



**ST.
MICHAEL'S**
Parish Church

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the final issue of the St Michael's Parish Church newsletter. Yes, you read that right: here we are on the threshold of joining with our friends in Avonbridge, St Ninian's Craigmalen and Torphichen to become **Linlithgow and Avon Valley Parish** on 1st November. Your newsletter will continue to keep you up to date with what's going on; but it will need a new name! You can share your ideas below.

What doesn't change is God's faithfulness as we go forward in fellowship with Him and with each other. Read on with thanks for what has been done and in expectation of what's to come.



Reflections on the Threshold

Innes (Torphichen)

I am looking forward to the union for several reasons. It will be great not to be Session Clerk after nearly 10 years, it will be great to have a minister - in fact hopefully four - and it will be great to get to know everyone in our new parish. It will not all be easy; I don't mean the integration of four congregations, I mean building up the church in our corner of West Lothian. To grow means to change, both outwardly and inwardly, not putting new wine in old wineskins.

Elaine (St Ninian's Craigmalen)

Being a part of the Liaison Team was a real eye-opener into all the different areas that had to be considered to enable us to work together once our four churches united. But with prayerful support and the dedication of those who have moved this along, the initial milestone has been achieved.

There will no doubt be many opportunities that lie ahead and with God's guidance, these will be taken forward positively by old and new friends together.

John (St Michael's)

It all started with a wee conversation in the White Dove Café in January 2023. Three strangers meeting for the first time; who would have thought that by October 2024 four Kirk Sessions would have unanimously approved the Union? Strangers we were but friends we became, realising that there was more that bound us together than divided us. During this journey we have shared our feelings our hopes and our fears, realising that by looking forward in faith we could do this, and we have. Thank you, God, for binding us together as one.

Heather (Avonbridge)

Excitement and relief are the main words that spring to mind as we move together into the union. Excitement that we will be part of a bigger Church bringing new ideas to our small community. Relief that our wee Church has got this far through our battles to stay open. We were small in numbers but with the excitement generated I believe that we will continue to grow in strength, commitment and size.



DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

Humanitarian Appeal

We all struggle to see what we can do to make a difference in the Middle East. Prayer is difficult (though God hears even our most inarticulate groans).

Alongside that, however, another option is to donate to support work on the ground with those most directly affected by violence and destruction.

The Disasters Emergency Committee, which brings together 15 leading UK charities including Christian Aid and Tear Fund, has renewed its Middle East Humanitarian Appeal. You can donate securely [here](#).

Blood Bikes Scotland

When a motorbike comes to visit the Guild, everyone wants a shot! Phil Dodsworth of Blood Bikes Scotland spoke recently to St Michael's Guild about BBS's work, which is entirely carried out by volunteers who also raise all necessary funds themselves. The Guild were delighted to be able to make a donation - and to get their hands on the bike.



Going forward, there's now a Guild meeting every Monday, alternating between St Michael's Kirk Hall where the next meeting falls on **28th October** and the Longcroft Halls at St Ninian's Craigmalen (next date: **4th November**). You can expect a warm welcome every time.

Ladies

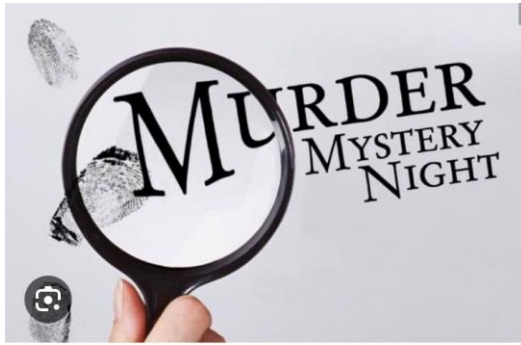


Are you interested in joining a new monthly group where we will reflect, share, listen, pray together and enjoy light refreshments?

Please join us in the Adam Room, Cross House on Thursday 24th October 7:30pm - 9:00pm to help us get started.

Contact Fiona McCracken on 07717 133862 for more information





Murder Mystery

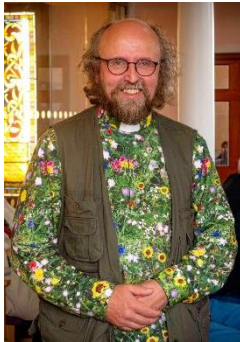
It's no secret that our much-loved Cross House needs a major refurbishment to allow it to be all it can be. Can you help us raise the funds we need for Cross House by unearthing a different secret – whodunnit?!

Come to Aspire Linlithgow's Murder Mystery Night at Linlithgow Rose Social Club this **Friday (25th Oct) at 7pm**, and test your skills against the entertaining drama played out by Edinburgh Theatre Arts.

Tickets £17.50 in Far From bookshop (cash only) or on [Eventbrite](#) (plus booking fee). Will there be a murder? – yes. Will you have a great night out? – yes. Will you solve the mystery? – only you can answer that one!

Creation and Communion at St Ninian's Craigmalen

One of the strengths St Ninian's Craigmalen are bringing to our union is their deep commitment as an Eco Congregation, exemplified in the Gold Award gained in 2018. Helping to replace the discontinued government support for the scheme, their Harvest retiring offering this year was in aid of Eco Congregation.



A cheque for £428 will be presented to Rev David Coleman, chaplain to Eco Congregation Scotland, at a special Communion and Creation service on **Sunday 27th October at 11am**



Occasionally – for the 21st Time

Later on **Sunday 27th**, along the road at St Michael's the 21st "Occasionally@St Michael's" concert begins at 3pm. Fittingly, series organiser Alison Hastie will herself be performing, as part of an unusual flute, viola and piano trio. Alison says "The Alsini Trio came together on the happy occasion of a friend's wedding, and we decided to explore further the repertoire for this unusual line-up".

And repertoire there is, including the only published chamber music by French composer Maurice Duruflé, and two glinting gems of 20th-century inventiveness by Ernest Bloch and Bohuslav Martinu. Entry by donation towards the church organ fund.

Occasionally @St.Michael's

A series of recitals by local musicians

In St. Michael's Parish Church,
The Cross, Linlithgow



Sunday 27th October 3pm

ALSINI TRIO

Nikola Kyosev Flute
Alison Hastie Viola
Silviya Mihaylova Piano

Giordani ~ Bloch ~ Duruflé ~ Martinu

Admission free, donations invited for upkeep of the church organ



Memory and Thanksgiving

This service, taking place in St Michael's on **Saturday 2nd November at 10am**, is a special time to remember and give thanks for loved ones who have died. The service will include reflective music and a gentle act of remembrance. All those grieving a loss of any kind are very welcome both for the service and for refreshments afterwards, when there will be an opportunity for conversation with other attendees and with members of the bereavement support team.

A New Future at Avonbridge

With the looming closure of the village's community hall, the Avonbridge congregation have investigated ways the church can continue to serve and support the local community. Building on the results of a community survey that asked what local people need or would like, an architect has been commissioned to draft drawings of how the building could be changed to serve the community's needs.

You'll have a chance to see around the building as it is now, to hear the results of the community survey, and see the draft drawings for how it might look for the future at a coffee morning on Saturday 9th November from 10am-12 noon. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy a lovely cup of tea or coffee - along with some yummy home baking – while hearing more.



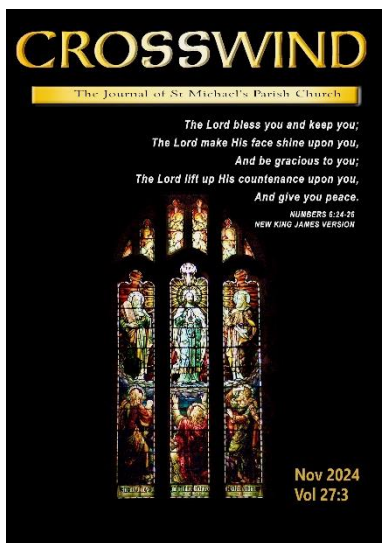
Sing a New Song

While the history of the kirk in Torphichen goes back centuries, our more recent history has included the writing of new hymns and songs. As part of the celebration of our union, the folk in Torphichen would like to share some of them and give us all the chance to learn some of them too, in the hope that they will become part of our shared future. We hope to have singers from all parts of the new parish. Please come along and join us all at Torphichen Kirk on **Sunday November 17th at 3pm**.

Fantastic Flowers

The pictured floral display featured at St Michael's Harvest service. But week after week, the flower group prepare beautiful arrangements that adorn worship in the ancient sanctuary.

The flower group always welcome donations toward their costs. If you'd like to support this uplifting ministry, simply put some cash or a cheque payable to 'St Michael's Parish Church' into an envelope marked 'Flower Fund'. This can be dropped in the offering on a Sunday or popped through the door at Cross House.



Crosswind Concludes

November 2024 marks the final edition of St Michael's magazine of record, Crosswind. Huge thanks are due to Myra Lawson and her team who have maintained professional production standards right to the end!

This special issue, available from early November both in hard copy and digitally in full colour on the [church website](#), will include the full text of Liam's sermon at the Crown of Thorns dedication service in August – and much more besides.

One of many decisions for the new Kirk Session will be how to build on this legacy and take forward meaningful communication both within the united parish and externally. Crosswind leaves us a fantastic example to follow.

Pray Every Day

Here are suggested topics for prayer throughout each week.

Monday: give thanks for all contributions for West Lothian Foodbank at recent Harvest festivals, and pray for the ongoing work of the Foodbank.

Tuesday: give thanks for the tireless and harmonious work of the liaison group overseeing the merger of our four congregations.

Wednesday: pray for the new Kirk Session to be formed, and the trustee elders drawn from all the churches to serve on it; pray also for elders who will continue to work on session teams.

Thursday: give thanks for the group of new elders recently ordained in St Michael's, praying that both they and we will be blessed in their service.

Friday: pray that God would challenge leaders in the Middle East to seek peace with justice, praying also for all Christians still living there to be given strength to love and to minister to all.

Saturday: continue to pray for the Aspire Linlithgow team in their ongoing fundraising work for the church and Cross House.

Sunday: pray that the ministry team will know God's presence and guidance over the next few months as our four congregations unite.





Competition: What's in a Name?

Bob here has a name – that's Bob the scarecrow, who smiled all through the Avonbridge Harvest service led by Rev Ken MacKay. This newsletter also has a name, but to be honest it's a little dull. More importantly, it's about to be out of date.

Can you come up with a catchy and attractive new name for our new Linlithgow and Avon Valley Parish's newsletter? We'd love to hear your suggestions! Just stick them in an email and send to newsletter editor Alan Miller [here](#). The more creative, the better, and the winner's prize will be to experience a beam of pride each time you see your idea atop successive issues.

Please also contact us on the same email address if you have a suggestion for a future newsletter item. The deadline for the next issue will be Sunday 24th November at 6pm.

Join us for Worship



St Michael's next quarterly Communion service takes place in the church on Sunday 24 November at 10am.

For reasons of health and safety, there will be no common cup. Participants will be served portions of bread and wine in individual glasses.

We also have Holy Communion in the Kirk Hall at 3pm with Rev Thom Riddell. Again, participants will be served portions of bread and wine in individual glasses



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Our worship services are every **Sunday at 10am**. As Covid-19 remains highly transmissible if you feel unwell please consider taking a lateral flow test before attending for worship. We look forward to worshipping with you, safely and joyfully, Sunday by Sunday.

Services at Springfield School are also **at 10.00am** and you are invited to enter the school hall by the main door.

Our contemporary evening services take place weekly on a Sunday **at 6.30pm** in the Kirk Hall, Cross House. Come early for a cuppa and a chat!

If you are not able to attend in person, our main church services are live-streamed:

Website: <https://www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsparishlinlithgow/>

They are available shortly after the end of the service for 1 week on the Kirk website under 'Faith'/'Worship Replay' or <http://www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk/replay>

and later on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/StMichaelsLinlithgow>

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@stmichaels-parish.org.uk

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**St Michael's Parish Church of Scotland, Linlithgow is a
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