



SPRING
2019

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

The Magazine of St Michael's Parish Church
Edinburgh

Contact details

Minister:	Rev. Andrea Price 13 Dovecot Park, EH14 2LN Tel: 0131 443 4355 E-mail: APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk	Mr Douglas Bannatyne, 6/6 Appin Terrace, EH14 1NN Tel: 444 2935 E-mail: douglasbannatyne@msn.com
Chair to the Board	Mr Jim Gray 54 Stevenson Avenue, EH11 2SN Tel: 337 9028 E-mail: jim_gray@blueyonder.co.uk
Clerk to the Board	Mr Michael Bareford Tel: 07469810559
Treasurer	Mrs Moira Gray, 54 Stevenson Avenue, EH11 2SN Tel: 337 9028 E-mail: moira_gray@blueyonder.co.uk
Safeguarding Officer	
Cradle Roll Elder	Mrs Babs Webster, 322 Oxcgangs Rd North, EH13 9NE Tel: 441 1328 E-mail: babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk
Organist	Mr Stuart Montgomery, 2 Henderson Row, EH3 5DS Tel: 556 2092 or 07713606117 E-mail: stuart.montgomery3@btopenworld.com
Fabric Convenor	Mr Bill Bremner, 104 Balgreen Road, EH12 5UB
Gift Aid Treasurer Traidcraft	Tel: 337 7048 E-mail: bill.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk
Church Secretary Tower Editor	Mrs Fiona MacMillan, Church Office. Tel: 478 9675 E-mail: office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk

Dear friends,

A very Happy New Year to you and all your family. I hope you had a gentle start to 2019 and are looking forward to times of joy and peace.

I hope you will allow me to call you friends, although we may not even have met, and you may soon think the minister is rather slow in learning names and faces. However, I hope that you will never worry about speaking to me when you need a listening ear or have worries and concerns.

My experience at St Michael's so far has been one of great friendship practiced. As I stand in the vestibule as people are arriving for a service, it is touching how warmly folks are welcoming each other. There are many hugs shared, hands shaken, laughs and stories exchanged.

What a blessing it is to be known and be part of a community. Neil and I are delighted to have arrived among you, and to be invited to become part of your lives. What a joy to look forward to. Thank you all for the welcome you have given us and for all the welcome and support you are giving each other.

Looking forward to Spring

Last Sunday, (Epiphany Sunday 6 January), a band of busy helpers took down the Christmas decorations, which had made the church look so bonny over the festive season. All is packed carefully away for another year. The danger is that we pack away the Christ child with it – by accident only, of course.

For, after celebrating the birth of our Lord, it is now our task as a church to let Him grow in our hearts and minds. Christ, the light of the world, has come to lighten the path we travel. In the next weeks we will explore what this means.

The Season of Epiphany, lasting until the Beginning of Lent, will invite us to listen again to the message Jesus has for the world; a message of turning ordinary things into something special, but also a message which is challenging the powerful to listen, to care for and help those in need, and challenging the God fearing folk, not just to say fine words, but to up their game and live closer to God and be kinder to each other.

Then we will remember the consequences for Jesus of such challenging talk and actions during Lent and Easter. Next week I will meet with our ecumenical neighbours and make plans for shared services and activities. Watch the notices for details. What a rich time ahead.

Endings and Beginnings

In the first week of being with you in December I had the privilege to conduct the funerals of Jean Snaddon and Madge Pennycook and attended Margaret Nelson's funeral, three long lives, well lived in their families and communities.

As we get older, we find that we have far too often to bid farewell to beloved companions on our way. So it was with great joy that we welcomed the birth of Rose to Michael and Ceri Bearford a few days later. Only days old, she was nearly roped in to play the baby Jesus in the Nativity Service!

As gardens and fields lie fallow in the winter cold, light is dim and days short, one can feel quite low and gloomy. Yet today, as I walked past Dalry Primary School, there was a tree in the playground covered all over with delicate white flowers. What a surprise and delight to the eye.

The tree reminded me: Spring will come and God's springtime, the season of Lent, will bring forth Easter and new life. Thank God. We have much to look forward to, much to ponder on in our hearts and minds on our way and much to celebrate.

World Leprosy Day 2019

There are still hundreds of new cases of Leprosy diagnosed every year, one third in children. There are over 3 million people living undiagnosed with Leprosy, and over 4 million people living with life-changing disabilities. Those affected by Leprosy often face real prejudice and discrimination as other people often do not understand the facts about Leprosy, or see it as a curse or something shameful, just as happened in Jesus day. In some cases, prejudice can mean that people are excluded from their family, school, and work or even divorced due to their diagnosis. Nowadays Leprosy is curable and, after just one dose of Multi-Drug Therapy no longer infectious.

World Leprosy Day 2019 takes place on 27th January. The charity Lepra works to find, treat, provide specialised medical care, and support people affected by Leprosy.

ROKDIYA'S STORY: Rokdiya is a young teenager living in Bihar, India. Her father had previously been affected by leprosy and had lost his right eye as a result. Rokdiya developed small skin lesions and patches but her parents did not recognise that they were due to Leprosy. One year later a contact survey by Lepra diagnosed her disease and she was started on Multi Drug Treatment. Once she had recovered she was able to return to school and is now working towards her dream of becoming a doctor. She says "I want to be a doctor to raise awareness of Leprosy so nobody lives with disability".

Further information or donations can be made by visiting www.lepra.org.uk (Lepra's Patron is Her Majesty the Queen).

Allan Gordon

Second Sunday Soup

Second Sunday Soup will take place after the service on Sundays 10th February and 10th March.



Practice, Practice, Practice!

By Fred Plumer (minister in UCC,USA)

I was probably about thirteen when my parents decided to find me a new piano teacher who might inspire me to go to the next level of competence. I had been taking lessons for about four or five years at that point and both my former teachers had told my parents that I had a talent that should be nurtured. So every Wednesday afternoon immediately after school, my mom would drive me over twenty miles each way so that I could have the benefit of this teacher who had shaped the music careers of more than a few professional pianists.

From the very beginning he was not certain about my commitment, probably for good reason. I loved all sports; I loved

riding my bike in the hills that surrounded our home; and I was discovering girls. Practicing the piano was no higher than fourth or fifth on a long list of things I wanted to do with my non-school time. After nearly a year of wrestling with the teacher over my commitment, with my parents over my priorities and my own guilt, I knew that things were not going well. One day while I was playing my assigned music with my teacher sitting next to me on the piano bench, he began banging his hands on the keys and yelling "If you don't practice, practice, practice you will never know what it means to be a musician...."

Over the last five decades as I have searched for a meaningful spiritual path that might bring purpose, fulfillment and peace to my life. I have often reflected on that experience with mirth and awe. It must have been a funny scene fit for a Woody Allen movie. But the truth is I know that my piano teacher was right. We will never discover what it means to become something meaningful unless we practice and practice – until it goes from our thinking to our being.

I often wonder as I look out over the religious landscape in our world today how many people who call themselves a Christian actually practice being one. I don't mean by going to church every Sunday, or memorizing the Bible or wearing an obvious cross around your neck. It does not mean honing a tight absolute argument about what one has to believe about Jesus to be a Christian or blindly reciting creeds. I mean when someone gets up in the morning, do they start the day by actually practicing being a Christian based on the teachings of Jesus.

It is the music score that Jesus gave us for this dance of life in which we are all participating. It is the path to an experience of the Realm of God. These teachings really are not that difficult to discern and I believe there is little debate about their authenticity. We may miss a couple of them and we might not be able to do all of them all of the time. But what is important is our willingness to practice, practice, practice!

Here are seven teachings that certainly will give you a good start:

Practice compassion;
practice trust;
practice forgiveness;
practice non-judgment;
practice generosity;
practice thankfulness;
and practice joy.

As simple as they are to list, we all know that they are often difficult to do, just as a piece of classical music is hard to play unless we have practiced and practiced. It is a big step to go from talking about these teachings, to practicing them. It is an even bigger step to go from having to think about them while we do them, to just being them. I often wonder, with some sadness, if Jesus the Teacher returned to earth today and looked at the religious landscape if he would not have the same frustration that my former piano teacher had. Would he want to yell: "Practice, practice, practice if you want to know what it means to be a Christian!"

After an extensive background in building management, real estate development and restaurant ownership and management, Fred Plumer made a career shift in 1981. He earned his M.Div. degree at the Pacific School of Religion while doing work in an inner city community center. In 1984 Rev. Plumer was called to the Irvine United Congregational Church in Irvine, California to lead a UCC new start church. He retired to write in 2004.

Life and Work

"Life and Work" magazine keeps you informed about the church nationally and globally. If you would like to subscribe to the magazine speak to Fiona in the office by ringing 0131 478 9675.

"Life and Work" is now also available as a digital edition: visit www.lifeandwork.org for regular news and exclusive features, find on Facebook and follow on Twitter@cofslifeandwork

A First-Time Mother - Ceri Bareford

I find it hard to believe that my daughter Rose Victoria was born 6 weeks ago, where did that go? As I write this, she is fast asleep but who knows how long that will last? The first few weeks have been some of the most trying and exhausting of my life, and it felt like it was going to go on forever! A lack of sleep is something that nothing can prepare you for and I've only started to feel human again quite recently!

We are finally starting to get into a sort-of routine, although the days are flying by and I've realised recently that I don't even notice if I haven't left the flat all day! It's amazing how your whole life can revolve around one tiny little person and how tired they can make you. I really don't know how I had time to work when I did.

But her little smile is the most beautiful thing in the world and makes it all worth it. As is the funny little frown she makes when trying to give her vitamin drops. I love listening to her while she sleeps and the little baby noises she makes.

As we prepare for her christening in the summer, Sunday, 30th June, I have been thinking about what a lovely event it will be, and I hope our families will be able to attend. I have also been thinking about what a responsibility it will be to raise her in faith and the challenges this will bring. And it really hit me about the responsibility that parents have. I have been thinking about my own confirmation in the Church in Wales which doesn't seem that long ago! And although I'm sure it will be a great day, it will also be the start of a journey for us and for Rose which I am really looking forward to.

The Stated Annual Congregational meeting will be held during the service on Sunday, 24th March 2019.

2019 Lent Appeal: The GK Experience – Lives Changing Together

From the Church of Scotland Website:

A Church of Scotland backed charity is working hard to help young people realise their potential and avoid getting involved in crime.

A 2005 study by the Scottish Government estimated that 43% of all crime in Scotland was attributable to people under the age of twenty one. Crime is one of the ways we measure deprivation and one charity, with its roots in church youth work, is working hard to help young people realise their potential and avoid getting into trouble with the law.

The GKexperience was the brainchild of Alex Bauer, who was at the time a Youth Worker in Linwood Parish Church. Through her experience there, and also in Milton in the North of Glasgow, she came to recognise that many of the young people she worked with were excluded from some of the experiences most likely to impact their lives and choices.

With the support of the Church of Scotland she set up the GKexperience and has spent the last decade working on a variety of approaches which offer real choices to some of the most disadvantaged young people in Scotland.

One of the GKexperience's service users, Paul Liddle, said: "If I hadn't encountered GK I'd probably see myself still being in trouble, definitely unemployed, possibly having been in and out of jail."

A core part of the group's work is providing residential experiences which model community living and help to develop positive, respectful relationships. They use the arts, cookery, development of life skills and issue-based working, as well as exciting outdoor activities to engage with the young people.

Through offering long term, relational youth work the GKexperience has shown how supportive relationships can have

a deeply profound impact on young people and their expectations and ambitions.

If you want to know more about this innovative and inspiring work check out the [GKexperience website](#) where you can read:

“TheGKexperience is a Youth Work Charity founded on the belief that young people are brilliant and that they all deserve the same opportunities in order to enable them to reach their potential. Youth workers and young leaders work together to support amazing young people facing challenges in their everyday lives.”

Exploring Faith

What do Christians believe? What do you believe? What do I believe?

If you are wondering, and would like to find out more about Christian faith and the church, why not come to the Exploring Faith meetings at St Michael's in the Annexe Room on Sunday 28th April, 5th May and 2nd June 2019 at 7.30pm- 9pm.

We will be exploring what we mean when we exclaim “Oh my God!”, grapple with some of our doubts and what faith means and wonder together what it means to be a Christian.

To book your place please phone Fiona in the office on 0131 478 9675 or e-mail office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk



*I always wanted to be a
Gregorian Monk, but I never
got the chants.*

Spare a Thought.....

Here in Edinburgh it is cold, it is very cold. If you are cold, spare a thought for the congregation of St. Thomas' Kirk in Leipzig as they listened to Bach's St. Matthew Passion for the first time in 1727.

Their Kirk could not be flooded with light and heat at the flick of a switch. Not only would they be cold, they would be suffering from a dreadful list of ailments, for which there was no cure. Their coughs, heralding Tuberculosis, would have punctured the austere silence. When they heard "O Sacred Head Now Wounded", they could hear and feel Christ's pain.

The modern philosopher and sociologist, Theodor Adorno, writes about "A false musical consciousness, manipulated for profit." Today, the T.V. cult of "Personality" presents grinning, preening performers who are strangers to sincerity and truth. Their voices issue down their noses, instead of projecting directly from the mouth to the heart. The performers of Bach's great music would have been taught to serve the music to the listeners. Their teaching maxim was "Listen to this great music", not "Listen to ME performing this great music".

Bach's musicians realised that their sacred music scoured the depth of human experience and raised the listeners up to a place as close to heaven as it is possible to be on earth. American scientists rocketed Bach's music into space just in case it would be found by extra-terrestrial beings, because they believed that Bach's music was amongst the greatest achievements human beings were capable of, on our planet.

In our tiny part of this planet, here in Edinburgh it is cold; it is very cold, if you are cold, spare a thought

Ruth Andrews

Come along for fellowship at the **Coffee Mornings** on Saturdays, 16th February and 16th March.

Fresh Start January 2019

Many, many thanks to everyone who donated to the "Cookers For Christmas" appeal. Sorry we can't tell you how much money was raised as nearly all of it was in gift aid envelopes, which of course raises more money for the appeal. When Fresh Start publishes their total figure raised we will let you know.

Please do keep the donations of food and household items coming. January is a very lean month for many people, so there is always an even bigger need for starter packs and food at this time of year.

We continue to be happy to come and collect household items if you are unable to bring them to church. Please contact us on 0131 441 1328 or email babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk

Thank you
Alasdair and Babs

Greetings Card Write for Rights

Thanks to everyone who contributed and, more importantly, signed cards for victims of injustice in Brazil, Morocco, South Africa, Venezuela, Vietnam and Northern Ireland.

Our annual sign-in coincided serendipitously with the first service conducted by Andrea and it was a very special occasion, with her family, friends from Orkney and London and the St Michael's family.

Over 200 cards were signed and posted. Please let me know if you receive a reply from anyone. I will pass on news of any developments in the lives of the individuals and groups to whom we sent these messages of hope.

Derek Wilson

St Colms @ St Michaels Guild

A Happy New Year from all Guild members at St Michaels. New Year is a time to look forward and also to reflect on the year that has gone. During the past year the Guild has increased its membership since changing the time of meetings to an afternoon. This also meant a change of day from Tuesday evening to Wednesday afternoon and even at our first meeting of this year we welcomed more new members.

Towards the end of last year, during Guild week, we enjoyed a social afternoon film show from Rab Anderson on his outdoor journeys, which raised money for the Guild BB Project. We also met on 7th November to disburse funds and an amount of £905 was paid out with donations given to the Church, Fresh Start, Christian Aid and the local Toy Library. At our last meeting of this session, in April, we will give to the Guild Project money raised from a bring and buy sale held at our meeting on 7th November and Guild week social proceeds. The latest news from the Guild Office at 121 George Street is a change to the date of Guild week, from November to the 8th to 15th September.

The outing to the theatre at Pitlochry was a real highlight of last year and the Big Sing held at St Cuthbert's Church raised over £1,700 for the Guild partnership in Malawi, specifically for work to help put a roof on a Church in Mzuzo: a wonderful afternoon and a great cause.

At our successful Christmas Party we welcomed the Rev Andrea Price to Guild. Andrea also led us in a programme about the discussion topic "The Unexpected Journeys" at our first meeting of this year. It was a fitting start to the year as we explored our own personal journeys alongside the often unexpected journeys undertaken by those in the Bible. Andrea displayed a world map across the floor where we retraced some of the places and countries our journeys had taken us: an afternoon of learning, understanding and fun.

Other meetings planned from now until April include a film journey on Japan, a talk on Faberge Eggs and speaker from World Mission on Women in the Church. A varied and interesting programme, so why not come along to one or all of our meetings? You will be made most welcome.

Fay Anderson, Co-convener Guild

World Day of Prayer (WDP)

There will be a WDP Service in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place on Friday 1st March at 2.30pm

The Service this year has been written by the women of Slovenia with the theme of 'Come - Everything Is Ready'. The invitation is grounded in the parable that Jesus told about a great dinner which was attended by those called off the streets, as the invited guests excused themselves. Bible studies to complement the theme are taking place at 121 George Street on Friday 15th and 22 February at 10.30am. All are welcome to these meetings.

Fay Anderson

Traidcraft

Traidcraft is to stock "the Real Easter Egg" again this year. Of 80 million Easter Eggs sold in the UK every year, this is the first to tell the story of Easter. Not only that, the chocolate is Fairtrade and a charitable donation is made to Traidcraft Exchange for every egg sold.

The Easter story activity book which comes in the egg depicts the story of the first Easter, and includes some fun activities. There will be eggs to purchase after the service each Sunday from the Traidcraft stall or leave an order with Sheila Bremner or Fiona in the office.

Church House Chatter

At the beginning of the year, when magazines were full of advertisements for keep fit and self-help classes, I read an article which stated that over 72% of British people questioned admitted that they found ironing more relaxing than attending a yoga class. The article went on to report that, on the back of this, a hotel in London was offering an "Ironing Club: choreographed ironing and synchronised breathing for a chilled chore."

Personally, while not hating the task, I can't say I'd advocate it to others as an activity to promote relaxation, and I could never see myself going along to such a group. I think I'd make myself more anxious, wondering if my collars and cuffs reached the standards of the other members!

Perhaps the secret to this relaxation, isn't so much in the activity of ironing, or of being able to say you belong to a group, but just in the act of taking time out of the activities which preoccupy us, and may even have us rushing around desperately trying to achieve all those "must do" tasks before bedtime.

I find "taking time out" and spending a wee while in prayer each day accomplishes the same goal of relaxation as I imagine is offered by these ironing classes; with no monetary cost, nor having to make an effort to relocate to another place. Wherever I am, in my armchair, on the bus, doing the housework, out walking or lying in my bed, I find talking to God, sharing all my thoughts and emotions with him, "balances my core". In those moments, I experience the free gift of God's grace, love and peace which carries me through the rest of the day and beyond.

Fiona

The Lord's Supper is celebrated on the last Sunday in January, March, June and October and every first Sunday of the month we will celebrate a short communion after morning service.

The Friendship Club

Meetings began on Monday 14th January with a wonderful recital by Alla Voce duo of Live Music Now. Dates of future meetings, all of which begin at 2pm are, Mondays 11th and 25th February, 11th (a recital by Stuart Montgomery) and 25th March, with the closing meeting of the session taking place on 8th April.

Bethany Christian Trust

Bethany Christian Trust sold over 3,000 Caring Christmas Trees last year, to both residents and businesses across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Glasgow and Fife. Caring Christmas Trees, raised £53k towards Bethany's Care Shelter and other winter projects with the homeless.

Bethany's Winter Care Shelter provides a hot meal and a safe place to sleep for those with nowhere to go during the coldest months of the year. This winter Bethany shared the story of Constantine, someone who was living on the streets, experiencing violence and abuse daily before finding Bethany's Care Shelter. Constantine says, 'The Care Shelter saved my life'. With Bethany's help, Constantine moved into Bethany Christian Centre and then Bethany House where he began to rebuild his life. Now Constantine is living in his own Bethany flat and is thinking about the next steps in his life.

Alasdair Bennett, Chief Executive at Bethany Christian Trust said, "Due to the generosity of those who chose to buy a Caring Christmas Tree, hundreds of people had somewhere warm, dry and safe to spend Christmas. We were able to provide care, support services, hot food and bed spaces to those in need throughout the festive season, and we are supremely grateful to everyone who bought a tree in 2018."

Since December 2018, the Night Shelter has been operating from "Diadem", formerly Stenhouse St Aiden's church building, which has been customised and adapted for the purpose.

Wordsearch

Places in the Old Testament

V	K	E	J	S	A	C	T	Y	A	Y	O	V	Z	Y	O	C	L	I	Z
Z	B	Z	T	E	R	Y	Y	I	Z	G	B	R	H	G	P	N	V	V	A
A	Q	U	O	S	R	F	Y	A	J	N	A	K	D	D	Q	W	C	A	L
I	U	J	G	N	I	U	O	T	N	I	B	V	L	H	N	B	I	B	B
R	V	I	L	U	Z	Y	S	M	N	B	E	Y	I	B	Y	M	B	Q	O
Y	E	H	X	W	R	E	Y	A	E	Z	L	M	J	B	U	M	D	P	G
S	O	U	A	L	S	U	V	T	L	N	F	N	Z	Q	M	C	A	U	H
S	B	H	H	T	Z	K	H	Y	J	E	J	I	G	I	O	D	E	P	Z
A	W	A	E	S	P	E	K	I	Q	T	M	T	Y	J	W	C	L	W	S
R	D	Q	V	L	L	Y	L	E	A	R	S	I	U	V	L	U	I	B	J
C	P	M	E	Z	V	E	X	B	U	B	F	D	E	D	O	M	G	V	C
K	N	Z	N	S	H	E	B	R	Q	G	A	B	M	S	S	K	W	Y	T
O	Q	M	I	W	G	V	U	C	R	H	H	V	R	H	O	R	E	B	V
C	C	E	N	Y	Q	F	T	N	L	J	V	J	S	F	H	P	U	X	N
O	B	R	P	C	T	Y	T	V	E	D	E	N	A	N	P	I	S	P	A
K	O	T	B	R	N	S	S	I	N	A	I	I	K	U	D	J	J	X	A
X	M	X	K	E	Z	J	E	R	I	C	H	O	S	N	N	E	Z	C	N
B	Q	A	B	J	Q	I	T	J	N	Y	A	F	A	R	G	O	A	S	A
S	M	P	Z	G	K	J	D	X	V	M	F	S	A	M	A	R	I	A	C
H	Y	L	K	G	L	B	A	B	Y	L	O	N	S	H	E	C	H	E	M

Assyria
Babel
Babylon
Bethel
Canaan
Eden

Edom
Egypt
Gilead
Horeb
Israel
Jericho

Jerusalem
Judah
Nineveh
Samaria
Shechem
Sinai
Ur

What's on in St Michael's?

Sunday	11.00 am	Morning Worship
	6.30pm	Evening Service - last Sunday of the month

Tea is served in the hall after Morning Worship and Soup Lunch is served after the morning service on the Second Sunday of every month.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated on the last Sunday in January, March, June and October.

Monday	10.00 am	Mothers and Toddlers Group
	2.00 pm	Friendship Club
	7.00pm	Zumba with Natalie

Tuesday	10.00 am	Mother and Toddlers Group
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Wednesday	10.30am	Scots Music Group
	2.00pm	St Colm's @ St Michael's Guild
	5.00 pm	Rainbows
	6.15pm	Brownies
	6.30pm	Guides

Thursday	10.00 am	Springwell Golden Voices
	2.00 pm	I.O.M
	7.00pm	Showcase

Friday	6.00 pm	Beavers
	6.00 pm	Cubs
	7.20pm	Scouts

Saturday	10.30 am	Young Ones
	10.30am	Coffee Morning (Third of the month)

Edinburgh: St Michael's Parish Church of Scotland
1 Slateford Road, Edinburgh EH11 1NX
Telephone: 0131 478 9675

E-mail: office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk
Website: <http://www.stmichaels-kirk.co.uk>
Scottish Registered Charity no: SC 009038