditure and increase income in what remains a turbulent economic environment.

It should be noted that our fixed tariff for energy comes to an end this year and hopefully our annual costs will not increase too much, as energy costs look to stabilise.

In addition to the financial statements, our year-end accounts include a summary of what has been achieved at St Michael's. 2023 has been a very successful year; thanks to the skills and commitment of members, volunteers, staff and supporters, we have delivered a diverse range of activities to demonstrate that with God's help we can deliver on our promises to work on his behalf.

Our thanks to the Stewardship and Finance team for their work in helping to manage and monitor our finances. Hopefully, by sharing St Michael's financial performance, you will have an understanding of the scale of the operation and how much our activity has increased, and the level of responsibility and work involved. Implementing new accounting software in 2023 was a considerable amount of work, but we are now in a stronger position and can reap the benefits.



The Stewardship and Finance team at St Michael's would welcome additional support from volunteers with financial/management skills to join their team. This is not an onerous commitment, but it is important in helping to ensure the church looks after everyone's money properly. If you have some spare time and have financial experience, please contact me on LJamieson58@aol.com to find out how you can help.

There will be an opportunity for the full congregation to hear about the annual accounts at a meeting to be arranged in early summer. It is important that we all work together for the future prosperity of St Michael's Linlithgow. Lots of people doing a little can make an enormous difference.

I thank you again for your continued support for St Michael's, both in terms of financial support and to all our volunteers who work tirelessly in Christian faith.



YESTERDAY ONCE MORE

by Iain Harrison

Background to 1924

In the UK in 1924 it was a fairly quiet year. The Met Office issued its first shipping forecast and the hourly Greenwich Time Signal was broadcast for the first time. There were two General Elections, in January, Ramsay MacDonald became the first Labour Prime Minister but only lasted until October when Stanley Baldwin won for the Conservatives.

Further afield in the United States, J Edgar Hoover was appointed Director of what is now known as the FBI. In Germany a certain Adolf Hitler was jailed for 5 years in a failed coup in Germany; he was released after nine months. In the Paris Olympics, Eric Liddell won gold in the 400 metres (and bronze in the 200 metres) having refused to take part in his favoured event the 100 metres as the heats were held on a Sunday and he refused to run on the Sabbath.

Nearer home the Scottish County of Linlithgowshire was renamed West Lothian.



Eric Liddell

The Poor Box

The money collected in the Poor Box over the last year amounted to £7/1/0 (Seven pounds and five pence for those of you too young to remember the days before decimalisation!). This money was given to the minister for distribution amongst the deserving from the parish. It was agreed in future that distributions be made half yearly rather than annually.

Candelabras

At the meeting held in January 1924 and following recommendations from the auditors, the Kirk Session was resolved to increase the insurance on the candelabras to £400, an impressive figure at the time and equivalent to £30,476 today.

Heating

An enhancement to the gas boiler was delayed due to the forthcoming possibility of electricity being introduced in the town and therefore the Church. That said it was decided that on the second Sunday of March the collection raised would go towards the Coal Fund.

500th Anniversary

Discussions took place regarding the fact that the 500th anniversary of the building of the existing church would take place that year. How to celebrate this event was discussed and it was agreed that a special service be held at the end of September. Sadly, the minutes from 1924 don't shed any more light on what actually took place.

Converting the Church Organ

With the imminent arrival of electricity the company who built the organ, Messrs Ingram & Co were approached for suggestions on how the organ would work using electricity. The method originally favoured by the company was a 'Discus System' costing £273/10/- (£273.50). However, the company concerned later suggested a 'Duplex Blower' to be installed instead as although it was slower it was considerably quieter. The costs were slightly cheaper at £242 plus £22/10/- (£22.50) for a sound proofed felt lined box. This suggestion was accepted.

Visitors

The possibility of having a guidebook was raised and it was agreed that such a book would be helpful to visitors. Estimates of cost would be obtained.

At a meeting in July it was also agreed to place a box in the Church to permit visitors to make a donation, any donation would then go towards the Restoration Fund.

Familiar Problems

Concerns around the condition of the roof of the church and the disposal of water from the roof and walls of the church were raised. The foundations of the building were also found to be very damp. The Town Clerk's Office agreed that the Church's rones were in need of attention and this would be referred to the Burgh Surveyor so that emergency work might be dealt with.

Electricity

On 21 October, the specification and conditions submitted by the Scottish Midlands Electricity Supply Company were accepted and an agreement signed for the provision of the electricity supply.



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ST MICHAEL'S PULPIT

by Bruce Jamieson



I have often stood in the pulpit of St Michael's while compèring concerts and it got me thinking about the various preaching platforms which have graced the church. Early places of worship, particularly Jewish synagogues, had a raised podium called a 'bimah' from which orators or celebrants would deliver their message.

Early Christian, Roman Catholic establishments also installed a small stage but more often the Word was delivered from the High Altar. After the Reformation, Scottish Churches needed a more prominent, elevated structure from which the preacher could address the congregation – the Proclamation of the Word of God being the central feature of Protestant worship.

This raised dais was called a pulpit (from the Latin *pulpitum* meaning a small stage) and it became the most important item in a church. What St Michael's first Presbyterian pulpit looked like is not known. The Rev Coupar in his 1927 booklet declares that it was made of stone and that some carved panels from the construction still remained within the church.

By 1812 there was a wooden pulpit which was removed during an extensive renovation of the church, under the direction of its minister, the Rev James Dobie. It is recorded that, as a condition of being granted the contract to restore the church, local craftsmen Robert Mickel and John Gibb were granted permission to take away and use the timber from that 'old pulpit'.

The new preaching podium was placed, traditionally, at the east end of the church and, in common with many other early 19th-century pulpits, it was positioned centrally, in the middle of the apse. It was an elaborate Gothic structure with a canopy and back plate which acted as a soundboard to improve acoustics.

Originally, the new pulpit was accessed by a semi-circular stair but this was replaced by a rear staircase which allowed the minister to 'enter in a quieter manner'. (Rev John Ferguson in 'Ecclesia Antiqua.')



Below the pulpit there was a space reserved for the Precentor (who led the 'singing') or the Session Clerk – the man appointed to handle the administrative work of the kirk. His job on a Sunday was to keep order in the church – and to ensure that the minister preached for the requisite length – as dictated by an hourglass affixed to the pulpit.

St Michael's 'Gothic spaceship' of a pulpit was used for over 80 years until another massive facelift to the whole church saw the church radically altered and a new pulpit erected on the north side of the apse.



A true work of art, it was made to the design of church architect John Honeyman, and paid for by John Miller Richard of Clarendon, a wealthy landowner and the father of John Ferguson's wife. It featured wooden statues of three queens: Margaret, wife of King Malcolm Canmore; Mary Stewart, born in Linlithgow Palace in 1542 and Queen Victoria – the patron of the church.

Sadly, John Miller Richard died before the pulpit could be consecrated, an act which took place on October 24th 1896, when the Rev Donald Macleod of Park Church in Glasgow re-dedicated the church and

its fittings. In tribute to the pulpit benefactor, a stained-glass window, depicting the Transfiguration of Jesus, was erected in 1898 above the main west entrance.

In 2003 another monarch joined the retinue around the pulpit when Queen Elizabeth was added – the creation of Livingston sculptor John Donaldson who has since gone on to carve replicas of the famous Stirling heads which now grace ceilings at Stirling Castle.

The late 19th-century pulpit in St Michael's was installed on the north side of the apse but now is positioned on the south side – its move occasioned by the erection of a new organ in 2001. And there it still stands – a tribute to 125 years of preaching in the venerable kirk.



OUR TRAVELLING GOD

by Gordon Wardall



In the Old Testament we hear how God travelled through the desert with the people of Israel, leading them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (eg Exodus 13:21). Jesus' call to his first disciples was, in a sense, an invitation to travel with him. God invites us too to travel with him on a journey of faith.

God's invitation can be unexpected and sometimes quite disruptive. Many of the disciples were known to have had secure, perhaps profitable occupations that would have kept them busy; yet something about Jesus prompted them to turn their backs on their previous lives and follow him instead. In the Old Testament, Elisha didn't hesitate to leave what was probably a lucrative business as a farmer to serve God by becoming Elijah's successor (1 Kings 19: 19-21). We also must be ready to respond to God's invitation to travel with him, whenever and in whatever form it comes.

We can sometimes view faith as something static, particularly when we think in terms such as 'inviting Jesus into our hearts', which may give the impression of a one-off experience at conversion. Rather, we should view the latter as the beginning of a journey with Jesus, one in which we become gradually more like him.

The journey may not take the route that we're expecting or hoping for. God often interrupts our plans, especially when we choose to wander off on paths of our own. We have to trust that God, who sees all things and loves us perfectly, will guide each one of us on the path that's best to accomplish his plan for us.

Travelling with God is not, of course, confined to our time in this world: our journey will continue after death and the passing of this world, into his new creation, when this broken world will be renewed and transformed. But the earthly part of the journey is not just a practice run for eternity: Jesus' kingdom begins now in the hearts and minds of believers and in the work he accomplishes through them, and will be established in full in his new heaven and earth.

If we want to grow in faith, we must seek God in our plans and ask him what he is trying to do in our lives. He will always be there, listening and guiding us on our way.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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Auxiliary Minister

Rev Thom Riddell
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Youth & Family Outreach Worker

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The Guild

Margaret Henderson
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Toddlers and Jolly Babies

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Sunday Club

Steve Chaffee
email: steve@stmichaels-parish.org.uk
Sunday Club (3-11yrs)
Bible Class (12-14yrs)
YF (15+)

Boys' Brigade

Lisa Callaghan
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Safeguarding

Alison Murray
tel: (01506) 840407
Andy Tunnicliffe
tel: 07961521919

Bereavement Support Group

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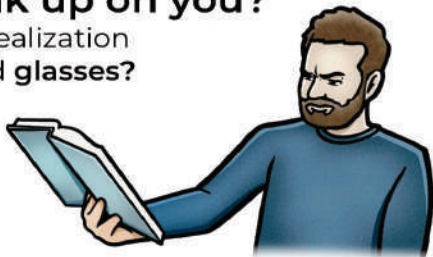
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