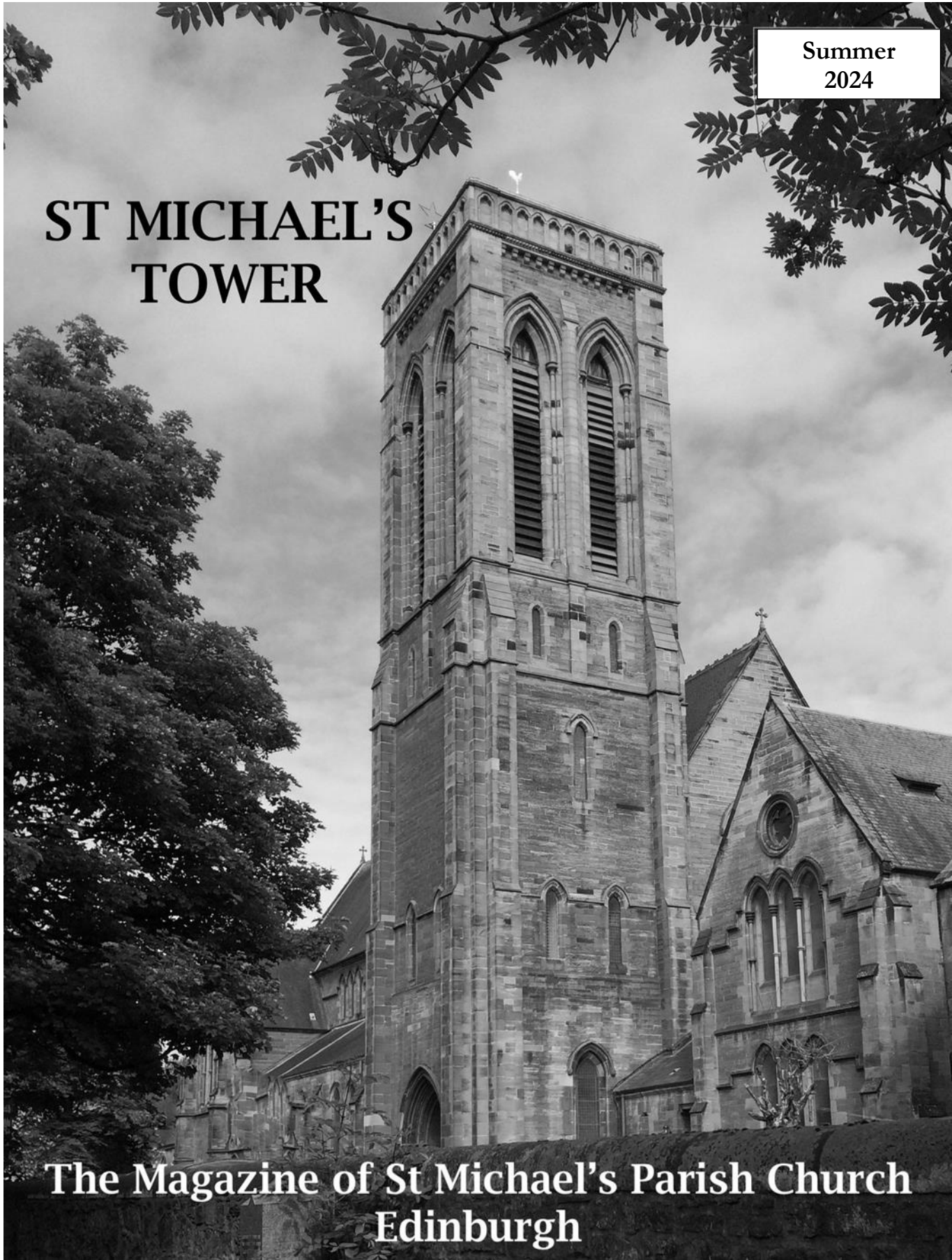




Summer
2024

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

The Magazine of St Michael's Parish Church
Edinburgh

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Dear Members and Friends of St Michael's

Paris is getting ready to host the Olympic Games from 26 July to 11 August. Will nations remember and abide with the old tradition of laying down their weapons to 'fight' each other in peaceful sporting competitions? Or will the gods of war and hatred continue to dominate the news and lives of so many in the world? I think I know the answer.

When Jesus came to tell humanity about the Kingdom of God being near there was 'peace' in the Empire of Rome, of which Israel was one province. Rome was very proud of its '*pax romana*', a peace brought about by Rome's rule with its battalions stationed all over the land and its laws and administration overseeing everything.

In contrast Jesus came to bring God's peace into hearts and minds and, from there, to make it a reality. From Jesus we have learnt about equality, tolerance, forgiveness and love for all, irrespective of people's race, class or background.

Since Jesus' days on this earth, the world has lived and fought and failed many a time. But we have also learnt a lot. Yes, we can still learn more

and work the Kingdom of God further into the structures of life *if* we follow the leading of God's Spirit of love. 'If ...'

But the Church of Scotland is, as you know, in the middle of a battle for survival. There have been various discussions regarding which, of our four buildings in the upcoming union, will be released. Our Session met again recently with Presbytery representatives – who also visited the other three congregations.

It is with great sadness, however, that we have to let you know that our arguments to retain St Michael's building in the future have not convinced the Deployment Committee of Presbytery. Instead they are proposing to declare St Michael's a category B building, to be released, put up for sale by the end of 2026 and declare Barclays, Viewforth, Craiglockhart and Polwarth category A (to be retained).

The Congregation was told of this development on Sunday 26 May 2024 during the service. The Session will discuss this at our next Session Meeting on Monday 10 June and Presbytery shall be asked to agree it on 18 June. Our Congregation will be asked to appear in our interest.

I am sorry that we have not managed to change the mind of the Committee. We have done well and were heard.

I am sorry that we, like most other congregations, have not managed to raise more younger people and encourage them to join the Church.

I am also sorry that we, also like others around us, have not managed to raise more support from the surrounding community to let us stand out as a vibrant growing Christian community. We are in the same position as most Church of Scotland congregations and have done, I would argue, no better nor worse than them.

Nationally there are just not enough young people in church to keep all our congregations and buildings going as they were. We have run out of sufficient numbers of ministers, we are now running out of younger people and, soon, we shall run out of money.

I know St Michael's as a vibrant, caring and faithful Christian community. But so are our three neighbours around us. There is not much between us but one of our four buildings has to be given up, sold or repurposed. And the same may be asked of another building in the not too distant future.

Given that people do not need or want as many active churches in the neighbourhood than in the past, it may be time for us to look forward in faith, pack up our things of faith, pull up our faith's tent pegs, so to speak, and move on into the new Union.

I am so very sorry about this. Please pray and let's support each other as best we can in this hard time.

At our last Session meeting, we came to the conclusion that the old British motto '**KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON**' is of the essence.

Or, to go back to the Olympics and the Apostle Paul, who compared our faith to a sporting challenge – demanding and at times gruelling:

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. 1 Corinthians 9:24

And the letter to the Hebrews reminds us of the examples and gifts our forebears gave us:

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.' (Hebrews 12:1)

We have a hard road before us as a church. The Church of Scotland has shrunk and some fear its collapse. Change is needed.

Today the world and society are full of options and communities around us have changed so much. Many hardly know their neighbours and all do different things. The days of all going to church together are long past.

But this does not mean that our faith is worth nothing, or is somehow less than before. On the contrary there are signs that people want and need guidance and reassurance with values explored and affirmed as Jesus teaches. We have recently added three young people to our congregation by profession of faith and two more are considering joining.

So, do not give up. Don't think yourself clever if you turn your back on your congregation and walk away. Your congregation needs you more than ever. Jesus, God's son, our Lord, still calls us to follow him and to love God and our neighbour as ourselves.

May God find us keeping calm and carrying on his work, faithfully hoping and loving.

May it be said of us all at the end, as we read in Timothy 4:7:

'I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.'

May God bless you and all your dearest, our congregation and church on the way ahead.

Andrea, Your minister at St Michael's Church

100 Years of Eric Liddell's Olympic Gold Medal win

On 11 July 1924 Eric Liddell won the gold medal for the 400 metre race at the Paris Olympic Games. You may well have watched the film '*Chariots of Fire*' and been reminded by it of Eric Liddell's great sporting abilities and determined Christian stance. Eric Liddell was not only a great runner but also a great rugby player and an even greater Christian.

On **11 July 2024**, 100 years after the day he won his medal, we are inviting you to join us in the Chancel at 7.30pm to learn more about his life and faith.

The following two Thursdays, **18 July and 25 July** we shall meet to begin a study of Eric Liddell's only book '**The Disciplines of the Christian Life**'. On these two Tuesdays we shall talk about its first part '*What is Discipleship?*'

From **1 August** onwards we will meet once a month on the First Thursday of the month (unless otherwise announced) to discuss the second part of his book '*A Year of Discipleship*'. Eric Liddell gives us his thoughts on what it means to be a follower of Jesus – set out in monthly instalments. This will give you a good chance to think and speak with others about what it means to be a Christian. Come and join in and invite others to do so as well.

Morning Coffee over the Summer

We do hope for some lovely summer weather to be able to enjoy the Church garden together with a chat over coffee or tea. Two years ago we were outside all the time. Last year we were in the Lower Hall all the time. This is still Scotland!

Whatever the weather, come along and bring a friend or a neighbor for a good blether and a laugh. When: **Wednesdays from 5 June to end August from 10.30 am to 12 Noon** in the Church garden or inside the building – depending on the weather.

Canal Festival 2024

Fountainbridge Canalside Community Trust has, once again, organised many charities and community groups to come together to produce a fun-filled afternoon for everyone on **Saturday 15 June 2024 from 12 Noon to 4.30pm.**

Residents and visitors are invited to explore the Union Canal between the Lochrin Basin and Harrison Park and to meet some of the great organisations that operate throughout the year on and near to the canal. There will be loads of free activities and entertainment as you travel along the canal in the heart of Edinburgh. Come and discover some #canalmagic !

Once again St Michael's will host a stall with a Teddy Tombola, delicious home bakes & refreshments and interactive story telling.

Please support us by contributing to the baking and come along for some fun.

A sign-up sheet has been placed at the back of the Church so please do let us know if you might be able to find some time to help 'man' the stall and/or what baked goods you might be planning to provide.

New name for the United Congregation

All four congregations have voted on a choice of names but it transpires that we are at an impasse. Two congregations liked 'MERCHISTON' and two congregations preferred 'CANALSIDE'. The Implementation Team shall return to this question in Autumn and identify a way to move forward and agree a name for the future united parish.

Summer Concerts in August 2024

As in the last few years, we are going to put on some concerts in the Church during the last week of the Edinburgh International Festival. These have been a great success in the past, bringing many new people across the threshold of the building for the first time and highlighting what an excellent venue it is for music.

Wednesday 14 August at 3pm

The series starts slightly earlier than usual with the very welcome return of Beth Taylor (mezzo-soprano) and Brian Bannatyne-Scott (bass-baritone). Since she last sang at St Michael's, Beth has hit the high spots by reaching the nationally-broadcast Final of the Cardiff Singer of the World competition and excitement is mounting for her appearance as 'The Angel' in Elgar's ***Dream of Gerontius*** in The Usher Hall on 2 March 2025. In our concert, she and Brian will sing song cycles and duets by Robert Schumann, accompanied on the piano by Michal Gajzler.

Saturday 17 August at 4pm

Our very own Stuart Montgomery will give his usual opener, this time playing entirely organ music and featuring some new additions to his repertoire. Afterwards, there will be the usual tea party to which all are welcome.

Sunday 18 August at 3pm

We are delighted to welcome the Korean-born guitarist Sungbin Cho, a past winner of the London International Guitar Competition. Sungbin fell in love with the guitar after his father found solace and joy in learning it during a critical illness. His son joined him on this journey and discovered his own passion, feeling naturally 'at home' on the instrument. He describes how he loves using music as a means of communicating with people.

Monday 19 August at 7.30pm

TBC.

Tuesday 20 August at 7.30pm

Orcadian professional violinist Catriona Price (daughter of our Minister, Rev Andrea Price) joins forces with the Argentinian percussionist Joni Strugo for an intimate evening of tunes from around the world. Featuring arrangements of Scottish tunes, Argentinian melodies, tunes from Brazil, Mexico and other Latin American cultures, some J S Bach reimagined, and much more.

Wednesday 21 August at 7.30pm

This will be a programme of Beethoven piano sonatas given by the accomplished pianist David Mowle. A retired neurosurgeon, and proof that it doesn't have to be your living to be an excellent musician, David is a passionate advocate of the arts and music and the present chairman of the Hebrides Ensemble.

Thursday 22 August at 7.30pm

Local harpist Esther Swift will give a solo concert, featuring material from her recently released first solo album ***Expectations of a Lifetime*** (launched in the Queen's Hall on 14 June). With Catriona Price, she is half of the duo Twelfth Day and is well known at St Michael's.

Friday 23 August at 7.30pm

This will be a welcome return of the local brass quintet Brass Tracks. With their eclectic mix of music, as last year it could be anything from Bach to Baccharach. But it will be a thrilling sound in our spacious building.

Saturday 24 August at 7.30pm

In our midst over the last few years, we have witnessed the burgeoning talent of Simon Mercieca, a pupil of Stuart Montgomery. Still only 14 he has already passed Grade 8 with Distinction in both piano and violin, but has recently been branching out into jazz. He has formed a jazz trio and we will all want to support this, their first public outing.

Sunday 25 August at 9pm

As last year, our series will end with the annual reunion of the Renaissance Group Corncrakes, the choir from St Andrews University in which Andrea and Neil Price met in 1982. The founder, the late Douglas Gifford, never let people leave the choir once they graduated – they just became bad-attending 'Corncrakes'! The joy of the choir coming together again will be demonstrated in an exuberant programme of Renaissance church music from mainland Europe.

Please note the late start of the last concert to allow people to attend the final concert of the Edinburgh International Festival in the Usher Hall.

These concerts are church fundraising events and, as such, there are no advance ticket sales or admission charges at the door. There will be retiring collections, and those attending are asked to donate what they would expect to pay for a ticket to a concert of this quality. In the past, this has pleasingly averaged about £10 per person. The musicians will be offered remuneration from these collections.

We look forward to seeing many of you at as many of the concerts as possible.

And ... **PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!**

Neil Price

Dates for your Diary

Wednesdays from 5 June to 28 August Morning Coffee in the Church Garden (indoors during inclement weather).	
Monday 10 June	Session Meeting 7.30pm Chancel area
Saturday 15 June	Canal Festival and Raft Race. St Michael's stall with Teddy Tombola, delicious home bakes and interactive story telling – in Harrison Park East from 12 Noon to 4.30pm
Wednesday 26 June	Time Out: the 9 th Commandment. 7.30 to 8pm
Sunday 7 July	Communion Service
Thursday 11 July	Eric Liddell Centenary Evening, Chancel at 7.30pm
Sunday 14 July	Songs of Praise – vote for your favourite hymn in church on the flip chart from 16 June
Thursday 18 July	The Life of Discipleship 1, Study based on Eric Liddell's book 'The Disciplines of the Christian Life' Chancel at 7.30pm
Thursday 25 July	The Life of Discipleship 2, Study based on Eric Liddell's book 'The Disciplines of the Christian Life' Chancel at 7.30pm
Wednesday 31 July	Time Out: the 10 th Commandment
Thursday 1 August then every 1st Thursday of month	A Year of Discipleship. Monthly study based on Eric Liddell's book 'The Disciplines of the Christian Life'. Chancel or Annex Room at 7.30pm
Wednesday 14 August 3pm	Beth Taylor (mezzo-soprano) and Brian Bannatyne-Scott (bass-baritone)
Saturday 17 August 4pm	Stuart Montgomery in Concert (Organ and Piano)
Sunday 18 August 3pm	Sungbin Cho (Guitar)
Tuesday 20 August 7.30pm	Catriona Price (Violin) and Joni Strugo (Percussion)

Wednesday 21 August 7.30pm	David Mowle (Piano)
Thursday 22 August 7.30pm	Esther Swift (Harp)
Friday 23 August 7.30pm	Brass Tracks (Brass Quintet)
Saturday 24 August 7.30pm	Simon Mercieca and Friends (Jazz Trio)
Sunday 25 August 9pm	Corncrakes conducted by Neil Price (Choir)
Wednesday 28 August	Time Out 7.30 pm to 8pm

Who Am I?

Darkness surrounds me,
But I am bold.

Dread overcomes men,
I shine like gold.

Powerful men fear me,
I am so old.

Everyone knows me,
Snow, sleet or shower.

I am the bright Star
On top of the Tower

Twinkling so brightly
High up above,

Extinguish my Star,
Say "Goodbye to love".

Ruth Andrews

St Michael's Gardening Club

The Gardening Club restarted at the end of April and one of the first tasks was to clear and improve access to the garden.

Thank you to all who are involved as gardening is a tiring though ultimately rewarding task and there is often, quite literally, heavy lifting required.



By Fiona Lunn (Photograph courtesy of Andrea Price)

St Michael's Friendship Club

Making plans is never an easy task. Robert Burns reminds us that "The best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley". His words are often quoted because they are so true; planning the Friendship Club Syllabus is never easy and things can go wrong, usually at the last minute! Speakers fail to turn up, or arrive late; therefore having an alternative plan is imperative. However, a start has been made to planning the new Syllabus. The first Artist we have booked is Mr. Stuart Montgomery. He can be relied upon to arrive on time and give a very entertaining Concert. Mr. Montgomery always manages to include music that will appeal to everyone and his Concert on 17th February 2025 is eagerly anticipated.

Other favourite artists we like to include in our Syllabus are the young musicians from "Live Music Now". They come from Glasgow and although we don't always know in advance who will turn up, (or what they will play), they usually present a lively and entertaining programme. Their Concert often coincides with our Raffle, so they return to Glasgow with little prizes to remind them of their visit to St. Michael's Friendship Club.

Typing and setting out the Syllabus is yet another task that often presents problems. Thanks to technology we have smart 'phones and smart computers, but if the operator is not smart, difficulties tend to arise and even when everything seems to be going well that's usually when the computer freezes, or the ink runs out, or the keyboard needs a new battery! When things go wrong there is never an eight year old child available to fix everything in about ten seconds!

People tell me that most clubs have similar problems, but they manage to muddle through and the end result is always worth all the hassle.

Whatever the future brings, the Friendship Club will continue to function until the 14th April 2025. In the meantime, we wish all our friends a lovely, carefree summer with (hopefully) lots of sunshine and happiness.

Ruth Andrews, President

St Colm's @ St Michael's Guild

The Guild's final meetings of this Session were marked by sadness as we lost two members by death, Pat Welsh our Treasurer and long-standing member for over 30 years died on 1 March. Anne McLeod a member since the Guild located to St Michael's died on 26 March. Tributes are being paid to them elsewhere in this Tower.

The Guild, at its business meeting in April disbursed funds to Junction 42 (Prison Charity), Friends of Saughton Park, and Edinburgh Zoo for conservation work. At that meeting it was also agreed that the Conveners, Secretary and Committee continue in posts and that Fay Anderson take on the role of Treasurer in the meantime. Cathie Neill thanked all who supported the Guild in so many ways - helping to make it the great partner that it is in the work of the Church here and abroad.

We had a lovely afternoon tea on Wednesday 15 May at the Mercure Hotel and were joined by members from Craiglockhart Guild. Friendship shared between the two Churches. Some of us are to attend the Big Sing at the Assembly on the evening of 21 May. Again, a fellowship shared with guilds all over Scotland. On 12 June we are to visit the 5 Sisters Zoo in West Calder, our Summer Outing.

We are now preparing a syllabus for the next Session which will start on Wednesday 11 September at 2pm with the strategy 'Let us Build a House' and the theme 'Sure Foundations'.

The Guild wish everyone a happy, relaxed summertime.

Fay Anderson, Co-Convener

Changes to the Church Family

New By Profession of faith: Ashley Coates, April 2024
Marcus and Fiona Price, April 2024

Deaths: Evelyn Walker, January 2024
Pat Welsh, March 2024
Anne McLeod, March 2024

Obituaries

Patricia Welsh



Pat Welsh – known to her many friends as Pat and as Tricia to her close family – died on 1 March 2024. She was well known for all of her church

work at Dalry, then St Colms where she was an active Elder, Chair of the Board, choir member, Guild member then Guild Treasurer and she ran wonderful social evenings, raising funds which led to a substantial legacy from a grateful social event attendee. This legacy is still in use for social events and outings.

On transferring to St Michael's she continued to be Guild Treasurer, a post she carried out with the utmost fairness and efficiency up until her death.

In her working life Pat was a civil servant working within various departments of the Scottish Office (now known as Scottish Government). She was considered a much respected colleague and her plain speaking and no nonsense approach, often laced with humour, to work and to any problems arising was much appreciated. In 1970 Pat broke her service in Scottish Office and moved to work with Time Life magazines and books in Amsterdam – at that time this was a huge leap of faith. Here humour often softened difficulties as, when struggling with Dutch language lessons, the tutor told her how much he admired the way she 'rolled her rrrrs!'. So much laughter and he didn't get the joke! Friends from that time never let her forget that.

She returned to work in the Scottish Office and worked there until retirement. She then worked voluntarily for the Samaritans where her common sense and experience helped many.

In later years she encountered serious health problems but, with her strong faith, she made the most of life.

She was a much loved sister to David and sister in law to Barbara, an adored Auntie of Lisa and Julie with husband Haykel. She was my dear friend and also very dear to my family. Much missed but a privilege to have known her.

Lisa and Julie, when young, said that Auntie Tricia had 'a song for everything' and my great niece, Fay, said Auntie Pat had 'best hugs ever'. Pretty good epitaphs.

Fay Anderson

Anne McLeod



Anne McLeod died on 26 March 2024. Anne was a well-known Church member here at St Michael's and she could be seen on a Sunday in the back pew sitting with her friends.

Friends were important to her and, if any of them were unwell or had not been seen for a while, she would always enquire about their welfare. I recall that, during COVID, her regular telephone calls were a lifeline to me and to many others as we all tried to keep in touch.

Anne was a keen member of the Guild and attended meetings as often as she could given that she had her own health problems. Her support in Guild could always be relied on. She was also a long standing member of the Friendship Club – indeed she attended the Friendship Club the day

before she died – her words that day, to me and to others were ‘well you have to get out’.

Anne was widowed fairly young and worked as a legal secretary. In retirement she worked voluntarily for the St Columba’s hospice Shop in Morningside. She also kept active by attending an exercise class recommended by her Doctor.

She will be missed by her friends, especially by Wilma, and by her brother and nieces.

The back row of the pews is not quite the same now but her memory is there.

Fay Anderson

Church House Chatter

I’m sorry to say that one of our regular Church Hall users, Sing in the City, is moving on to pastures new. However this is for the best possible reason - the choir has gone from strength to strength and they needed to find a new venue to accommodate all the additional singers. They have enjoyed being here as much as we have enjoyed having them. Please join me in wishing them all the best.

We continue to live in unsettling times - in our personal lives, within the changing religious, political and social landscapes of Scotland and the UK and, increasingly, by the impact of global events. A recent discussion with a friend reminded me of a book title ‘*Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway*’. It can be so easy to sink in to a state of inertia when we feel overwhelmed but we **do** have the inner strength to face, acknowledge and accept the fear and to make decisions which are right for us and our loved ones. Let’s try ‘to live our best lives’.



This time last year I was musing about it being a year since I started in the Church Office and reflecting about '1st Wedding Anniversary' themes. I see that the traditional wedding anniversary theme for two years is 'Cotton'. That, in turn, reminded me of a wedding I attended many years ago when the Minister borrowed from a well-known toilet roll advert with her blessing that the marriage would be 'soft and strong and very, very long'. I am hopeful that my association with our Church will continue its longevity to at least a third year - Leather – which apparently 'improves with age!'.

Fiona Lunn, Editor

PS: Given the amount of rain we have had recently I thought the Noah's Ark word search overleaf might be appropriate ...

Bible Word Search

Name: _____

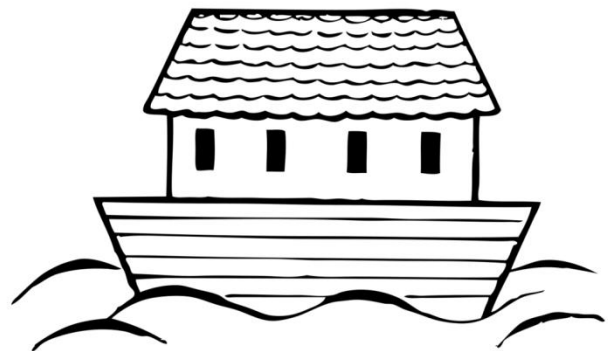


Noah and the Ark



Word list:

ANIMALS	LAND
ARK	MOUNTAIN
BELIEVE	NOAH
BUILD	PAIRS
CREATURES	PROMISE
DOVE	RAIN
EVIL	RAINBOW
FLOOD	TWO
FORTY	WATER
GOOD	WOOD



St Michael's Parish Church



**Wednesday Coffee
Mornings
5 June to 28 AUGUST
10.30AM to 12
ALL WELCOME**



STALLS OUTSIDE THE NORTH MERCHISTON CLUB 2024

[St. Michael's, Slateford Road](#) (Community Stall) *Teddy Tombola, delicious home bakes & refreshments and interactive story telling.*

Please sign up to volunteer your help and to share your baking prowess with others.

