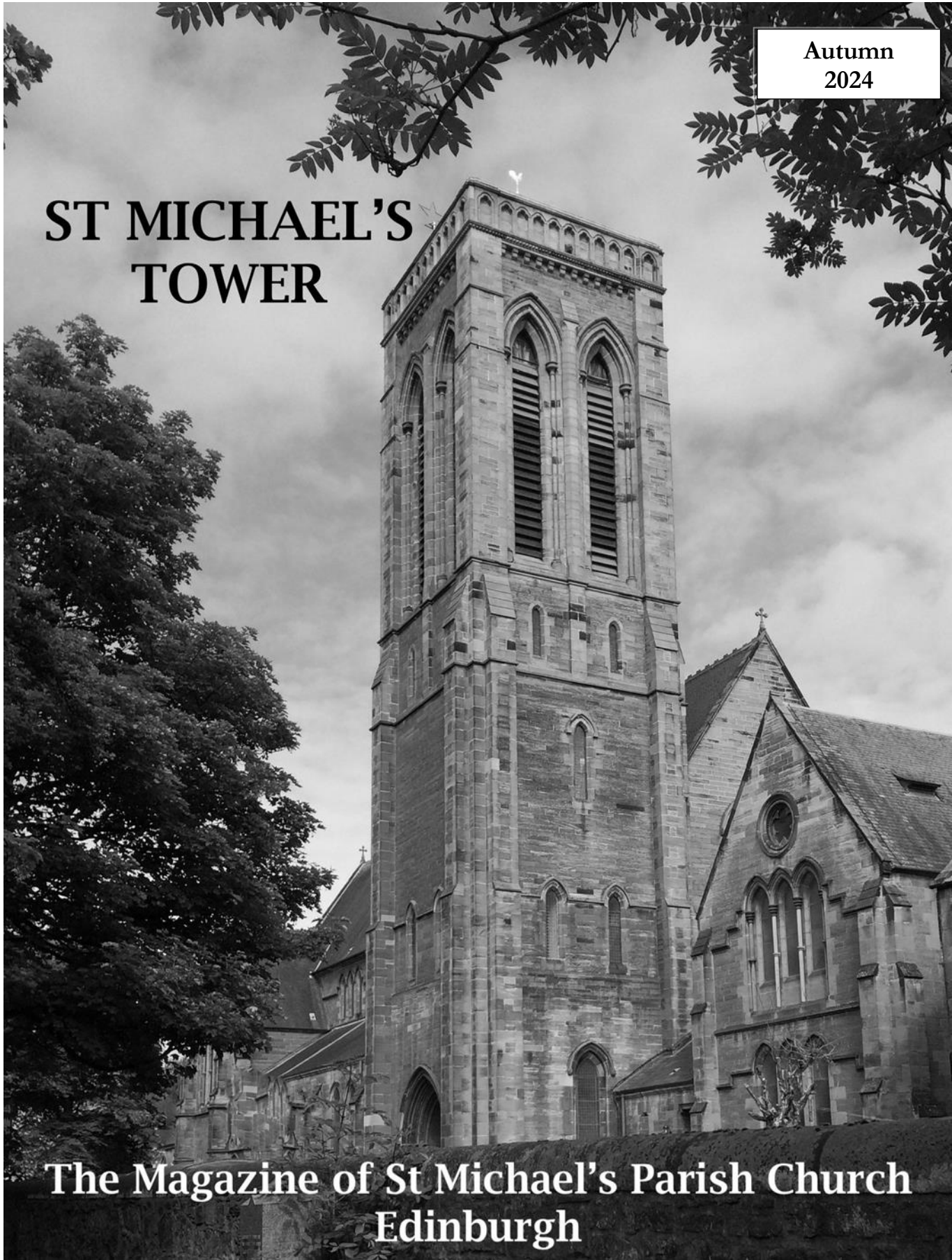




Autumn
2024

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

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Dear Friends and Supporters of St Michael's

'What is happening to St Michael's?'

Many people are asking me this question now and the answer is not straightforward. St Michael's is, of course, our church building but that building is only here because of the people who look after it, work in it and use it to welcome and nourish anyone who is willing to join them.

And so St Michael's is also a community, one of God's families, where members have known each other for many years, grown up together, welcomed new people and also said farewell to those moving on in this life and to the next.

Due to the increasing secularisation of our society the Church of Scotland is, sadly, unable to attract enough younger people to keep all church buildings and church communities going as they are. As a result Presbytery Plans all around Scotland are causing congregations to unite to form new congregations. This will also mean that many church buildings shall have to be repurposed or sold.

As you know, St Michael's is to unite with Barclay Viewforth, Craiglockhart and Polwarth congregations. The plan also stipulates that we have to nominate (at least) one of our four buildings to be put up for sale and it is St Michael's which Presbytery has chosen to put forward for sale at the end of 2026.

St Michael's Session has submitted objections. We cannot appeal the decision but we can appeal the process used to come to that decision. We are awaiting news as to whether or not our appeal will be heard.

In theory this is just about our building. But, of course, this affects our whole community, its morale and our plans for the future. Is it worth going to St Michael's? Is it worth making plans? How will it all go in the days and months to come? It is like walking through a foggy landscape and it can easily make us feel disorientated and lost.

Now, more than ever, we need to remember that God still loves us and calls us. Now we need to remember, as the hymn 'Look forward in faith' states, that **'all time, all the world and all our lives are in God's hand and care'**.

And so we are planning another Autumn at St Michael's as the 'St Michael's Congregation' and, probably, for several seasons after that. There will be Harvest and Remembrance, there will be a service to support the bereaved. There will be the Film Club and Pious Pints, the Guild and The Friendship Club and Coffee Mornings.

The recent Olympic Games in Paris were fun to watch and many athletes impressed us with their skills and determination. 100 years previously Eric Liddell won his gold medal in the 400m race at World Record time – a record which stood for 12 years. You may know the story from the film 'Chariots of Fire'.

But Eric Liddell was not only a great sportsman but also a great Christian teacher. Days after winning his medal he gave up all sports and returned to his birthplace, China, where he first taught chemistry and then became a full time missionary – teaching the good news in rural places which he reached by walking or going by bike.

Eric Liddell was imprisoned by the Japanese occupation forces during WWII and was a great source of hope for the many interned with him.

While there he wrote a book called 'The Discipline of the Christian Life'. In the coming months we are going to use this book to refresh our own faith,

meeting once a month on the first Thursday of the month, to talk and think about what it means today to believe and follow Jesus Christ.

Please join us and help us to be St Michael's for as long as we can – until we have to take our next step, guided by the God of love, leading us through an unknown landscape.

Eric Liddell said:

'Champions are not always the ones who win, but those who never give up and keep fighting till the end'

So, don't give up on St Michael's or your faith. Let us be true champions by holding on to the good news of love which is stronger than hatred, goodness which is stronger than evil, life which is stronger than death. And let us live this good news.

Blessings to you all.

TIMELINE OF ERIC LIDDELL'S LIFE (1902-1945)



- | | |
|------|--|
| 1902 | born in China on 16th January |
| 1907 | moved back to the United Kingdom, to Glasgow and then to England for school |
| 1920 | started studies at Edinburgh University |
| 1922 | played rugby for Scotland in seven international games |
| 1923 | set hundred meter world record; a committed Christian he refused to run the 100m race in the Olympic Games as the heats took place on a Sunday; he was vilified as unpatriotic in the press; instead he trained for the 400m |
| 1924 | won the gold medal for the 400 meter race at the Paris Olympics. Two weeks later graduated with a BSc |

- 1925 moved back to China. Took up the position of science teacher at Anglo-Chinese Christian College. Led students in renovating a sports stadium; at the time one of the best in China
- 1929 last gold medal won at the international games in Tianjin
- 1930 last race run, winning the North China championship
- 1932 ordained as a minister and became a full time missionary in rural China
- 1934 March married Florence
- 1935 first daughter born, Patricia
- 1938 second daughter born, Heather
- 1939 was in UK when WWII broke out but returned to China to work and help
- 1941 family separated when Florence and the girls went to stay with family in Canada. Third daughter, Nancy Maureen, born there; was never able to meet her father
- 1943 sent to an internment camp; organised sports matches for children in the camp using his personal belongings; for the good of the children sacrificed Sunday to referee matches; he was a great source of hope and inspiration to many in the camp
- 1945 after developing a brain tumour died aged 43 on 21 February

If you want to know more come and borrow some books about Eric Liddell - available at St Michael's.



Quotes from Eric Liddell

The greatest victory is not in winning races, but in overcoming obstacles, breaking down barriers, and pushing through limitations.

Champions are not always the ones who win, but those who never give up and keep fighting till the end.

True strength is not just physical; it is mental, emotional and spiritual. Train all aspects of your being.

True greatness is not measured by how fast you run, but by how well you inspire others to run with you.

We are all given talents, but it is up to us to discover them, nurture them and maximise their potential.

Success is not about winning races; it's about becoming a better person and making a positive impact on the world.

Don't compare yourself to others; compare yourself to the person you were yesterday. That's the only competition that matters.

Discipleship Meetings

These take place in St Michael's Church Annex Room on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. We use Eric Liddell's book '*The Discipline of the Christian Life*' to start off our own thoughts and discussion about what it means to be Christians in the 21st Century.

Everyone, whether a new Christian or well-practised, is very welcome. The next dates and topics are:

Thursday 5 September – The Life of Jesus
Thursday 3 October – Cross and Resurrection
Thursday 7 November – God's Moral Law

First Saturday of the Month Winter Coffee Mornings

As summer draws to a close we give thanks that we have been able to hold so many of our Wednesday morning coffee gatherings outside in the Church garden.

We now have our monthly **Saturday Coffee Mornings** to look forward to over the Autumn/Winter seasons. These will take place on the first Saturday of the month. The venue shall be the Church Hall and all are welcome to come along between 10.30 and 12 on the dates noted below:

Saturdays: 7 September, 5 October, 2 November, 7 December

Pious Pints

Pious Pints restarts on **Tuesday 17 September at 7.30pm** at the 'Diggers', or The Athletic Arms to use its proper name.

Should a church group meet in a pub? Well, you do not have to drink alcohol but we do have to show that we are not high and mighty but can meet anywhere to enjoy each other's company and think about what it means to be humans on Jesus' way.

So usually the minister starts with a wee thought or invites all present to talk about a question for a bit and we then share what we think. The rest of the evening you are free to catch up with everyone and have a good time.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month unless otherwise advertised.

Tuesday 17 September, **Thursday 17 October**, 19 November, 17 December

Time Out Evening Services

After finishing the series on the Ten Commandments we are starting a new theme for our short evening services. Once a month, in the middle of the week, we meet for 30 minutes in St Michael's chancel to sing, pray and think together.

Our new topic will be Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, which we will reflect upon in short sections for the next few months. Come and join us on the last Wednesday of each month for **Time Out**:

Wednesdays: 25 September, 30 October and 27 November

Bereavement Service 2024

Daphne du Maurier wrote from her own experience of grief:

'I would say to those who mourn – I can only speak from my own experience - look upon each day that comes as a challenge, as a test of courage. The pain will come in waves, some days worse than others, for no apparent reason. Accept the pain. Do not suppress it. Never attempt to hide grief from yourself. Little by little, just as the deaf, the blind, the handicapped develop with time an extra sense to balance disability, so the bereaved, the widowed, will find new strength, new vision, born of the very pain and loneliness which seems, at first, impossible to master. I address myself more especially to the middle-

aged who, like myself, look back to over 30 years or more of married life and find it hardest to adapt. The young must, of their very nature, heal sooner than ourselves.'

On **Sunday 17 November 2024** we are offering our annual service for those who are grieving the death of a loved one. This may have happened in the last year or long ago. We meet to remember and mourn together. We meet to reassure each other that God holds them and us in his loving embrace and through it all that we are still united.

Come and join us at **3pm** in St Michael's Church. There will be a cup of tea available afterwards.

If you want to make sure that a name is read out in memoriam please let the minister know before the service. Relations of those whose funerals we were involved in will receive an invitation at the beginning of the month.

Funerals, Weddings and the idea of 'PARISH'

As we get older and, sadly, have to attend or arrange funerals of dear friends or family members we may well begin to wonder what will happen after our own death.

In recent years some new trends have emerged in the world of weddings and funerals.

Since arriving at St Michael's late in 2018 I have, unfortunately, had almost no weddings as young people choose to let Registrars conduct their wedding ceremony at the venue where they celebrate rather than at church.

I would be very happy to conduct a wedding service at a venue but so many people do not think of God or religion as a way to frame or express what they hold dearest, what values, principles and authority they pursue.

More recently, especially since Covid, you will have noticed adverts on the TV for 'fuss free' funerals – which supposedly allow your family and friends do what they want to remember you. Is it really possible to avoid sadness and tears when someone dies? As with weddings, funerals also come in all shapes and sizes and we have a lot of choice in making them personal and meaningful.

'Pure' or 'direct' cremation means that there is no ceremony of any kind. The body is collected by the undertaker and cremated without anyone

present apart from the staff of the crematorium. And there is no doubt that this saves a lot of money as there are no cars, no printing of Orders of Service, no fees for the use of chapels or organists, no celebrants and no wake requiring food or drink.

Sometimes these savings will be a great relief to a family where money needs to be spent on other things to help support the living. But I worry that this trend denies family and friends an important time to say goodbye, to give thanks for a lifetime shared and to grieve together – all part of the living, bonding and shaping of our communities.

Funerals are, of course, about the person who has died but, if they are done well, they also encourage and give strength to those left behind. The death of a wife/husband/friend changes the landscape dramatically for those who are left. Those left behind have to adjust and reshape their lives in new ways.

Ministers of the Church of Scotland are not allowed to charge for their services at funerals or weddings – even for non-members, whereas celebrants will require payment. The Minister is not only minister of his church members but also for the whole area, the 'parish'. Sadly, most people do not know this anymore. The idea of a 'parish minister' is an alien concept to most these days.

Church members are allowed to use the church for their wedding or funeral service without charge as they are contributing in their regular giving, or have contributed to the church all their lives. They have paid, also, for the Minister through their giving.

So, if you have strong ideas about how you would like to be remembered when you die, do not hesitate to speak to your family or friends about it. Or write down your wishes.

A 'pure/direct' cremation may be just the thing for you but, maybe, consider letting your family/friends grieve and give thanks at a memorial service afterwards.

Whatever you decide talk to your folk and friends about it. This is not morbid but can be a great help to people later on. And, if I can be of help in such conversations please do not hesitate to telephone me.

Andrea, Your minister at St Michael's Church

Dates for your Diary

2 September	Session Meeting 7.30pm in the Church Hall
7 September	First Saturday of the Month Coffee Morning 10.30-12
10 September	Presbytery Meeting 7pm at Palmerston Place Church
17 September	Pious Pints 7.30pm at The Diggers
22 September	Pulpit Exchange with David Clarkson from Barclay Viewforth
25 September	TIME OUT from 7.30pm to 8pm in the Sanctuary
28-29 September	Open Doors Weekend – a chance to look at St Michael's architectural features more closely Saturday from 10am to 4pm. Sunday from 10 to 1pm
6 October	Harvest Thanksgiving at 11am Film Club 7pm in the Church Hall <i>'The Old Oak'</i>
13 October	Guild Service on the theme: 'Sure Foundations'
22 October	Presbytery Conversation about Assisted Dying , 7pm at Palmerston Place
27 October	Communion Service
10 November	Remembrance Sunday
11 November	Session Meeting
17 November	Prisoners' Week Service 11am Bereavement Service at 3pm

The Man at the South Door

In the 1980s and 90s we lived in a different world. The parish and area around St Michael's was full of young people. Few people could enjoy the luxury of a holiday. There was a lot of unemployment, especially in the 'Thatcher' years. The church hall was full every weekday – Friendship Club, Woman's Guild, Old Men's Club, Girls' Brigade then Brownies and Guides and a Boys Brigade of all sections. And we had the luxury of a splendid church officer, Ros Martin, who lived with her two boys in the house attached to the church.

One day when I appeared for the Wednesday vestry hour, Ros turned up herself and said, 'Margaret, I don't want to worry you, but there's a man sleeping outside the door on the south side of the church.'

I replied, 'Well there's a lot of homeless about and unemployment. I shall have a word.'

But she was insistent that this was something different.

'I know all the 'regulars'. He's not like them. First of all I don't feel safe and secondly he could easily break into the church and steal something. You need to do something.' So I promised to 'do' something.

Privately I wondered what was worth stealing in the church and sadly thought, not for the first time, how good it would be to open the church for homeless people to sleep in overnight. Which, of course, DID, happen at a later date. Apparently he turned up late at night and packed up first thing in the morning. Ros and I inspected the area and we agreed that the step was clean and did not smell of stale beer or food, sweat or other body odours.

Apparently he appeared at the end of the day, opened a haversack, pulled out a sleeping bag and settled down for the night.

By the morning he had gone. I promised to investigate.

So I returned to the church late one evening and stopped by the south door, a door I had never used. Sure enough a man was curled up on the doorstep and settling down for the night. His hair was startlingly short and I did wonder whether he had graced one of HM's Prisons ... as it turned out I was not entirely wrong. Another organisation was involved ... So I approached and said, 'Hello. I'm Margaret and I'm the minister. You

know, I could find you somewhere more comfortable to sleep'. He froze, like a startled animal and looked at me with terror.

'Sally Ann? No thanks.'

'OK. Well ...', with sinking heart, 'You could come to our house.'. He looked even more distressed. 'I'll go'.

'No. Stay. Please. You are welcome. Please don't run away.' I realised that standing on the steps I must look intimidating, so I sat down some distance from him.

Gradually he shared his story. Not prison, but her Majesty's armed forces. The Army. Like many youngsters from a broken or unstable home, with few or no qualifications, he had joined the army, possibly aged 16 or 17. He had seen active service in – now my memory betrays me – in the 80s? 90s? The Gulf War?

I remembered how, at that same age, I had come home from school to a warm house and security. To a good meal made by a housekeeper and then homework. My mother, herself a teacher, had piles of marking to do and it was a race to see who could finish our 'homework' first. Thereafter hilarious games of rummy, 'muffin' and the first tentative steps, via whist, to the only card game – bridge.

Real homework began in High School but, again, going home was always a refuge – warmth, a mug of coffee and an apple before 'tea' served about 6pm, a main course, mince (made to go further with a little fine oatmeal), cabbage boiled to a pulp, mash, veg and, occasionally, stewed apples from the garden and a bilious looking Bird's Custard. Wonderfully filling stodge for teenagers.

Although, always, I mourned the early death of my father when I was only eight, I had always known security. The house would be open. And warm. There would be food being prepared. Then my mother arrived and had the first of the cigarettes and the chain smoking which eventually killed her. Around the table, sharing the minor triumphs and tragedies of the playground and classroom, we laughed and teased and sighed as we thought of the homework to come.

I could not begin to imagine what this young man had suffered in his childhood and then through war service. Later I learned what PTSD was – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I am certain now that he had this condition. We became friends, he and I. I told him that he could have a key to the

vestry door and he could have toilet and washing facilities. He declined and explained that there were Gents' Toilets down the road and, if he went when they were just opened, he could have a shave and thorough wash. So that explained his fine shave and clean smell. I never did ask about clothes but, clearly, he knew where and how to wash them. He never asked for money as he had his 'army pension'.

As the days lengthened and became warmer, on one evening visit, he stood and told me he would be leaving. I was both curious and very moved that he had chosen to tell me. I did not want to grill him so said, with complete honesty, that I would miss him. He gave a glimmer of a smile then volunteered that he was 'going north'. He loved to walk in the hills and moors, to sleep in the heather or on a beach in the West coast. Also he enjoyed occasional casual work on a farm when he could be sure of some money and a good meal. Then to my huge delight he asked tentatively if he could be back for the winter. I wanted to hug him but instead said, sedately, that he would be very welcome and I looked forward to seeing him in the Autumn. So he disappeared. That was the pattern for three years.

Then, during the third year, he told me that he had decided it was time 'to try to settle a bit'. His name was down on a waiting list for a one-bedroom Council house. I told him if he needed a reference I would be happy to oblige. He told me seriously that the Army had done that already. As had a farmer up North.

As the mother of a son roughly the same age I wanted to embrace him, wish him well and to urge him to 'come home' if he felt lonely. Instead I told him I thought he was being very brave and he could come back to this place if he wanted to. But, even as I said it, I knew that in a strange and wonderful way Ros, the church officer, I, as Minister, and, supremely, St Michael's church building, had played a small part in the healing of a fine young man.

I never saw him again.

Margaret Forrester

Israel/Palestine and The Church of Scotland's General Assembly 2024

At this year's General Assembly in May it was inevitable that many members would have wished the Church of Scotland to have responded loudly and publicly to the dreadful attack by Hamas terrorists on 7 October

2023 and the subsequent response by the Israeli defence forces resulting in the deaths of over 37,000 Palestinians (the majority being women and including over 14,000 children).

The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) reports to the Assembly and has, as part of its responsibilities, consideration of the situation in Israel/Palestine. Before its report was considered in detail a commissioner stood up to state that many had wished the Church of Scotland's (COS) leadership team had been more outspoken about the suffering of the people in Gaza and the West Bank as she felt it had been far too silent after its statement in November welcoming a temporary ceasefire.

The FAPLT, in its lengthy report, had included two deliverances on Peace in Palestine, Israel and Lebanon:

- 1 'Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to share the voices of Palestinian Christians, and to continue to support the Church's contribution to interfaith dialogue.'
- 2 'Call on the whole Church of Scotland to pray for peace in the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas and in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, and restate the 2015 General Assembly call urging the UK government to recognise, without delay, the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, as a contribution to securing lasting peace and justice for all.'

These two deliverances were carried without debate.

But I, with support, certainly felt that stronger action was required since, for 15 years, Palestinian Christians have been calling for the Churches to stand against the injustices they are experiencing. They have repeatedly appealed to us (Kairos Appeals), as brothers and sisters in Christ, to support them in many ways – so the following deliverance was proposed:

'Encourage Church members to take note of the requests from Palestinian Christian Communities for help in their non-violent struggle to bring peace with justice, including consideration of previous General Assembly Statements and to refrain from buying goods from illegal Israeli settlements.'

This was carried unanimously.

I then proposed a second new deliverance:

‘Call on the Church of Scotland to publicly and explicitly call on the UK Government to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, to cease granting export licences for the sale of armaments to Israel and to reinstate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) funding immediately.’ (UNRWA delivers life-saving humanitarian Aid to Palestinians – which Israel has tried to get donor nations to discontinue).

This deliverance was also unanimously accepted.

Another commissioner then proposed a deliverance asking that the FAPLT give consideration to restoring the annual Church of Scotland grant to help fund the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and report back to the General Assembly of 2025 - as this grant has been withdrawn for 2024.

Again, this was unanimously accepted.

We hoped, with the acceptance of these additional deliverances, that it would be obvious to all that the General Assembly, on behalf of the whole Church of Scotland, wished to make it very clear to the UK Government the actions it required to see in response to the horrendous events in Gaza, the West Bank and in Israel.

Allan Gordon

Fresh Start Celebrating 25 years of Fresh Start

Founded in 1999, Fresh Start was established with a mission to help people who have been homeless to make a home for themselves. Over the years, the charity has expanded its services and programs to meet the needs of the community. From the flagship program the ‘Starter Packs’ to its social and practical services – such as painting, cooking and gardening – and to providing food and advice through its community hub, Fresh Start has made a tangible difference to the lives of countless individuals.

Fresh Start's remarkable journey wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of its supporters.

Here's what Managing Director, Biddy Kelly, had to say about Fresh Start turning 25.

'On one hand, providing services to those in need for 25 years is a great achievement but, on the other hand, it is a sad reflection of our world today. In the last few years we have seen demand for all our services grow year on year. We have ended the last few years being amazed at the amount we have achieved and always thinking we cannot keep that up in the following year. But the following year we do – because we need to provide people with the hope for a better future. That is what all our staff and volunteers do each and every day and I can't thank each and every one of them enough for their continued support.'

Here, at St Michael's, every little donation comes together to make a substantial addition to Fresh Start's resources. Please keep an eye on the noticeboard in the vestibule for news updates and requests for things that are urgently needed.

Harvest 2024

All donations for Harvest Thanksgiving this year are going to Fresh Start.

Please give generously, as you always do. Goods for Starter Packs and the Pantry are always very welcome.

If you have anything you would like to donate, that you are unable to bring to Church, please let us know and we will be happy to come and collect.

Thanks again for all you give and do for Fresh Start.

Alasdair and Babs Webster

St Michael's Film Club 2024/25

All our films screen in the Hall at 7pm with no charge (though donations are accepted).

We open with '**The Old Oak**' (UK 2023), probably the last film in the distinguished career of English director Ken Loach. As ever, firmly based on social issues, it tells a compelling story of the last pub in the village and recently arrived Syrian refugees. There is conflict, of course, but there is hope. **Sunday 6 October.**

The USA Presidential election will be even more in our thoughts in November. **'Wag the Dog'** (1997) might provide some light relief with its satirical take on the relationship between power and the media. Dustin Hoffman stars. **Sunday 3 November.**

'Hidden Figures' (USA 2016) tells a long-forgotten story set in the era of the 'Space Race' in the 1960s, revealing the racial and gender discrimination suffered by three brilliant African-American women in NASA's efforts to put John Glenn into space. **Sunday 1 December.**

We begin a new year in Orkney, the beautiful but harsh setting for **'Venus Peter'** (UK 1989). A young boy, Peter, baptised with sea water, lives a fanciful life with his fisherman grandfather and aunt. **Sunday 5 January.**

'Till' (USA 2022) takes us back to 1955 and the brutal murder of a 14-year old Emmett Till in Mississippi. The murder, and the blatant racist injustice of his killers' trial, played a crucial role in advancing the Civil Rights movement. Emmett's mother's search for justice is movingly portrayed. **Sunday 2 February.**

'The Windermere Children' (UK, Germany 2020) where the 300 young Jewish survivors of World War II who were taken to a camp in the Lake District rehabilitate and learn to integrate into society after their traumatic ordeals. Learning is a two-way process in this production which concentrates on seven youngsters and the adults in charge. **Sunday 2 March.**

We provide a sweet confection in **'Chocolat'** (UK 2000) another story of integration and redemption, an adaptation of Joanne Harris's novel. There's a newcomer in the remote French village, an unmarried mother (Juliette Binoche) who opens a chocolate shop – during Lent. **Sunday 6 April.**

The season ends with **'The Young Woman and the Sea'** (USA 2024) the uplifting life of Gertrude Ederle, champion swimmer, the first woman to successfully swim the English Channel, in 1926. **Sunday 4 May**

Derek Wilson

Who Am I?

I can be young,
I can be old,

I can be hot,
I can be cold,

I can be green,
I can be white,

I can nourish,
I can delight.

I can be clear,
I can be opaque.

What can I be,
For goodness sake?

When you go out on the spree,
You drink from me.

I'm a bottle!

Ruth Andrews

Doors Open Days 2024

Once again, St Michael's will be taking part in the Scottish Civic Trust **Doors Open Days**.

The Church will be open to the public on **Saturday 28 September from 10 am to 4pm and again on Sunday 29 September from 10am to 1pm** (Worship taking place 11am to 12 Noon).

There will be information sheets available giving a short history of the building. This will also include information on several interesting features within the Sanctuary, for example the stained-glass windows, the organ and the pulpit and lectern art work.

If you would like to find out more about other buildings in the local or wider area that are also taking part please go to www.doorsopendays.org.uk

Please note, if searching for St Michael's, please do not include the apostrophe.

If you would like to volunteer to help on these days please add your name to the sign-up sheets at the back of the church.

Sheila Bremner

St Michael's Friendship Club

It's a wonderful feeling when a plan comes together! I am happy to report that the Friendship Club Syllabus is now 99 per cent completed! At the time of writing this, (August 16th), I am still waiting to hear from the lady who talks about Harrison Park Canal Side. She is penciled in for 3rd February 2025. However, we will commence our meetings on 16th September 2024, with a Shakespearian Actress. I am sure this will be a "First" for the Friendship Club. The Actress, Danielle Farrow, was highly recommended by the ladies of Augustine United Church.

As usual, we will have our Minister, The Rev. Andrea Price who will talk to us about "Recycling" and that will be on the 30th September. We have also managed to book "Live Music Now" on two separate occasions. "Live Music Now" have never let us down in the past and it is always good to encourage young performers who are at the beginning of their careers in Music. Some Artists we have hosted in the past, have gone on to stellar careers in the difficult world of music performance. Another Musician we all admire, Sheila Sapcota, will be performing for us with her brother David Simpson. They are a very popular duo and on a separate occasion, David will give a talk. He is a very inspirational and interesting speaker. David is a real polymath, he can talk on many subjects and he can play many instruments, (including the notoriously difficult 12-string guitar), UTMOST RESPECT to him!

There are many people whose occupations I admire and respect, because I could never do them. I respect everyone in the caring professions. Reflexologists who manipulate the feet of people and make them feel better deserve our respect. The Reflexologist Pamela Couper came to our club on February 6th 2023 and she was very popular because she individually advised us all on how to alleviate our aches and pains. Another profession that takes special people to carry out their tasks, are undertakers. We are inviting an undertaker to tell us about his profession

and I think that will be another "First" for the Friendship Club! His talk is entitled "The Elephant in the Room"! I have spoken with him and he has a lively sense of humour; therefore, as long as he doesn't bring his tape measure with him we will all be okay!

Other interesting speakers we have booked are a lady from "The Listening Service", which operates at Edinburgh Sheriff Court and another lady we have approached is knowledgeable about historical coinage and investments and she is coming from "The Museum on the Mound".

Finally, a musician who needs no introduction because we all know him and appreciate how excellent his Concerts always are, Mr. Stuart Montgomery will play for us on 17th February 2025. (A special date for everyone's diary.)

As usual, we will have a little celebration at Christmas 2024 and on the 14th April 2025 we will close with a "Daffodil Tea". So far, so good, that is the plan we have put together which hopefully will include something for everyone to enjoy.

Look forward to seeing you all and in the meantime Very Best Wishes.

Ruth Andrews, President

St Colm's @ St Michael's Guild

During the summer months of June, July and August, on the first Wednesdays of the month, some of the Guild attended Craiglockhart for a Guild afternoon tea. These were enjoyable, friendly occasions and we hope, in the months ahead, to have at least one joint meeting.

We, along with Church members, enjoyed a visit to the 5 Sisters Zoo in June. This zoo does great work through its education programme for groups, especially youngsters, and in rescuing animals which have been ill-treated here and around the world. We all enjoyed the day whether it was seeing the Scottish wildcat being fed, the cheeky meerkats or the aviary. It is a lovely setting and my group was convinced that the bigger animals were in the trees watching us!

The Big Sing during Assembly week was a great success and, as goods from Malawi were on sale and Karen Gillon, our General Secretary was selling with her usual flair, it meant all sold! We do have fun at big Guild meetings.

Our Syllabus (although word from Guild Office recommends calling it a programme) is almost prepared and we start on **Wednesday 11 September** with Andea speaking on the theme for the session ahead – ‘Sure Foundations’. This is the first in the three year strategy of ‘Let us Build a House’.

Recently some members attended a community day at St Bride’s Community Centre which, among other things, showcased the community choir ‘*Forget me Notes*’. We are having a speaker from the choir at our meeting on 25 September. This choir regularly sings at Saughton Park and we have a guild member who sings in the choir. This should be an interesting meeting – tying in with our theme of Sure Foundations – a foundation building community spirit through music.

A joint meeting at Craiglockhart Guild is planned for 2 October when Rae Lind, National Convener, will speak.

Other meetings include ‘Fashion through the Ages’ and we are considering a theatre outing to the Lyceum nearer Christmas, maybe a bit early to mention Christmas but seats go fast!

Sunday 13 October will be our Dedication service. We have to choose a project to support this coming year. To date, the money raised for Guild projects 2021-2024 amounts to £485,921.09. The current projects run until the end of this year so it would be good to reach £500,000 by then. New projects will start in 2025.

Around ten of us hope to represent our Guild at the annual gathering on 7 September at the Assembly. This is the biggest event of the Guild year bringing over 1,000 Guild members and friends together for a day of worship, celebration and fellowship. This year, as well as hearing from the Moderator, we will be joined by guests from Malawi (more shopping?) ...

All are welcome at Guild meetings, whether members or just visiting to see what it is all about. The capitation fee this year 2024-25 is £16. New members continue to receive the first year free.

Looking forward to seeing you there on 11 September at 2pm.

Whose we are and Whom we Serve

Fay Anderson, Co-Convener

Changes to the Church Family

New

Alastair Clyde, July 2024
Chris Jack, July 2024

Deaths:

Tommy Naughton, June 2024
Margaret Stewart, July 2024

Obituaries

Tommy Naughton 1936 to 2024

Tommy died on 13 June 2024 at the age of 88.

Some of us first met Tommy when he came to St Colm's Church to a Tuesday Service. We held a short midweek service, fortnightly, during the summer taken, in turn, by members of session and our minister.

On the first day he came Jean McEdwards' little dog, Kyle, was there and Tommy remarked 'kirk is nae place fur a dug'. We smiled at this and immediately recognised 'old school'.

Going to church midweek was nothing new for Tommy as he had served many Churches in town as a Church officer. Any time you passed St Aidan's at the foot of Chesser Avenue, Tommy could be seen sweeping out the path and tending to the grounds. He also served at Polwarth and was well known throughout Edinburgh as keeping church grounds immaculate.

He himself was immaculate, indeed he was never seen without a collar and tie on – again 'old school'. At his home in Downfield Place he showed me his back green, which he kept. It was pristine with the grass cut to within an inch of its life.

When he joined St Michael's he also joined the Guild and the Friendship Club which he enjoyed. He kept us on our toes re timekeeping and, as the clock reached 2pm and we had not started, we were given a sharp reminder – 'old school'.

At Guild some of our speakers knew Tommy from previous churches and greeted him with respect. Leaders of Guild and Friendship Club understood him and valued his support as, I know, did Andrea. Despite his declining health he attended Church as regularly as he could. The order of the day was important to him.

Tommy was brought up by his grandparents and served his country by doing National Service – this combination probably instilled in him the order of how things should be done and there is nothing wrong in that. At the last Remembrance Service Tommy attended he marched down with the wreath, ramrod straight, and saluted with such dignity that it made the service all the more meaningful.

Old School still has its place in respecting one's country, one's fellow beings and, importantly, one's Church and its traditions. Tommy had that in abundance and will be missed for all those qualities he embodied.

Fay Anderson

Church House Chatter

On a recent trip to Norway I was lucky enough to learn a bit more about the indigenous population – the Trolls.

I was particularly interested to learn that, like the Scots, Trolls are partial to porridge! Indeed one of the older Norwegian traditions is to leave a bowl of porridge out on Christmas Eve in the hope that the Trolls will think kindly of their hosts and ensure a good harvest and a plentiful supply of milk from the local cows.

An amusing fact is that, because Trolls are blessed with long noses, the Troll wives in particular apparently use their noses to stir the breakfast porridge.

Fascinating as that is I plan to stick with my 'spurtle'.



It will soon be Halloween which got me thinking about some of the traditions from my childhood.

We did, of course, make our lanterns from a 'hard as bricks' turnip ('neep') using a potato peeler. This was tough work and we would end up with sore fingers and a pile of scraped out turnip piled high on yesterday's newspaper. What a feeling of satisfaction when a stump of candle was placed inside to light up its triangular eyes and jagged mouth.

And of course Halloween would not have been complete without 'dookin' for apples'. The washing up basin would be filled with water and have plenty apples bobbing about on top. Us kids would take it in turns to stand on a high backed chair with a fork between our teeth and our hands behind our back - I am not sure why we had our hands behind our backs but suspect it was a counter-balance to the (rather heavy!) old fashioned fork??? We would then drop the fork from our mouths in to the washing up basin below in the hope of spearing an apple. I was pretty hopeless at this but it was fun trying. What was left of yesterday's newspaper came in handy to soak up the overspill from the basin.

Guising involved wrapping a 'cape' around ourselves, putting on a plastic 'monster' mask and visiting the other neighbours in our tenement block. I don't remember ever singing a song or receiving any fruit/chocolate but I suppose we must have done! We were lucky enough to have a black cat (an incredibly tolerant pet!) and we could easily pretend to be witches and warlocks by picking him up and giving an evil sounding 'cackle'. Simple times ...

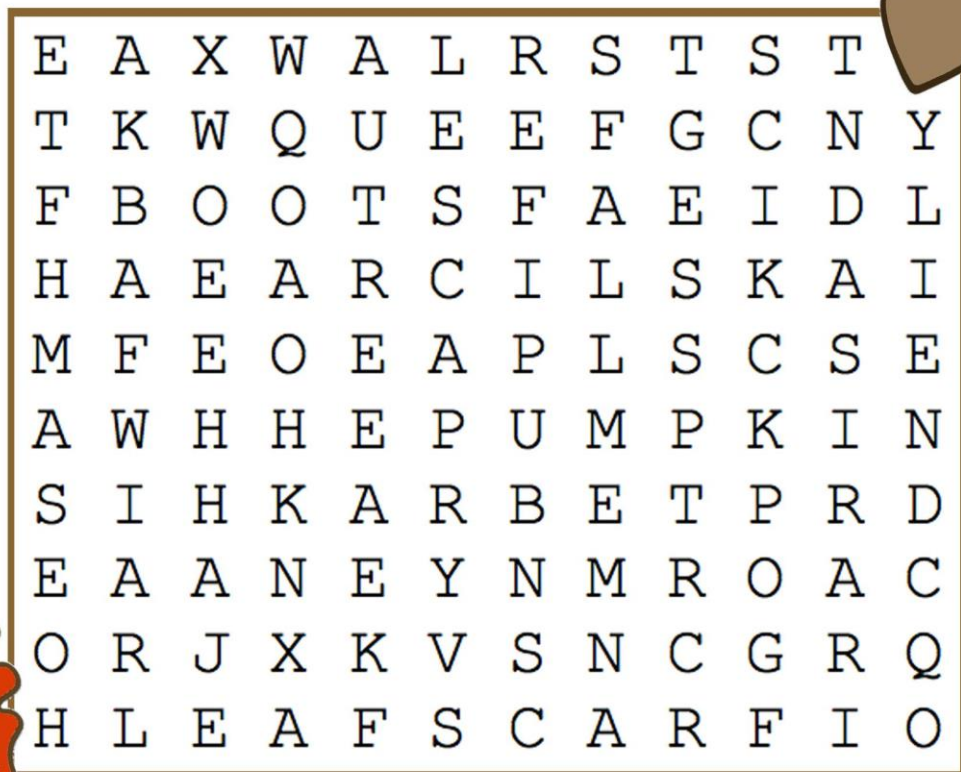
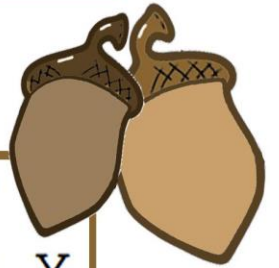
Happy Halloween when it comes.

Fiona Lunn, Editor

Autumn



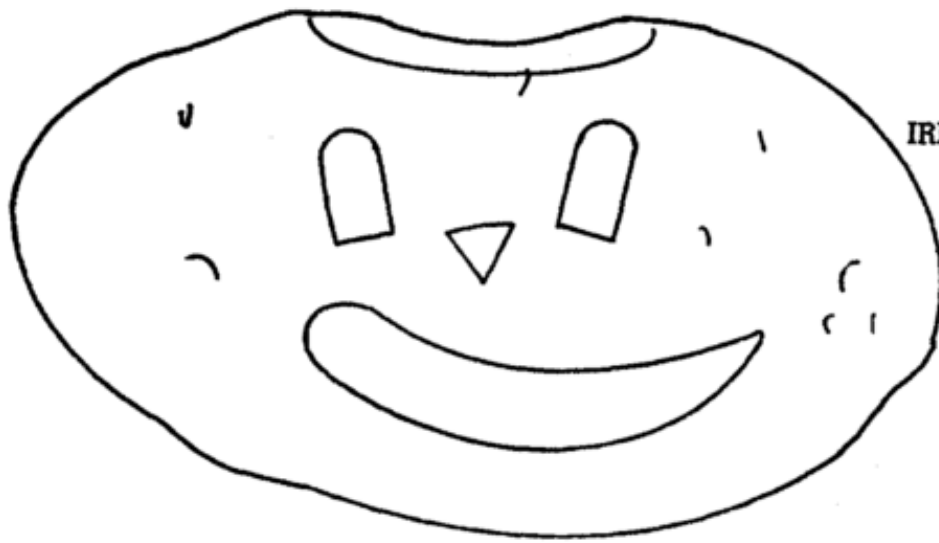
WORD SEARCH



SCARF
TREE
ACORN
HAY

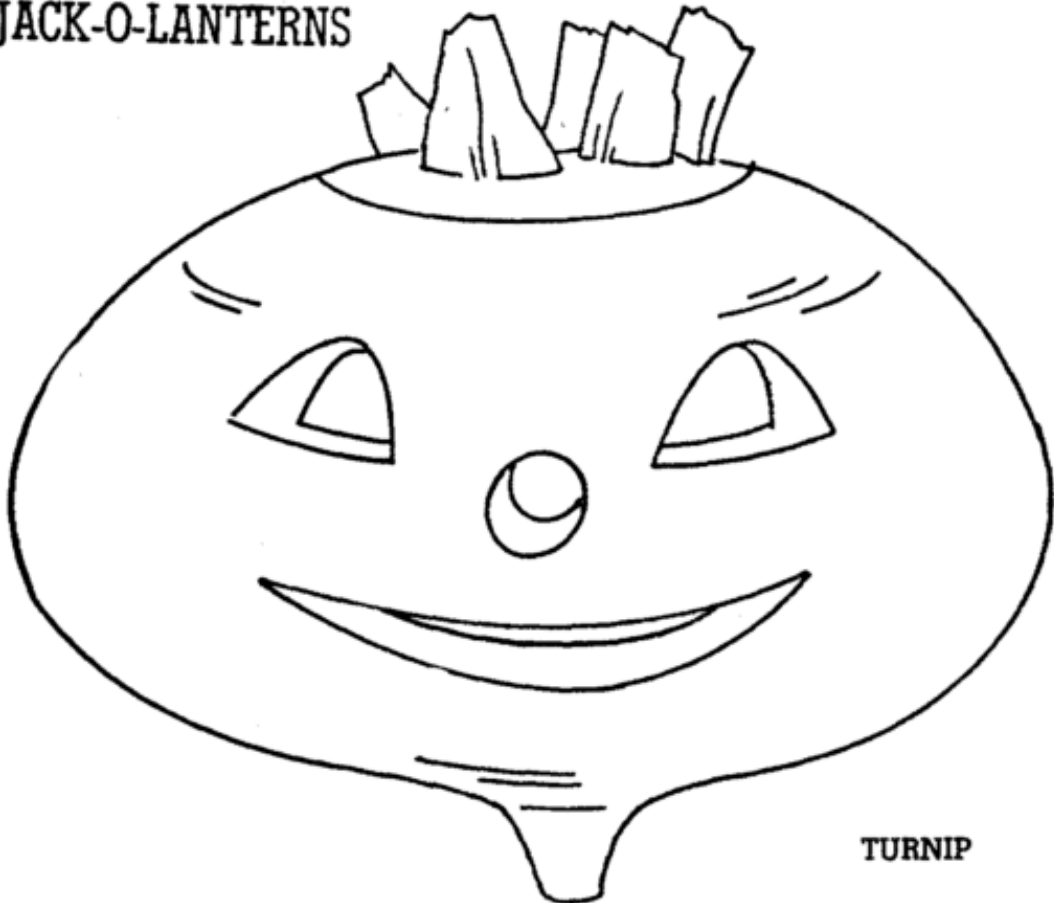
APPLE
FALL
PUMPKIN
SWEATER

BOOTS
RAKE
PIE
LEAF



IRISH POTATO

JACK-O-LANTERNS



TURNIP

The first "jack-o-lanterns" were potatoes and turnips hollowed out and used as lanterns by the Irish. Faces were carved in them and candles placed inside.

St Michael's Parish Church



Saturday Morning Coffee

During

Autumn/Winter

On the first Saturday of the
month from

10.30AM to 12 Noon

ALL WELCOME