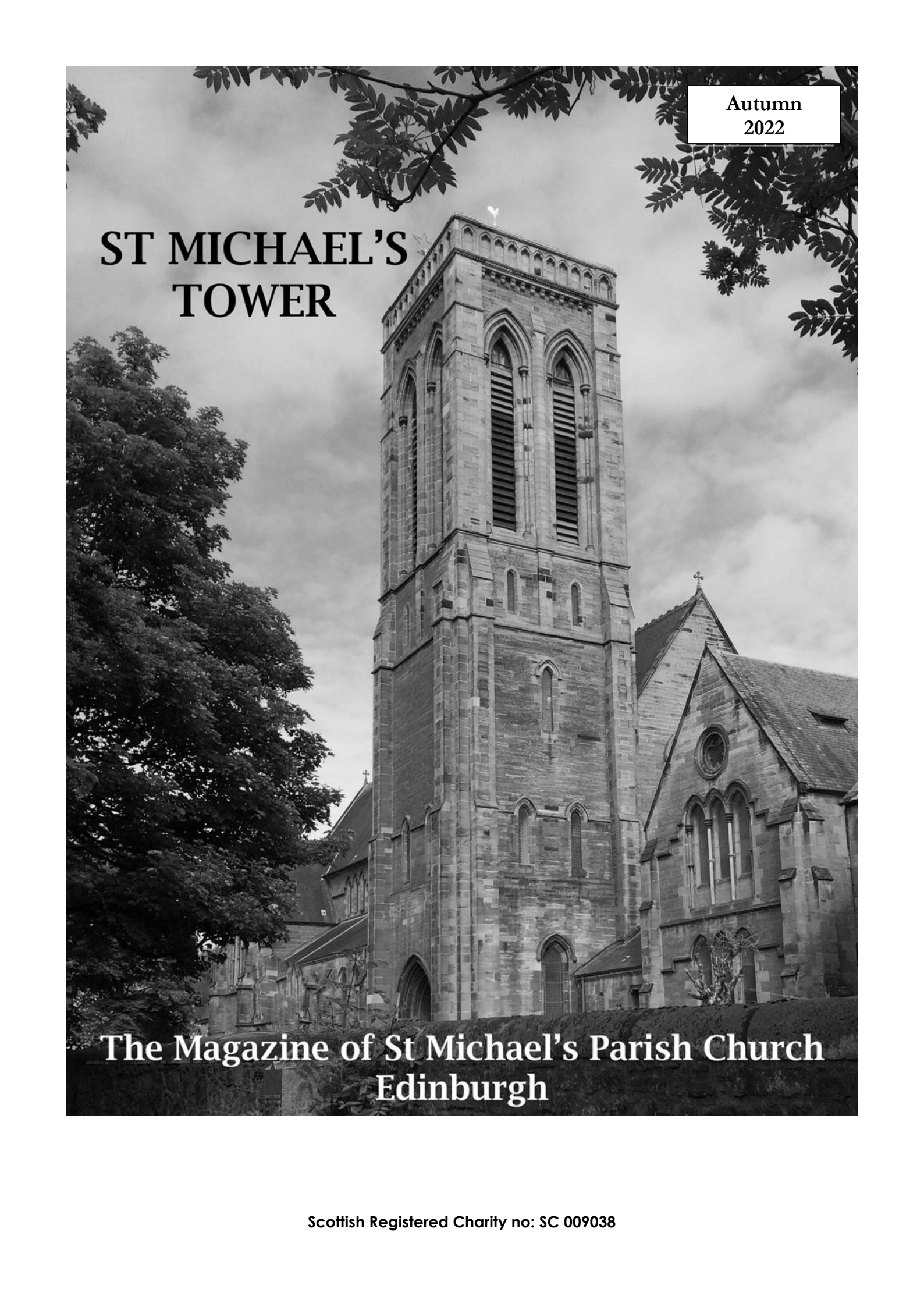




Autumn
2022

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

The Magazine of St Michael's Parish Church
Edinburgh

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Dear friends,

Autumn is the “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” – or so the poet Keats describes it in his poem “To Autumn”. Here is the first verse.

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.*

We have had a good summer with plenty of sunshine and enough rain to swell the fruit in our gardens. Golfers, gardeners and walkers are brown without even travelling far. And those of us who have had the chance to travel and enjoy a break away from home have come back with stories to tell and, I hope, refreshed.

The bible compares God quite often with a gardener busy providing food for his household. God plants the garden of Eden, Jesus tells stories of vineyards being fenced, guarded and pruned in order to provide good fruit. There is a garden at the end of the age, described in the book of Revelation, a vision of a glorious, light-filled and open city full of trees by a river providing fruit every month of the year. Even the leaves are for the healing of the nations.

As our world is awakening to the problems we are all facing due to climate change trees and plants are gaining more and more attention and respect from us humans. City planners are realising that planting trees and parkland, roadsides, flowerbeds and even walls can stem life threatening overheating.

While the plight of the polar bears touches our hearts we are beginning to understand that this earth can well do without mankind but not without bees, tiny worms and microbes busy producing the food we rely on. We are realising only now that we are not able to live on God's blue planet on our own but are part of a complex web of creation and we need to do our bit to safeguard it rather than abuse and destroy it.

So, this Autumn, we thank God again for the harvest we are able to enjoy from fields and gardens, mines and soil, sea, rivers and lakes. Many problems lie ahead because of the destructive exploitation of resources our species has indulged in for nearly two centuries and now peoples' lives begin to be directly affected by climate change and power struggles over resources.

Everyone will feel the ripples and consequences and humanity will be tested in the years ahead. We will be tested for what we really hold dear and believe. Will we love God and our neighbour as ourselves – or just ourselves?

May God guide us and strengthen us as we move through Autumn towards the end of this year and the beginning of a new one. May we be like the branches of Christ the vine in God's vineyard, able to bring forth the fruits of God's Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control.

Please get in touch if you would like a chat with me. And do get involved in the life of St Michael's Church to make sure it will continue. Church is a private charity under law. It is God given but still man and woman made! Let's tend God's vineyard together for a good harvest.

God bless you.

Andrea, the minister

Edinburgh Mission Planning Update

As you know the numbers of ministry posts in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian have to be cut drastically and all congregations are in the process of working out how to organise church life in future.

The proposal for St Michael's is to form a new parish with three of our neighbouring parishes, Barclay Viewforth, Polwarth and Craiglockhart. This new parish will have two ministers supporting elders and office bearers in running its life and worship centres.

The work of this new parish will be described in a so-called "Mission Narrative". Based on the five marks of Mission it describes the work of the church in its area: how it **tells** and **teaches** the good news of God, how it **tends** its people, how it **transforms** unjust structures and **treasures** God's creation.

As part of this process every existing congregation has been asked to draft a mission narrative. Read our submission overleaf.

On 25 August 2022 the current four ministers plus two elders from each congregation will meet to attempt to draft one joint document out of the four individual ones. This document will then be submitted to Presbytery and the Faith Nurture Committee of 121 George Street.

The next Presbytery meetings (13 September, 4 October and 15 November) will, no doubt, be busy with updates and detailed discussions of the proposed mission plan. We are scheduled to approve the Mission Plan by 6 December at the latest.

St Michael's Mission Narrative

1 August 2022

TELLS THE GOOD NEWS

- In regular communal worship expressing our outward looking and inclusive ethos inspiring our actions.
- Worship is participative and relating to current affairs
- Music of all kinds on piano and organ enhances our worship with hymns sung mainly from CH4
- Banners, social media, leaflets and the magazine are tools used to share the good news
- We aim to upgrade from recording and uploading our services to enable live streaming in future

TEACHES THE GOOD NEWS to everyone according to their age and stage

- We offer groups with a warm and friendly atmosphere including Bible study, communicants class , Guild and child friendly activities
- we invite people to share in the life of the congregation as a way of learning to live our faith
- We plan to restart a welcoming group for new attendees

TENDS to its members and neighbours through its pastoral care to the housebound and bereaved, fighting isolation by offering the Friendship Club, the Film Club, Pious Pints, Coffee Mornings and Second Sunday Soup, offering its space to support wellbeing with concerts, drama and exercise.

In future we will continue responding to the changing needs of our neighbours.

TRANSFORMS unjust structures by regularly supporting, among others, Fairtrade and Christian Aid, Fresh Start and Bethany, Gifts for Prisoners' Children, Amnesty Letter writing, HiV AIDS and regular fundraising for various charities home and abroad.

We aim to continue raising awareness about injustice by inviting speakers, signing petitions, giving financial support and donations in kind.

TREASURES God's creation by being an ECO congregation, encouraging recycling and the re-wilding of part of the church garden.

Remembrance Sunday – 13 November 2022

We will remember those who gave their lives in the two World Wars during the morning service. In order to be able to observe the silence at 11am we will start the service at 10.50 am.

After the service we will walk to North Merchiston Cemetery across the road and, at about 12.15, hold a short commemoration at the War Memorial there. Please join in and invite friends and neighbours to this event.

Bereavement Service – 20 November 2022

On Sunday 20 November we are offering a service at 3pm for all who have been bereaved in the past year or at another time but would like some space to remember and grieve together.

Join us for a time of reflection, remembering loved ones and the precious time you shared.

Time Out – Wednesday Evening Reflections 7.30pm to 8pm

Are you still going for a daily walk as many of us did during lockdown? If so then why not walk towards St Michael's and come in for 30 minutes to stop and think.

With music and songs, poetry, readings and prayers we will explore the Fruits of the Spirit.

Next Dates: 21 September 2022 – Peace
 26 October 2022 – Patience
 30 November 2022 - Kindness

Pious Pints *Restarting*

Join us in the back room of "The Athletic Arms" (better known as "The Diggers") for a thoughtful pause and lots of conversation with everyone else there.

Next Dates: (Tuesdays) 13 September, 11 October, 22 November
Time: 7.30pm

Coffee Mornings

As life gradually returns to pre-Covid normality we intend to start monthly Coffee Mornings from October 2022.

We do not feel confident enough yet to have a Christmas Fair on the scale that we have had previously but hope to have some of the usual toiletries, decorations and gifts for sale in November and December.

So mark the following dates for your diaries:

Saturday 1 October Saturday 5 November Saturday 3 December
From 10.30 am to 12 Noon

See you there!

Stuart Montgomery, Director of Music

Sitting in the Gallery one afternoon recently at his Festival Concert, I realised how easy it is to take for granted the work that Stuart puts in each week to enhance our worship at St Michael's. Stuart has been Director of Music at St Michael's since 1993 and offers a varied selection of traditional and contemporary music, chosen with consideration to suit the occasion and mood of the Congregation.



We look forward to many more years of Bach, Chopin, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, suitably presented by Stuart, on Organ and Piano.

Douglas Bannatyne



St Michael's Friendship Club

Modern technology is a great asset: that is until it goes wrong! What do you do if your computer/tablet or mobile phone goes wrong? The common answer is to get an eight year old child to sort it for you. However, eight year old children lead very busy social lives. Their parents chauffeur them all over the place – to dancing classes, music lessons, Scouts, Brownies etc – the list goes on and on. When you are able to track a youngster down their little fingers are so dexterous they usually take seconds to solve your technology problem. It does leave older adults, like me, feeling bit thick! My excuse is that, instead of smart phones and tablets, I started school clutching a slate under my arm and a scratchy writing implement to write down wobbly letters and numbers. The scraping noise really set my teeth on edge (it was worse than an out of tune fiddle)!

Lately I have been trying to compile a Syllabus for the Friendship Club on my old computer (I'm told that computers are old after four years of use) and the computer has been playing up. It has taken me ages to get the computer to produce columns the correct distance apart. On an old typewriter the tabulation would have taken minutes!

I have also been busy phoning people and pleading with them to entertain members of the Friendship Club for as little (or hopefully no fee) as possible and that has been embarrassingly awkward! However, we have managed to book the famous folk duo "Muckle Ado" to play and sing for us. They are well-established performers and have played at venues all over Scotland. They also have sold numerous compact discs of their quirky songs and favourite Scottish melodies.

Due to popular demand, Julie Wilson will be returning to talk to the Club about wild life in cemeteries. We have also managed to get a man to tell us about his adventures on a canoe. It's not the man a television programme was made about – who faked his own death. That man gave new meaning to the initials R.I.P – "Resides in Panama". Mr Simpson, our speaker, is an honest man, and tales of his adventures will be more interesting and genuine.

As usual, we will book top class musicians from "Live Music now" and the ever popular Mr Stuart Montgomery will play the organ and piano for us. He regularly plays for the Friendship Club and always manages to produce an entertaining programme – delivered in his usual charismatic style.

An enthusiastic Scottish Violinist is looking forward to entertaining us and a singer of Burns' songs will be yet another new performer we will welcome to St Michael's.

As well as excellent musicians, we have managed to source some health professionals to talk about our health and well-being. A Reflexologist we have managed to book tells me that she is looking for a volunteer to remove their shoes! I have coerced a friend in to doing this. If anyone touches my feet I just dissolve into a fit of the giggles!

All in all I think we have managed to find speakers and entertainers who will appeal to everyone. I now have to get on and compile the Syllabus, hoping that my "old" computer won't play up again!

Has that eight year old "doon the stair" finished with her dancing class yet?

Ruth V Andrews

St Colm's @ St Michael's Guild

The Guild starts its Autumn Session on Wednesday 14 September at 2pm and will meet fortnightly until Wednesday 7 December. The theme for Year Two of our Look Forward in Faith strategy is "Wee Seeds, Big Trees". Unlike previous themes, which have had their origins in a particular Bible verse or passage of scripture, Wee Seeds, Big Trees explores the idea of growth - physical growth and spiritual growth. Our Minister, Andrea, will be our speaker on 14 September to help us understand the theme and where it can relate to our growth, making us the people we have become.

The Guild Dedication Service is planned for Sunday 16 October 2022.

The Syllabus is being finalised now and we hope to have a speaker on the Guild topic we have chosen for this year – Starchild. This project addresses the challenge of stigma and the myths related to intellectual and physical disability in Uganda. Starchild aims to build a sanctuary to offer support, training and guidance to the most marginalised and help to prevent future generations of disabled people from being hidden within their communities. We consider this a worthwhile project to support.

We also hope to hear from John Wilson, a Church member, who is a keen bird watcher with a special interest in swifts. This subject ties in with the Church's concerns on how we look after the planet and all its creatures.

The Guild also gives us a topic for discussion which, this year, is "Faith and Change" – highly topical given the changes which are to take place within the Church of Scotland.

The annual subscription for the coming year is £14 per member.

Once ready the Syllabus will be freely distributed. All are welcome to the Guild meetings whether as a visitor or member. Come on – give it a try!

Whose we are and Whom we serve **Fay Anderson, Co-convenor**

Fresh Start Tower Autumn 2022

The Harvest Thanksgiving service at St Michael's will be held on Sunday 2nd October and we will once again be collecting goods and money for Fresh Start. We are delighted to welcome the managing director of Fresh Start, Biddy Kelly, to give us an update on some of the work they do. By the sound of things they have had a very busy year and requests for their help have risen enormously and will continue to do so.

Donations of the usual household goods, food, cleaning materials and toiletries are very much required as is the need for cookers and other white goods, so later on in the year, the "Cookers for Christmas" appeal will go ahead.

Fresh Start is delighted to be taking part in the Kilt Walk on Sunday 18th September. This will be the first non-virtual Kilt Walk for two years and the funds raised will help them deliver their vital services to people who have experienced homelessness.

As well as maintaining the garden at the hub and the growing space in Craigmillar, Fresh Start have taken on two new growing spaces in north Edinburgh where, with help from volunteers, they have transformed them into a productive allotment growing crops for the Pantry and cookery classes.

Thank you to everyone at St Michael's who has given so generously to Fresh Start or who have passed the word! If you are unsure what to donate or would like us to come and collect your donations from your home then please give us a call on 0131 441 1328 or speak to us at the Church.

Alasdair and Babs Webster

St Michael's Film Club

Our new season begins on **Sunday 2nd October** with the Academy-award winning **Nomadland** (USA, 2020) starring Frances McDormand. Written, produced and directed by Chloe Zhao, it presents the camper-vanning lives of itinerant people surviving recession in the American West of the 21st century.

Sunday 6th November we present **Intouchables** (2011) a French comedy/drama. A wealthy French quadriplegic hires a reluctant Senegalese parolee as a full-time carer. "An irreverent, humorous take on disability, closely drawn from real life ... charming and uplifting" (The Guardian).

Sunday 4th December: Offside (2006) concerns a bunch of young girls trying to see their national side play a home World Cup tie. Sounds easy but this is in Iran where restrictions don't allow. There's tension and comedy and an insight into life in a country where, of course, the film was banned.

Sunday 8th January. Our first film for 2023 **What's Eating Gilbert Grape** (1993) has Johnny Depp and Leonardo di Caprio as part of a terrific cast dealing with life's problems in a Midwestern town.

Sunday 5th February Flee (Denmark, 2020) is the most unusual film we're showing: a mix of archive TV footage and animation which tells a fantastically moving true story kept secret for many years. The film's director meets Amin, an Afghan refugee in Copenhagen and this is his story.

Sunday 5th March. A strong contender for Best Picture at this year's Oscars, **Belfast** lost out but won for Best Original Screenplay for writer/director Kenneth Branagh who based the film on his family's experience of life in the city at the beginning of 'the Troubles'. It's not at all stereotypical and extends its scope beyond Northern Ireland with stories, characters, acting and direction that ring true. Jamie Dornan, Catriona Balfe, Ciaran Hinds and Judi Dench are the known stars and Jude Hill (b. 2010), as Buddy, is the shining new one.

Sunday 2nd April: Man Dancin' (UK, 2003) is our film for Easter. Jimmy Kerrigan, a Glaswegian hard man tries to go straight on leaving prison, but neither the police nor his former gang boss believes him. A local priest is the only one to offer him hope, involving Jimmy in the production of a parish passion play. Alex Ferns, Kenneth Cranham and James Cosmo lead a strong cast in an involving drama.

Sunday 7th May: *Pride* (UK, 2014). Gay activists work to help the miners during the National Union of Mineworker strikes of 1984. This story seems unlikely but was true. From this unusual premise we find a 'joyous, well-researched and liberating film in the feel-good spirit of Billy Elliot, The Full Monty and Calendar Girls.' (The Observer). Bill Nighy, Imelda Staunton, Dominic West and Paddy Considine are the star names for first-time director Matthew Warchus.

All films are shown in the Church Hall, starting at 7pm. We then enjoy refreshments and discussion after each film.

Entry is free but donations are welcome.

Apartheid Israel

Many of us must wonder if there is anything we can do to help achieve Peace with Justice in Palestine and Israel. The situation just seems to be steadily deteriorating if the recent Israeli bombardment of Gaza and yet more house and school demolitions in occupied Palestine are anything to go by. Israeli raids in the West Bank in towns like Nablus and Jenin have resulted in yet more Palestinian deaths (many innocent women and children). Early on 18 August, the Israeli Army raided the offices of seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organisations in Remallah, as well as a local Church. It seems the Israeli Government seeks to suppress the Palestinian's rights to peaceful protest and so have threatened to imprison any staff who try to return to their offices.

On the other hand the indiscriminate firing of unguided rockets by Palestinian Militants in response to the Israeli military violence does not, I believe, do anything to help achieve peace. But what will? What can we do? Surely we must do something!

Palestinian Christian Leaders have, several times, (see Cry For Hope: www.cryforhope.org) asked for Christians worldwide to boycott buying any goods and products from Israel. Their hope is that economic sanctions will put pressure on Israel to eliminate the apartheid system - as happened in South Africa around 30 years ago. The hope is that, by non-violent action, Israel may be brought back to the negotiating table to seek equal rights for all who live in that very troubled part of the Middle East.

Allan Gordon

And, courtesy of Ruth Andrews, here follows a spoof of a song Max Bygraves recorded many years ago. The original is all about a romantic encounter between two toothbrushes, this version is more apt, sadly, for today's increasingly dire environmental situation:

I'm a pink toothbrush, you're a blue toothbrush,
Here we are on the ocean floor,
We'll still be here toothbrush,
Every year, toothbrush,
For a millennium or more!

Every time one nylon bristle
Comes out, clean as a whistle,
It gets stuck in the gullet
Of a passing mullet,
Who breathes his last
In the ocean vast.

Our bodies, made of plastic
That refuses to die are drastic.

We are two toothbrushes
Lying amongst sea weed and rushes
And heaps and heaps of shabby tat,
Destroying the ocean's habitat
Along with unmentionable waste
And plastic tubes of Pretty Pink
Toothpaste.

Gardening Chapter 5 – The Answer lies in the Soil

Many of you will remember the 1960s radio comedy "Beyond our Ken", in which Kenneth Williams, playing the part of gardener Arthur Fallowfield, constantly repeated "The answer lies in the soil" as his response to every question. Little did he, or his script writer, know how prophetic this was, nor that this phrase held a universal truth which is only recently being fully recognised and understood by scientists.

The soil beneath our feet and the other components of the earth's crust provide, directly or indirectly, for all our needs. In Genesis 1:11-12 we read:

"Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: the earth brought forth vegetation: every

kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good."

Then in verses 29-30 we read:

"I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food."

But that is not all that the earth, with its top layer of soil, provides. We take stone from the earth for buildings, boundaries and roads. In the same earth that produces our fruit and vegetables, we also grow trees and bushes for timber, heat, fabrics (viscose/bamboo/cotton), paper – and even for the rubber for our tyres.

The animals that provide meat for food graze on grass growing in the soil and, from them, we also receive the wool for clothing and insulation and leather for bags, belts and shoes.

We take minerals from the earth to provide steel, glass, silver, gold, copper and even all the electronic gadgets that have become an essential part of our lives.

We have used oil from the ground to heat our homes, power our vehicles and to make the plastics that have revolutionised our lives.

It is part of the wonderful generosity of God that all these things are available to us and that He gave us the brainpower to learn to use them but, most importantly, the discernment to use them wisely. The question is – do we, in fact, use the natural world and the earth which is its foundation with both gratitude and wisdom?

The evidence all around us, as we battle with our changing climate, is that we have not treated the natural world well. We have taken from it without regard for its sustainability nor for the perfect balance in nature that existed at the dawn of creation.

Gracious God, share with us your heart for creation, that we may cherish all life, working together to heal the damage we have done and knowing that in all our struggles you are beside us, to inspire, strengthen and transform us. Amen

(Chris Polhill from "A heart for Creation" Wildgoose publications)

In this year of COP 15 on Biodiversity in Canada in December, we shall be reminded once again of the cataclysmic decline in the number of species that has happened on our watch and, of course, all of them, just as we do, depend on the earth, directly or indirectly, for their habitat and food. As the web of life breaks, the human life-support system will also become more fragile and that will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people the most.

We know that the soil is the foundation of life on earth and that, if we are to begin to reverse the terrible damage humankind has done to the natural world, we must start by healing the soil. And the wonderful thing is that we can truly say “The answer (*to many of our problems*) lies in the soil”. It is both a victim of our lack of care in causing climate change, but also a part of the solution, as long as we follow nature’s lead and learn to look after our soil well.

How do we do that? Well, in effect, by intervening as little as possible in the natural processes that keep our soils healthy.

- Soil is a living entity – and very precious – because, in terms of a human life, it is non-renewable; it can take about 100 years to create 1cm of soil. There are billions of invisible bacteria and fungi in the soil as well as the thousands of invertebrates and small mammals that also call it home. Every time we use chemical fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides we kill off these creatures which work tirelessly to keep the soil healthy. So **we need to garden organically**. Sadly, it is also true, that plants that are treated with chemicals often become toxic to the pollinators on which we depend for our food. The decline in the number of bees, for instance, is, in part, due to the use of neonicotinoids.
- Within the soil there is an invisible fungal network which makes sure that plants receive the natural nutrients they require and which also allows communication between plants to help them prepare for and withstand pest attack. When we disturb the soil we break this network. So **we need to stop digging our gardens!** The healthiest soils are to be found in woodlands where nothing disturbs the soil and where the extensive tree roots ensure that the fungal network is also wide-ranging. This is the basic philosophy behind Agri-forestry which will involve either tree planting on farms or the restoration of natural hedgerows as field boundaries - removed in the mid-twentieth century for apparently greater efficiency of land use as farm machinery got bigger. Little did we know that this would push farmers into having to use artificial fertilisers to replace the natural nutrient network they had destroyed.

- When the soil is healthy and functioning as God intended, plants draw down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the process called photosynthesis. The sugars thus made are not usable by the plants until they have been exuded through the roots into the soil and “processed” by soil bacteria. But the wonderful thing is that plants don’t use all the carbon that they send down into the soil – so what is not used remains in the soil, locked away unless we disturb it by digging. This is why the soil is part of the solution to climate change, so remember – **Don’t dig!** In my garden, where I have not dug now for 15 years, if I lose a plant and have to remove it in order to replace it, without exception, around where the root of the dead plant was there are always flakes of a grey substance which looks like ash; this is sequestered carbon. If we disturb it it combines with oxygen in the air and becomes carbon dioxide once again. In his book “A Life on our Planet” David Attenborough says this: “The world’s land plants and soils combined contain two or three times as much carbon as the atmosphere.” So the more plants there are and the less we disturb the soil the more carbon we can keep stored away where it can do no harm.

We need to be guided by nature. There is nothing in nature that disturbs the soil. There is nothing in nature that introduces toxic chemicals. The cycle of nutrients comes from leaves which fall in Autumn and lie on the ground to protect it from compaction by rain and snow in the winter.

Eventually these dead leaves disappear, drawn down into the soil by worms, where they increase the organic matter. This improves the structure of the soil – helping to retain moisture and reduce flooding and attracting and supporting the living organisms which then process the carbon the plants draw down through photosynthesis. The plants use the nutrients thus released to grow stronger and photosynthesise more. A perfect cycle representing God’s perfect and loving plan for his world.

This is a very simplistic view of soil science, but contains the main elements we need to remember:

- Garden organically
- Keep off the soil to prevent compaction
- Don’t remove leaves from the soil in Autumn
- Keep the ground covered all the time with photosynthesising plants in Spring, Summer and Autumn and a layer of leaf mulch – or home-made compost – in winter
- Don’t dig for the sake of it as we were taught to do!

If you are interested in learning more, Google:

- The Soil Association
- Elaine Ingham / The Soil Food Web
- Charles Dowding – champion of no-dig cultivation

The European Commission Soil Data Centre has the following information which may also be of interest.

Soil biodiversity represents the variety of life below ground.

The total biomass below ground generally equals or exceeds that above ground, whilst the biodiversity in the soil always exceeds that on the associated surface by orders of magnitude, particularly at the microbial scale.

Some numbers describe well the soil biodiversity: a teaspoon of soil (about one gram) may typically contain one billion bacterial cells (corresponding to about ten thousand different bacterial genomes), up to one million individual fungi, about one million cells of protists, and several hundred of nematodes. Beside microorganisms and microfauna, soil harbours different species of meso and macro/megafauna represented by arthropods, earthworms and mammals.

The soil biota plays many fundamental roles in delivering key ecosystem goods and services.

<i>Ecosystems goods provided by soil biota</i>	<i>Ecosystems services provided by soil biota</i>
• Food production • Fibre production • Fuel production • Provision of clean water • Provision of secondary compounds (eg. Pharmaceuticals)	• Driving nutrient cycling • Regulation of water flow and storage • Regulation of soil and sediment movement • Regulation of other biota including pests and diseases • Maintenance of soil structure • Detoxification of pollutants • Regulation of atmospheric composition

Prayer

Generous God, you give us so much, but we are the people of much knowledge who lack wisdom; the people of great power who cannot tread gently amongst living things. We confess that we have not shown the gratitude your gifts to us deserve. We confess that we have not used your gifts wisely. We confess that we have caused the imbalance in nature that is driving climate change. Our relationship with you is the foundation of our spiritual life and we need to nurture it through prayer and worship. Our relationship with the soil is the foundation of our physical life; open our hearts and minds to understand how we can nurture it and ourselves back to health.

Amen

“Mary Madeleine”!!

The Congregation very kindly “tested” Stuart Montgomery's home baking prior to him providing many more batches for audience members to enjoy with a cup of tea after his recent Concert Recital at St Michael's. These went down so well he was asked to share the recipe, as undernoted. He has also included a photograph to help tempt everyone to dig out their “pinnies” and give them a go!

FRENCH MADELEINES

By Mary Berry

These shell-shaped cakes are made using a Madeleine tin.

It is worth greasing and flouring the tins well, so that the cakes come out cleanly, without sticking. This recipe will make around 30 madeleines.

150g (5oz) butter

3 large eggs

150g (5oz) caster sugar

150g (5oz) self-raising flour

½ level teaspoon of baking powder

Grated rind of 1 lemon

1. Pre-heat the oven to Gas 7 (220C/Fan 200C). Grease a madeleine tray, dust with flour and shake off any excess.

2. Melt the butter in a small pan and allow to cool slightly. Measure the eggs and sugar into a large bowl, and whisk until pale and thick.
3. Sift in half the flour with the baking powder along with the lemon rind, and fold in gently. Pour in half the melted butter around the edge of the bowl and fold in. Repeat the process with the remaining flour and butter.
Spoon the mixture into the prepared moulds so that it is just level with the tops (careful not to pour in too much).
4. Bake in the pre-heated oven for 6-8 minutes until well risen, golden and spongy to the touch. Ease out of the tins with a small palette knife and cool on a wire rack. Grease and flour the tins again and repeat, until all the mixture has been used. Keep an eye on the oven and be ready to turn the tray half-way through, as they will brown very quickly.
5. Freeze as desired, allowing for around half an hour to de-frost at room temperature.

Stuart Montgomery



Church House Chatter

It's hard to believe that I have been with St Michael's for 3 months already. Everyone has been very welcoming and, although I am still learning, I really did feel at home very quickly.

The role itself has been varied. The “expected” work, of course, that comes from renting out the Halls, helping arrange access for Church tradesfolk and so on but also the more unexpected “maintenance” roles that crop up. It certainly keeps me on my toes – quite literally sometimes as I run and up down the stairs sorting out various tasks. But it really highlights the importance and the benefits of working closely together as a team.

It's been amazing to be here during the summer when the weather has been so warm and great to see people being able to sit out in the grounds of the Church and making the most of the sunshine. Ensuring we can get fresh air in to the Church and Halls without needing to put the heating on has been a real bonus given our usual Scottish summers ...

Talking of Scottish summers many of you may already have seen some of the “Best of the Fringe” jokes published in the press this week. I do quite enjoy silly jokes so thought I'd share this one with you:

**My attempts to combine nitrous oxide and Oxo cubes made me a laughing stock
(courtesy of Olaf Falafel, Comedian, Fringe 2022)**

I got chatting to a lady out picking berries the other day. It transpired that she is a member of the congregation and she ended up, quite literally, making my mouth water as she told me about all the produce (from hedgerow jam to sausage rolls) that she and her family have provided in the past for the Annual Christmas Fair. Although the Fair won't be going ahead in its usual format again this year I am, nonetheless, looking forward to purchasing (and maybe even providing!) some goodies for Christmas at the coffee mornings later in the year.

I know that the news is rather gloomy for the coming months but I always look forward to the changing seasons and Autumn can be beautiful when the leaves turn to rich tones of orange and red. A friend, who moved to Australia, made a point of going for a walk in all weathers when she was back here on holiday because the weather was “always good” in Australia and she desperately missed experiencing the British seasons – yes even the driving rain and gale force winds ... She also missed our well-known brands of Tinned Tomato Soup and Chocolate Digestive Biscuits so it just shows that the UK has more to offer than we sometimes imagine!

Fiona Lunn

Some examples of Church Events to whet your appetite for more

Jubilee Picnic Lunch



A Week of Concerts





A full review of our concerts will appear in the next Tower.

Changes to the Church Family

Baptism: Molly Jean McQueen on 19 June 2022

Deaths: Frances Clapperton on 22 May 2022
Joyce Macfarlane on 8 August 2022



SAMSON WORD SCRAMBLE

Read Judges 13-16.
Unscramble the words below.

1. tmlepe: _____
2. smoasn: _____
3. tminah: _____
4. ellidah: _____
5. pihinsltie: _____
6. narztiae: _____
7. vrneyiad: _____
8. nilo: _____
9. itarseiie: _____
10. hria: _____

VINEYARD LION TIMNAH SAMSON TEMPLE

DELILAH ISRAELITE NAZARITE HAIR PHILISTINE