



SPRING  
2022

# ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

The Magazine of St Michael's Parish Church  
Edinburgh

## Contact details

<b>Minister:</b>	Rev. Andrea Price 13 Dovecot Park, EH14 2LN Tel: 0131 443 4355 E-mail: <a href="mailto:APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk">APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Session Clerk</b>	Mr Douglas Bannatyne, 6/6 Appin Terrace, EH14 1NN Tel: 444 2935 E-mail: <a href="mailto:douglasbannatyne@msn.com">douglasbannatyne@msn.com</a>
<b>Chair to the Board</b>	Rev. Andrea Price 13 Dovecot Park, EH14 2LN Tel: 0131 443 4355 E-mail: <a href="mailto:APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk">APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Clerk to the Board</b>	Mr Michael Bareford Tel: 07469810559
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mrs Moira Gray, 54 Stevenson Avenue, EH11 2SN Tel: 337 9028 E-mail: <a href="mailto:moira_gray@blueyonder.co.uk">moira_gray@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Miss Moira Miller 6/6 Appin Place, EH14 1PW Tel: 0131 455 7414 E-mail: <a href="mailto:moira-miller@talktalk.net">moira-miller@talktalk.net</a>
<b>Cradle Roll Elder</b>	Mrs Babs Webster, 322 Oxbgangs Rd North, EH13 9NE Tel: 441 1328 E-mail: <a href="mailto:babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk">babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Organist</b>	Mr Stuart Montgomery, 2 Henderson Row, EH3 5DS Tel: 556 2092 or 07713606117 E-mail: <a href="mailto:stuart.montgomery3@btopenworld.com">stuart.montgomery3@btopenworld.com</a>
<b>Fabric Convenor</b>	Mr Bill Bremner, 104 Balgreen Road, EH12 5UB
<b>Gift Aid Treasurer</b>	Tel: 337 7048
<b>Traidcraft</b>	E-mail: <a href="mailto:bill.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk">bill.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
<b>Church Secretary</b>	Mrs Fiona MacMillan, Church Office.
<b>Tower Editor</b>	Tel: 478 9675 E-mail: <a href="mailto:office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk">office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk</a>

**Dear Folks,**

Our Burns Evening this year, held online, reminded us of the poem "To a Mountain Daisy", which Douglas Bannatyne chose and read to us. In it Robert Burns mourns the fate of the wee, brave daisy flower which he has to plough over, and compares its fate with that of everybody in the onslaughts of life and times.

And then some of us read the book of Ecclesiastes again, and Ruth remembered her teacher hammering, sometimes literally, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" into her pupils.

Well, how very depressing, you may well say.

Yet, here we are with another spring approaching. The first snowdrops have been spotted and the daffodil and tulip bulbs are pushing their leaves out. In spite of dark nights, wind or cold, a New Year's cycle has begun, a little earlier than in former times – that too is climate change at work.

In the Christian year we are also at the beginning of a new cycle, journeying with Christ our Lord. We celebrated his birth at Christmas. We watched him grow and asking many wise questions in the temple as a young boy. We remembered his baptism and calling to teach the world about God's love and new ways - in spite of the world's storms, vanity and destruction.

And like any of us, like the mountain daisy and all things in this world, Jesus too went through the valley of the shadow of death, however, not to eternal destruction, but to be given new life by God in the resurrection.

So, instead of despairing, instead of following the materialist's creed that economic growth will solve all problems, let us follow our Lord's journey and with it, remember that it is life and love he offers his friends. And that will save the day and guide us through the night.

God, who gave us all life, and as Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, gives us plenty of time for all sorts of things, wants to give us joy in living, full life as Jesus said in John's gospel.

I hope to see you and speak to you soon, either at church on Sunday or at some of the events around Lent and Easter. Or get in touch if you would like a chat on the phone or a visit from me.

God bless you and your family

**Andrea**, your minister

### **Ecclesiastes Message**

....not all doom and gloom about vanity after all:

*"Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do. Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9: 7-9)*

### **Jesus' Message**

*"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.  
I am the good shepherd.  
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10: 10-11)*



Many congratulations to Andrea who, on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, celebrated 25 years as an ordained minister.

At the close of morning worship that day, Alan Gordon, on behalf of all the members of St Michael's, thanking her for her ministry of teaching, support and encouragement, presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a book.

Andrea, we wish you every blessing as you continue to lead, teach and support us through the coming months and years.

## Changes to the Church Family

### **Funerals:**

#### **Members:**

Irene Herd

John Hulse

Catherine Eagle (Cathy) Anderson

#### **Non-members:**

Alexander Gibb

James Skinner Mack

**Baptism:** Izzy Duff

### **Ordination of Elders on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> February:**

Gary Anderson

Moirra Miller

## **Thank you**

A collection for Marie Curie Hospice, in memory of Cathie Anderson and Alex Anderson's late wife Linda, was taken at the end of Cathie's funeral service in the church,

The collection raised £134, which Alex has handed into Marie Curie, Edinburgh.



Alex Anderson is welcoming donations of Chocolate Easter Eggs for taking and distributing to the young patients in the wards of the Sick Kids Hospital in time for Easter.

Chocolate Eggs can be taken to church any Sunday morning, or contact Alex or any of the Elders to arrange collection of your donation.

## **Irene Herd 8<sup>th</sup> February 1942 – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Irene married Bill in St Michael's Church in 1964 and they were blessed with their daughter Dianne two years later.

Irene had been to a Billy Graham rally in Murrayfield stadium, which sparked her interest in things of faith. She was baptized at St Michael's Church and became an elder in 1993. When she retired, still in her mid-50s, Irene used her organizational skills and energy for the work of the church. She became an active contributor to the church's restoration committee and the fundraising committee. Together with four others, she ran the "Restoration Shop" on Ashley Terrace selling second hand goods, garden gnomes and all kinds of things. They also ran stalls at markets and in the Assembly Rooms raising thousands of pounds to ensure St Michael's future.

When the leader of the Friendship Club needed a break, Irene took a turn to lead the Club and was its Secretary for many years. She also organized the collection and delivery of knitted baby clothes for Simpsons Maternity Hospital. A member of the Pastoral Care Team, Irene was unfailing in her support of others.

A good cook and baker, Irene's tablet was famous, and she made ever so much of it to sell for church funds. She also helped with the church lunch club, the Soup Pot. Irene loved her garden and for years she and Bill distributed the church flowers to those sick, in hospital or bereaved. In recent years Irene, together with Dianne, developed a fine art of composing one large floral arrangement, made up entirely of silk flowers, for the front of the church.

Irene became quite interested in history and was an active member of the church archive group, gathering precious documents of St Michael's history and safeguarding them. This resulted in the booklet the 'History of St Michael's, 1883-2008'.

Irene had a kind heart, loved her pets, especially her dogs, and was as soft as butter with them.

She was not afraid to speak her mind and was generous with her time, energy and talents.



## **Fairtrade Fortnight 21<sup>st</sup> February – 6<sup>th</sup> March**

Did You Know Fairtrade Fortnight started in Edinburgh in 1997 and is now celebrated in a number of countries around the world, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand?

This year, the focus of Fairtrade Fortnight is climate change and the growing problems this poses to farmers and workers within the Fairtrade community.

During the two weeks of Fairtrade Fortnight, individuals, groups and companies come together to celebrate the people in developing countries who grow our food, but who are often underpaid and exploited. Climate change is a huge challenge for farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, yet these are the countries who have contributed least to the cause of climate change. Droughts, crop disease, floods, heatwaves and shrinking harvests are among the challenges they face. When the Fairtrade Foundation spoke to some of these farmers, they were told that they felt climate change was one of the biggest obstacles their generation is facing.

Choosing to buy fairly traded goods is one of the simplest ways to make a difference in the world. Through fair trade, farmers and growers can earn enough to feed their families, send their children to school, provide a future for their local community and look into solutions to the problems they face due to climate change.

How will you celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight this year? Supporting St Michael's Tradecraft stall is a great way to ensure you're doing your bit. Why not start by purchasing a Real Easter Egg? You can purchase these, and many other fairly traded items, every Sunday morning before and after the service at the back of the church, or by ordering through Sheila Bremner at [sheila.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sheila.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk)

Edinburgh Libraries, in association with Edinburgh Fairtrade City Steering Group, is highlighting Fairtrade Fortnight in each of its libraries with printed materials, videos, and perhaps some free samples.

Fairtrade Foundation has a range of online events across Fairtrade Fortnight, which can be accessed here

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/lineup/>

## **ECO Church Update**

### **Energy Price Cap**

As most of us will be aware by now, the Government has recently announced the new energy price cap. This will mean that we will all be paying bills on average 54% higher than before.

While we can do little about the increase in the prices we will be facing, it may be possible for you to consider how to make your home more energy efficient.

Below are a couple of Scottish Government funded initiatives that can offer advice on how to manage your energy bills, as well as information and support available to help make your house more energy efficient.

### **Home Energy Scotland**

The Scottish Government funded Home Energy Scotland provides advice on how you can make your home more energy efficient.

Advisors offer free, impartial advice on energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting water waste and more.

See their website for the full range of information at

[www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org)

You can also find out what support is on offer in your area and when, by calling Home Energy Scotland for free on 0808 808 2282.

### **Energy Advice Scotland**

Home Energy Advice provides free, practical advice and information on energy-related matters Scotland wide.

Visit their website to see the full range of information available at

[www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org) or call 0808 196 8660

### **Garment Recycling**

Did you know that you can now recycle old clothes at Primark and H&M stores across the UK. Both recycle textiles, including bed sheets and towels, in any condition, so that nothing goes to landfill.

Pamela Couper

Two polar bears, standing on an ice flow, spot another ice flow with what looks like a panda heading their way. One polar bear turns to the other and asks, "What the heck is a PANDA doing in the Arctic?" The bear on the other ice flow, hearing the conversation, butts in, "I'm a polar bear with a sun tan"



## **Lent Conversations @ St Michael's Church**

Lent is the time before Easter when we make an effort to understand our faith a little better. You are invited to come to four evening meetings, which will last about one hour, and held in the church.

The meetings are suitable for young and older folk alike. We will sing a little, chat, listen or draw together while thinking about some passages from John's gospel reflecting on God's message to us through Jesus.

**Dates:** Wednesdays 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March

**Time:** 7-8pm

## **Lent Appeal 2022**

This year we hope to support EMMS International (Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society International) in our Lent Appeal, whose motto is "Health for Today, Hope for Tomorrow". Following Jesus' example and mission to bring God's good news to the poor, EMMS is working for a just world in which all people have access to good quality and dignified healthcare.

EMMS work with partners in some of the poorest communities of the world, e.g. Malawi, to transform lives through compassionate, effective and sustainable healthcare.

Covid has had consequences there, which we would hardly think of. It has caused a Pandemic Pregnancy Crisis. With schools closed, people out of work and economic pressure mounting, there has been a sharp rise in early pregnancies.

The COVID-19 battle is far from over, but the rise in teenage pregnancies will have repercussions long after the cloud of coronavirus has passed. Our support will help protect the health and future of teenage girls in Malawi.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March we will welcome a speaker from EMMS in our morning service at 11am who will tell us more about their work and projects in Malawi, and how we can help God's family there.

Read more on their website [www.emms.org](http://www.emms.org) or send a donation directly to Moira Gray.

Thank you so much.

## **Holy Week and Easter**

### **Experiencing Easter Trail**

When you have time during Holy Week, which starts 10<sup>th</sup> April, you may wish to walk the trail in the church garden around St Michael's thinking about the Easter story.

### **Good Friday Walk of Witness**

Walking the Cross from Craiglockhart Church to Polwarth Church, St Michael's Church and then on to Barclay Viewforth Church, stopping for a short act of worship at each one.

**Duration:** about 1 ½ hours

At the moment this is just an idea but keep a lookout for announcements nearer the time.

### **Good Friday Service**

7.30pm in St Michael's Church

### **Easter Morning Communions**

7am Open Air Garden Service followed by a shared breakfast in the church halls

11am Easter Communion Service in the church

## **Fresh Start**

First of all we would like to thank everyone at St. Michael's for your ongoing and generous support for the Fresh Start organisation. It does make a huge difference to the lives of so many people. All your donations of food, toiletries and cleaning materials go into starter packs or the Pantry which offers a dignified alternative to foodbank use and helps tackle social isolation and find community connectedness.

Jane is a member of the Pantry and is currently in temporary accommodation. "The Pantry has helped me a lot as we struggle to make our money stretch, so we use the Pantry. I feel more connected to you all in the Pantry, you have helped me and I feel I can be upfront and honest with you."

It is for people like Jane that all we can do to support Fresh Start helps to make life a little better. Please keep up the good work.

Babs & Alasdair.

## **Presbytery Mission Plan Consultation**

In December 2021 we were at last sent the proposals for the new Presbytery Mission Plan, as it is now called. And it is fair to say that it is causing a great deal of debate, worries and excitement. All congregations are affected. Everyone will feel things changing in the future.

Why is the church changing? Some people say it is all money driven and therefore not about God's Spirit working. However the proposals, and they are so far only proposals, are a result of the lack of ministers in our church, which is a result of the lack of younger people in church.

Think about it: if less young people come to church, how can they become involved and learn that ministry is a wonderful profession and life task? It cannot be right for a church as a whole to have 350+ congregations and charges without a minister at any one time.

So the General Assembly 2021 gave every presbytery a set number of posts to allocate. This means that from 2025 onwards Edinburgh Presbytery will only have 48.5 ministry posts to work with, a reduction from 76 posts presently. This has drastic consequences for all of us.

So what is proposed for us? St Michael's congregation is to come together with three other congregations: Polwarth, Barclay Viewforth and Craiglockhart. They will form one parish, but share two ministers. All their elders will form one session and together decide how to organize the worship and outreach/mission for their area and in their buildings.

Although it is called a "union" this does not necessarily mean that buildings will be closed – although that part of the Mission Plan proposals has yet to be published. The proposals for the church buildings are being reviewed by the General Trustees, who are in the process of auditing all church buildings.

What does this mean for us? Like others, we were surprised that GDS Church is not to come in with us but is proposed to go together with Palmerstone Place. We have at times worked together with Polwarth Church but Barclay Viewforth we have barely met and Craiglockhart is all new to us. Will we manage to work over such a large area in future with only two ministers?

What are the next steps? In February every Session will be sent a letter asking for our responses by 15<sup>th</sup> March. We will be invited to make corrections of facts and can also make counterproposals. However there is

no wriggle room in ministerial numbers. If someone asks for another minister, it will need to be taken from someone else's provision.

From April to June, sessions will be visited and listened to. Then the Mission plan will be adjusted. From June to September, more discussions will lead to further adjustments. As you can imagine this will be a tricky and contentious process, which will last until October 2022, when it is hoped the plan will be approved by everyone in presbytery. It then has to be approved by the national Faith Nurture Forum. By the end of this year the plan is supposed to be agreed and signed off by everyone and it is to be implemented by 2025.

What can you do? Pray for your elders and minister to keep the faith and make wise decisions. And encourage your young people to come to church and be the church. Because, if the next generation does not come forward, the church will contract still further.

### **Wednesday Bible Study Zooms –Old Testament Nuggets**

We will continue our exploration of books of the Old Testament with the help of Rev David Wood's studies. The zoom format allows us to spend an hour chatting and listening to each other in the comfort of our homes. Do join us.

**Dates of the meetings:** 20<sup>th</sup> April looking at the book of Proverbs  
27<sup>th</sup> April looking at the book of Job  
4<sup>th</sup> May looking at the book of Jonah

**Time:** 7pm – 8pm

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83036952077?pwd=ekt6TlVBd2ttVUZlTQWlhdFYwMEtEUT09>

**Meeting ID:** 830 3695 2077

**Passcode:** 795398

### **The General Assembly 2022**

The General Assembly is a significant annual event in the Church of Scotland calendar. Throughout the week, commissioners to the General Assembly examine the work and laws of the Church and make decisions that affect its future. This year's General Assembly will take place from Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May. Pray for all those involved as they make decisions which affect us all

## **The Friendship Club**

Robert Burns' most often quoted lines,

“The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,  
Gang aft agley”,

were proved, yet again, to be true when we had to cancel the Friendship Club meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, due to rising Covid numbers. However, prior to that date, on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 our speaker, Juliet Wilson, brought slides of Merchiston Cemetery and spoke in a scholarly manner, about the folk buried there. Although it seems like a sad subject, Juliet brought the achievements of the deceased to life. She showed that paradoxically, the cemetery was full of life, especially wild life, white squirrels, owls, woodpeckers and lively plants like ivy, determined to grow and flourish beside the dead.

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, we met a trail blazer! The Reverend Margaret Forrester told us about her campaign to allow women to become Ministers of the Church of Scotland. Margaret and a small group of her pals, had answers for all the objections put forward, some using biblical texts, and they won every argument! After much wrangling, in May 1968 women were allowed to become Ministers. Today, more than a quarter of Church of Scotland Ministers are women. We are delighted to have a lady Minister at St. Michael's Church.

In December we had a Christmas party and our Minister, Andrea, helped the party to go with a swing by leading the carol singing.

Unfortunately, the first meeting of the New Year had to be cancelled, but on the 31<sup>st</sup> January we hosted a guitarist and a singer from “Live Music Now”. We are proud of our association with “Live Music Now”, a charity set up by the late Yehudi Menuhin. The charity encourages young musicians starting out on their careers. Ross, the Guitarist, played beautifully, with clean finger work and musically thought out vibrato. He played music by Heitor Villa-Lobos and Manuel de Falla, evoking all the warmth and colour of Brazil and Spain. Ines, the singer sang songs by John Dowland, with impeccable diction. She also sang in Spanish and Italian. They remembered that they were close to Burns' day and performed songs by Robert Burns; their rich and varied repertoire was greatly appreciated.

We all look forward to the ever popular Stuart Montgomery's Concert on Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Stuart is bringing a French Horn player, Esme MacBride Stewart and their programme is also rich and varied.

After Stuart's Concert there will be three more meetings of the Friendship Club - that is if everything goes to plan! On February 28<sup>th</sup> a member of Edinburgh Street Pastors will come to speak about the charity's work and on March 14<sup>th</sup> our guest speaker will be Neil Price. We close our session on Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup> when we will hold our Spring Tea. Everybody is welcome; we try to include entertainment and interesting speakers that will appeal to everyone.

However, we will bear in mind Burns' warning regarding plans! Let's give our National Bard the last words:-

"And here's to them that wish us weel.  
May a' that's guid watch o'er them!"

Ruth Andrews

### **Who Am I?**

I have no feathers  
but I can fly.  
I have no tethers,  
I just drift by.

I can't swim a stroke  
but I can float.  
I bring joy to folk  
On land or boat.

I am beautiful,  
I am serene.  
A breeze carries me  
from scene to scene.

My colour is bright,  
children love me.  
They squeal with delight  
then set me free.

You know who I am,  
don't be a buffoon.  
You've passed this exam,  
I am a balloon!

## **Desmond Tutu**

One of the best loved Christians in our lifetime died on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Desmond Tutu was a small man physically, he had a huge laugh and he spent his life bridging the gulf between black and white, between oppressor and victim and used his strong non-violent Christian principles to help heal South Africa in a spirit of atonement and forgiveness.

He was born in 1931 and brought up in poverty. In 1960 he was ordained as an Anglican priest and then moved to study theology in London. In 1966 he returned to South Africa and taught for years in a Theological Seminary. In 1978 he became the first black general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He emerged as one of the most prominent opponents of South Africa's vicious apartheid system of racial segregation and white minority rule. As an activist he was a great supporter of human rights and stressed non-violent protest and encouraged an international economic boycott to bring about the end of apartheid. He was vociferous in warning the South African government and police that to continue with apartheid would lead to racial violence.

In 1984 he was awarded the Nobel Peace prize for all his efforts in trying to end apartheid. Two years later he was appointed Archbishop of Cape Town, the most senior Anglican Church appointment in South Africa. He secured approval for the ordination of female priests. He continued to be very active in multiple acts of civil disobedience. In 1988 he addressed the South African Government telling them defending apartheid was fundamentally indefensible, because it is evil. It is immoral without question, it is Unchristian.

Finally in 1990, South African President F.W. de Klerk lifted the ban on political parties like the African National Congress (ANC) and announced the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Mandela and de Klerk then negotiated an end to Apartheid and in the 1994 multiracial general election, Mandela became president. Mandela realized that reconciliation would be necessary between the country's racial groups and created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate past human rights abuses. It was titled "No Future without Forgiveness". He appointed Desmond Tutu to chair this, which he did with great success, as Tutu worked tirelessly for restorative rather than retributive justice. He so believed that justice, goodness, love and compassion must prevail. He always said he was a priest and not a politician.

On the International front he continued to strongly criticize Israel's policies



towards the Palestinians as being very similar to the policies of Apartheid in South Africa.

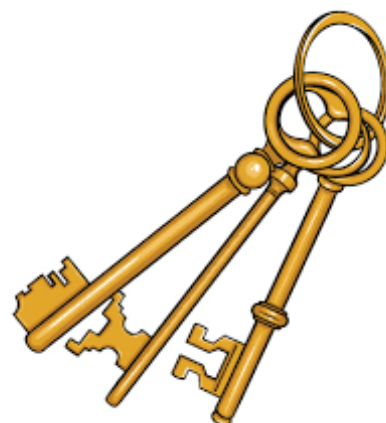
He finally officially retired from Public duties in 2010 and then in 2015 he went to Dharamsala in India to celebrate the Dalai Lama's 80th Birthday. Together they produced a remarkable book "The Book of Joy" crafted by deep and humorous conversation between a Buddhist and a Christian, which has become an International Bestseller.

He prayed for hours every day and his daily custom was to have the Eucharist as well. Our World has indeed lost a very holy, and very human man who spent his life pursuing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with his God.(Micah 6:8).

Allan Gordon

### **Key register**

As we see the reopening of our building for use by church and community groups and individuals, it seemed appropriate that an audit is carried out to ascertain who has keys to the building. To this end, if you have a set of keys, could you please contact Fiona with details of what, and how many, keys you have, so that they can be entered into the new register. E-mail [office@stmichaels-keik.co.uk](mailto:office@stmichaels-keik.co.uk) or leave a message on 0131 478 9675.



If you have a set of keys which you no longer require, do please hand them in to anyone on duty at morning worship any Sunday, or pop them, along with your details, into an envelope and post through the letterbox on the office door. An acknowledgement of their return will be issued to you.

Thank you for your help in this.

### **Easter Jokes**

1. Why was there so much yelling in the bakery on Easter?
2. What do you call a rabbit comedian?
3. How do you know when the Easter Bunny is angry?

## St Colms @ St Michael's Guild

The Guild finished 2021 in style with a very happy Christmas party at which Neil Price, standing in for Andrea who had suffered a bad reaction to her covid booster, sang for us, with Ruth at the piano, and led us in carol singing. We managed to play pass the parcel but keeping a metre apart was a challenge!

In my report in the winter Tower I mentioned that we were to hold an auction of Cathie Neill's beautiful quilting and sewing articles. We had a great afternoon auctioning off her pieces with Michael McMullan being a splendid auctioneer. He had the right amount of banter and may I say, respect for the goods he was auctioning. Everything was sold and £264 was raised for Guild funds and projects. An afternoon of fun and serious money-raising!

### The auction in full swing



Sadly our meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> January had to be cancelled due to the Church of Scotland's restrictions. We met on 9<sup>th</sup> February with John Vincent, priest in charge at St Martin of Tours, being able to come and speak to us and start the New Year. He spoke on his experience of being an Army Chaplain,

having served in Iraq and Afghanistan. We heard about all the duties involved in such Christian work and he brought a new insight into that area of work unfamiliar to many of us. A good start to the New Year.

Our next meeting is on 23<sup>rd</sup> February and on 9<sup>th</sup> March we are having Karen Gillon, the Guild General Secretary speak to us. On 23<sup>rd</sup> February Carol Finlay, from what was World Mission now Faith in Action is coming to speak to us. Carol recently preached at Church so it will be a pleasure to welcome her back.

The meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April will be our AGM; how quickly the time has flown from getting back together again in September. It has been a good lively session with good attendances. All are welcome to Guild meetings whether members or not.

The Guild wish everyone a glad Spring and a joyous Easter.

Fay Anderson, co convener



# **World Day of Prayer**

(Scottish Committee)

## ***Informed Prayer; Prayerful Action***

### **Edinburgh West Area Services for World Day of Prayer On Friday, 4th March 2022**

Carrick Knowe Parish Church, EH12 7DR	2.00pm
Saughtonhall United Reformed Church, EH12 5TR	2.00pm
Davidson's Mains Parish Church, EH4 5BB	2.30pm
South Queensferry Parish Church, EH30 9HY	7.30pm

## Congratulations to Stuart Montgomery



Stuart's book, '**Edinburgh : The Silent City**', has surpassed his target of raising £20,000 for St. Columba's Hospice; all monies going directly to patient care. Sales have actually amounted to nearly £30,000, before production costs were taken off, and already the amount for the hospice is creeping up to £21,000.

A reprint is ready to go, and if you would like more copies then please just let Stuart know.

Stuart would like to thank all those who purchased his book, for promoting it and helping him during these past fourteen months to reach this phenomenal fundraising achievement.

## Symphonic Praise

Join Origin Scotland for a wonderful evening of worship in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm. Tickets, which must be booked, are free but are strictly limited due to capacity restraints.

Book your ticket at [www.originscotland.org](http://www.originscotland.org) or call 0131 541 0117



## Wildlife in Edinburgh's Cemeteries

When lockdown was announced and we were restricted to one hour of Daily Exercise in our local area, I was one of many people who turned to walking through our local cemeteries. My partner and I walked through Dalry and North Merchiston Cemeteries every day in the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic and we continue to walk there regularly.



We soon realised that these cemeteries were thriving havens for a wide variety of wildlife, from nesting great spotted woodpeckers and sparrow hawks to over 78 species of insects, including at least 26 different types of hoverflies (harmless insects that mimic bees and wasps). We also sometimes saw the famous white squirrel that visits

North Merchiston Cemetery.

Through my involvement with the newly set up Friends Group for North Merchiston Cemetery and my recording of the wildlife in the two cemeteries, I was approached by the City of Edinburgh Council to carry out wildlife surveys of all the 43 cemeteries managed by the council. These include historic city centre cemeteries, such as Greyfriars; historic kirkyards outwith the city centre, such as Dalmeny; relatively modern cemeteries that are in regular use, including Craigmillar Castle Park and Victorian garden cemeteries that are no longer in regular use and have often become overgrown, such as Dalry and North Merchiston.

Over the past few months, I have visited most of the city's cemeteries and discovered a wonderful range of wildlife. It turns out that Greyfriars Kirkyard is not only a magnet for Harry Potter fans, but also home to a surprising number and variety of ladybirds. Did you know there are about 20 different types of ladybird found in Scotland? Corstorphine Parish Cemetery and Grange Cemetery are both home to examples of the rare Corstorphine sycamore (a unique type of sycamore). South Leith Kirkyard hosts a large number of grey squirrels, a pair of which I watched making a drey (nest) last time I visited. Many cemeteries are wonderful places for a variety of fungi in the autumn, particularly Morningside Cemetery which boasts a selection of rare waxcap fungi. Snowdrops are blooming in many

cemeteries at the moment, while winter aconites are showing their yellow flowers in a few sites, including Cramond cemetery. Crocuses won't be far behind and are already starting to show themselves in North Merchiston Cemetery.

When I visit a cemetery to survey the wildlife, I like to take time to have a coffee break and watch the birds as they flit around the trees. It's a lovely way to appreciate the beauty of nature.

Cemeteries are not just places for the dead; they are places full of life. Wildlife is currently being lost at a terrifying rate so all our greenspaces, including cemeteries, are incredibly valuable. There is admittedly a balance between looking after a cemetery for nature and looking after the graves. For example, ivy can damage graves, but it is incredibly valuable for wildlife, offering nesting sites for birds and winter foods for insects, including some of those 26 different species of hoverfly. So it's no coincidence that the most overgrown looking cemeteries are the best ones for finding wildlife.

The council is currently working on putting together new management plans for all the cemeteries. It's encouraging that as part of this they are currently looking at how cemeteries can be better managed for wildlife.

So next time you're passing North Merchiston, or any of the other many cemeteries in the city, how about popping in to wander round and enjoy the wildlife. You may be surprised by what you see!

Juliet Wilson,  
Friends of North Merchiston Cemetery

### **The Scottish Chamber Choir**

Directed by Iain McLarty, and with Simon Leach on the organ, The Scottish Chamber Choir will sing Faure's Requiem, and motets by Durufle, Messiaen and Poulenc in Old St Paul's Episcopal Church, 63 Jeffrey Street, EH1 1DH at 7.30pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Tickets cost £12 (Students £6) and can be ordered via TICKET Source or at the door where payment is by card only.

More information can be found at [info@scottishchamberchoir.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishchamberchoir.org.uk)

## **Music at St Michael's**

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm, Mihai Ritivoiu on piano, and Yoanna Prodanova on cello will give a concert featuring:

Debussy Sonata in D minor

Schubert Sonata in A minor "Arpeggione"

Chopin Polish Songs Op 74 (selection)

Dohnanyi Sonata in B flat major

There is no pre-booking or tickets; entry is free with a retiring collection.

Do come along to what promises to be a wonderful evening of music.

## **Care for the Family**



For more than thirty years Take a Break action holidays have given single parent families the opportunity to spend quality time together.

Parents and children enjoy a variety of activities from canoeing to campfires, archery to abseiling, together with other single parent families. Our subsidised holidays take place throughout the summer at great venues across the UK. Over the years, many families have said that it was the best holiday they'd ever had.

If you know of any single mums or dads with children aged 5-15 looking for a holiday with a difference, why not let them know about Take A Break. Booking lines are now open on 029 2081 0800. More information about the holidays can be found at the link

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/events/take-a-break>



## **Angel Tree Gift Collection**

Dear Andrea and Everyone at St Michael's,

After twenty-one years of organising the gift collection. I am running out of superlatives to describe the difference your congregations, kindness and generosity makes to the families and children of those held within the walls of Edinburgh Prison.

The difference the gift collection makes is impossible to measure in words alone. Please believe me when I say your kindness and generosity makes a profound difference to the lives of so many families and children: children who, without your support, may not have had any gifts to open on Christmas morning. That is truly how important the gift collection is.

The number of families and children that received gifts through the gift collection was 71 families and 153 children. The small amount of that were left will be used throughout the year for birthdays and other events. Thank you all for making the thirty sixth Edinburgh Prison Christmas gift collection a success.

Shona and Patrizia the Barnardo's staff in the visitor's centre were again vital to the success of the gift collection. I have some wonderful news to share with you. Shona Pate, the Manager of Edinburgh's Prisons Visitor Centre, has won a Butler Trust Award for 2021-22. It is wonderful, that the work that Shona and her staff do supporting the families of those in Edinburgh prison has been recognised in the awarding of a Butler Trust. The part that Shona and her staff play in the Christmas give collection is a small part of the invaluable the work that they do. This is a very well deserved Award.

I would once again like to thank the Governor of Edinburgh Prison, David Abernethy, and Deputy Governor, Gillian Walker for their continued support.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. I would also like to take the opportunity to wish you all a very prosperous new year.

Thank you once again for your support in making the gift collection a success.

Best Wishes  
Colin O'Flaherty

## Church House Chatter

Have you ever watched a very young child begin to explore the world around them? Even the tiniest piece of dust fascinates them; they stare at it for a long time, turning it this way and that in their tiny fingers and, more often than not, put it in to their mouths to see what it tastes and feels like in that orifice. Parents certainly need to have eyes at the back of their heads!

Recently my youngest, 1year old grandson found great hilarity at a grape which, falling onto the floor beside him, began to roll along the carpet. Instantly he related the grape's movement to that of the soft ball we'd been playing with. How he laughed and clapped his hands in delight, marvelling at what he was seeing. He then initiated a game of moving some of the other items, of differing shape and size, which were lying around us to see what happened when they too were given a gentle nudge: early scientific experimentation and exploration. Children can certainly make us look again, explore and marvel at what, to us, has often become so commonplace, that we no longer take notice.

In the ancient world, children were considered to hold the lowest status in society yet, as we read in Matthew 18:3, Mark 10:14, and Luke 18:17, children feature in Jesus' teachings. Specifically He teaches that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children, and that his followers should show the same qualities that young children have: trust, dependence, faith, innocence and love. He stresses that we must trust in and depend on God, in the same way as children depend on their parents and other adults.

When Jesus wanted to bless children, He said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it"* (Mark 10:14–15). The Bible does not teach that we have to earn our way into God's presence; all that is asked of us is "to come" and to "receive".

How does a child receive a gift? They do so eagerly, willing to question, trusting, boldly, and with unbridled joy. That trust and joy should be a hallmark of our faith as we receive God's gift in Christ this Easter.

Fiona

## Answers to the Easter Jokes

1. There were a lot of cross buns.
2. A funny bunny.
3. He'll look hopping mad.