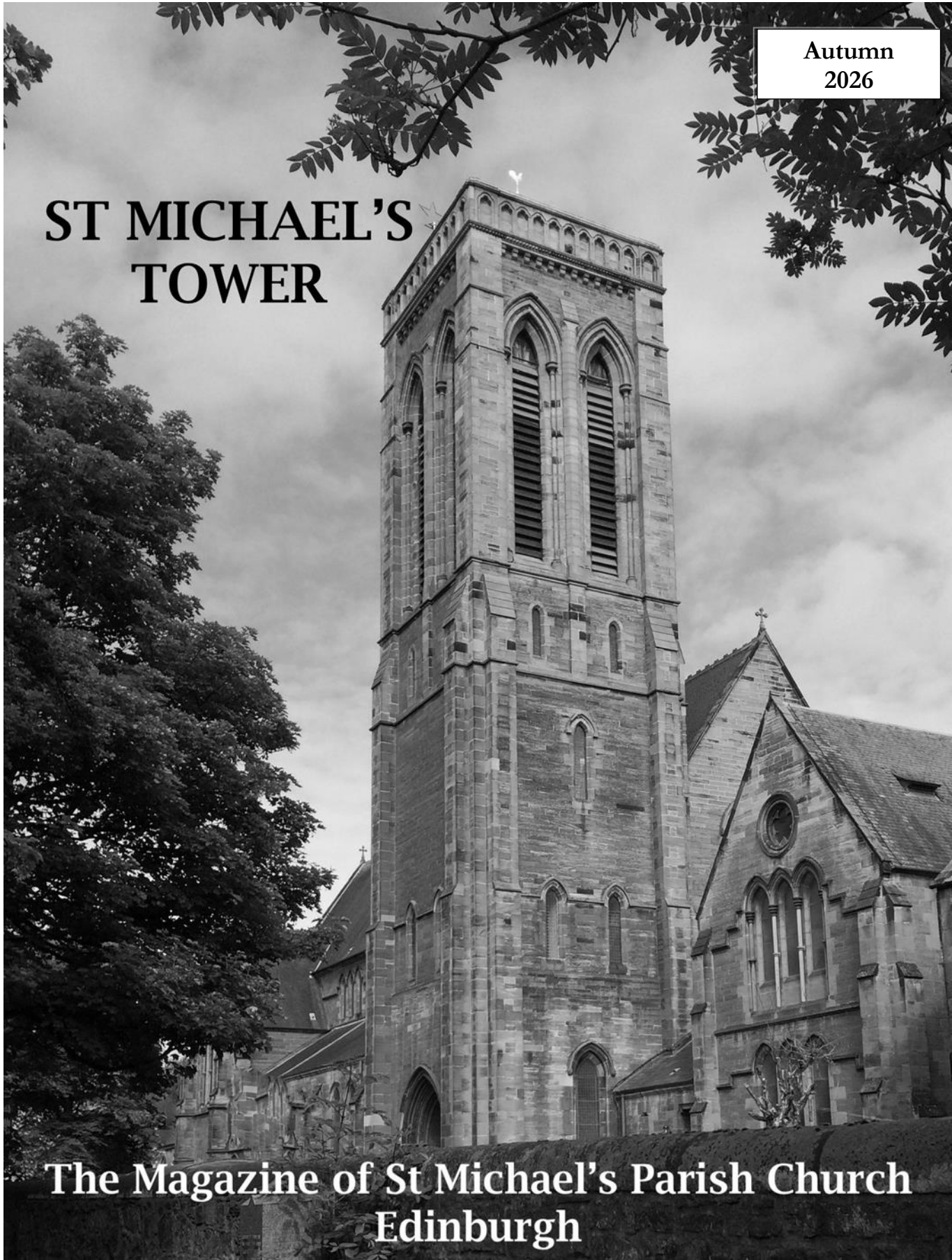




Autumn
2026

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

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Dear Friends

I was looking through Stuart's book '**Edinburgh: The Silent City**' recently and was reminded of how different the summer of 2020 was, with its deserted streets, compared to the Summer of 2026 where the city is alive with activity. The High Street, and its every available space, has a variety of artists trying to entertain the multitude of tourists who visit our Festival City from all corners of the world. Princes Street also looks very different, with all the diversions in place, following the fire in the former Debenhams building.

We live in a city where, every August, the population effectively doubles in size. When I worked in hospitality we always referred to August as the 'jam on our bread and butter'. An Edinburgh tourist tax was introduced at the end of July this year for all overnight guests and we look forward to seeing how the City Council plans to reinvest this money within our communities.

Whether you love or loathe the Festivals – you may have taken the opportunity to see your favourite comedian or author, booked to hear more from an interesting politician or journalist or just caught up with friends – the City does indeed take on a different feeling. Any journey through the city centre, by foot or bus, can take twice as long, the pavements are more crowded, your favourite coffee shop will be busier and restaurant prices may have increased.

Throughout the summer months at St Michael's we welcomed many worldwide visitors to join in our worship including those from the UK, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Dubai.

Our thoughts now turn to Autumn, the nights are 'drawing-in' and the rhythm of life continues with our regular activities – monthly coffee mornings, Matters, Natters and Chatters, The Film Club and Second Sunday Soup – all of which shall be resuming.

Some activities, however, may not continue as their leaders feel it is time to step back after many years of dedicated service. We shall celebrate their contributions to life in St Michael's at a later date in Autumn.

We are still unsure what the future holds for the congregation but, with the guidance of the Deployment Resource Committee, we shall find a path to take. In the meantime we shall continue to pull together and ensure that we have a community in which we can worship and share fellowship as Children of God in our corner of Edinburgh.

With every blessing

Douglas Bannatyne, Session Clerk

A lovely Thank You from Andrea Price

It's hard to believe that it's already been three months since Andrea retired. It was great to see her here at our Summer Coffee morning recently and to see both her and Neil at our August concerts.

Andrea's thank you letter is noted below along with photos of some of the gifts that the congregation presented her with (plus a present for Patch - who attended many church events and kept everyone on their toes).

Dear Douglas and all at St Michael's,

After a very busy day on Sunday I at last managed to open all the wonderful gifts and cards you gave me. Thank you so much for all of them. Your words, good wishes and thoughts really touched my heart. The flowers look beautiful in the sitting room. We will treasure the quaich and the luckenbooth brooch and find something worthy to do with the generous sum of money you gave me. With all this, the song by 'the old crakes' and the lovely lunch you gave me a wonderful send off and start into retirement. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I pray that you will be blessed richly by our God on the road ahead, wherever it will take you.

With all my love

Andrea



A very big Thank You

Many, many thanks to Sheila and Bill Bremner for the wonderful morning coffee and cakes they have supplied us with over three months of summer.

We even managed some mornings out in our lovely garden. A tonic for everyone on a Wednesday morning!

Helen O'Brien (on behalf of all attendees)

Autumn Weather

I was walking along the canal a few weeks ago, in some damp and humid weather, with the 'midges' feasting on my head and ended up thinking about the Scottish weather and the different 'types' of rain that we experience here. I am sure you will know many words to describe the weather but – particularly relevant for Autumn here are some of mine:

Dreich	damp, wet and grey
Blowing a Hoolie	very windy
Snell	as in it's a 'snell' wind – a bitter cold that gets in to your bones
Cauld	Cold
Baltic	VERY cold
Drookit	Soaking wet
Haar	Very common for Edinburgh – the mist/fog rolling in from the sea
Smirr	that incredibly fine drizzle which tricks you into thinking it's not raining until you realise you are 'Fair drookit' ...

However do bear in mind, as per the legendary Billy Connolly, that 'there is no such thing as bad weather – just the wrong clothes'.

Fiona Lunn, Editor

AND ON THAT NOTE ... if you have the time and the inclination then please head along to the exhibition at the NLS. There is a good wee café there too.

Rain

Dates and times

19 June 2026 to 30 April 2027

Type

Exhibition

Location

National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge

Price

Free



When people think of Scotland, they often think of rain. Scots, in turn, have always had a lot to say about it! Our relationship with rain is both practical and deeply woven into our culture, landscape and national identity.

This exhibition makes a splash as we dive into Scotland's relationship with rain. From weather forecasting, fashion, and film, to rain-soaked love stories, climate emergencies, and everything in between.

Coffee Mornings

Saturday 5th September
Saturday 7th November

Saturday 3rd October
Saturday 5th December

Our Monthly coffee mornings are restarting! Doors open at 10.30 am until 12 Noon. Entry is £2 and this includes tea, coffee and biscuits. A selection of freshly cooked hot rolls can be purchased. There will also be a mouthwatering selection of home-baked goods and jams to purchase.

Come and join the fun. All welcome.

If you would like to help out at one of our coffee mornings, please speak to Helen O'Brien or Bill Bremner. If you would like to contribute to the baking stall just bring your goodies along on the day.

Sheila Bremner

The Welcome Hub: Could you help us Welcome our New Neighbours?

This September we're launching **The Welcome Hub**, a relaxed evening for people who are new to Slateford, new to Edinburgh or simply looking to make some new connections.

Moving somewhere new can be exciting but it can also feel a little lonely. So we want St Michael's to offer something very simple: a warm welcome, a friendly face and some good cake!

Behind the scenes, preparations are already underway. Welcome packs and invitations are being prepared for the new students moving into the Napier University accommodation on Slateford Road, just across from the Church. A huge 'Thank You' to Gary Anderson and Asda who are kindly helping us with chocolate biscuits for the welcome packs!

And this is where we need **you!**

We're looking for volunteers to form our welcoming committee: people who can make coffee, serve cake, greet someone at the door, start a conversation or simply sit beside someone who has arrived on their own.

You don't need any special skills. Just come as yourself.

**The Welcome Hub launches on Monday 14 September,
7.30 – 9pm in St Michael's Church Hall**

Could you help us make someone feel at home?

For more information please speak to Kirsty, or email knicholls@churchofscotland.org.uk

Kirsty Nicholls

Pious Pints

Tuesday 15th September
Tuesday 10th November

Tuesday 20th October
Tuesday 15th December

Join us at the Athletic Arms (The Diggers) at the top of Henderson Terrace at 7.30pm for a drink (it doesn't need to be alcoholic! - they serve hot drinks too) and some thought-provoking conversation around a variety of topics – nothing too heavy! Come on your own or bring a friend or two.

Pious Pints is an informal get together in a unique location and offers a great opportunity to get to know each other better. All welcome.

Sheila Bremner

Matters, Natters & Chatters

Matters, Natters & Chatters (MNC) will restart on **Wednesday 16 September** and run fortnightly from then. This is a friendly group that meets from 2pm to 3.30pm for a varied programme of fun, activities and CAKE!

Join us in the Lower Hall for one or all of these afternoons. Please see below for the programme of activities for 2026.

16 th September	Bingo
30 th September	Talk by Graeme Allan on the occupation of the Channel Islands during WW2
14 th October	Dominos and a Quiz
28 th October	Halloween 'Witch Drive'

11 th November	Display of wartime memorabilia and Sing-a-long
25 th November	Christmas Crafts
9 th December	Christmas party

Sheila Bremner

Fairtrade Fortnight 2026

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from **Monday 21 September to Sunday 4 October**. Under the banner '**Do it Fair**', the campaign focuses on championing fair pay, supporting producers against climate change impacts and securing sustainable futures for global farmers and workers.

When you are out and about doing your shopping this fortnight, please try to think about the choices you make when purchasing things like coffee, tea, chocolate, pasta and bananas. Do your chosen items carry the Fairtrade logo? Yes, it will cost you a bit more but you can be sure that the extra pennies you spend will go to supporting farmers and to ensure they get a fair wage for what they are producing.

Please visit St Michael's Fair Trade stall which is open every Sunday morning at the back of the Church. We stock a small range of coffees, pasta, rice, peanut butter and chocolate.

Sheila Bremner

Doors Open Days

Doors Open Days is Scotland's largest free festival celebrating heritage and the built environment, giving the public free access to hundreds of buildings and sites that are usually either closed or have restricted opening.

St Michael's will, once again, be taking part in the Edinburgh and East Lothian Doors Open Days weekend. The Church will be open on **Saturday 26 September from 10 am to 4 pm and on Sunday 27 September from 10 am to 3 pm.**

If you would like to find out more about the history of St Michael's and some of the important fixtures and fittings within then come along and take the tour. There will be volunteers on hand throughout the day to tell you more about St Michael's today and what we offer in the community.

During the weekend, and into the following week, we are especially delighted to be hosting an exhibition of art for the charity **Impact Arts**. Impact Arts is an award-winning community arts charity, providing life-changing art programmes for people of all ages across central Scotland. They use creative engagement to build confidence and empower participants to achieve their potential. They specialise in using the arts to tackle inequalities, improve health and as a way to excite, involve and create meaningful impacts for the people and communities they work with. It was established in 1994 and has engaged across 30 of Scotland's 32 local authorities and with over 300,000 people.

Please support this wonderful group of people.

Sheila Bremner

Fresh Start Autumn 2026 - Harvest

How time flies! We are already having to think about our **Harvest Thanksgiving Service** which will be on **Sunday 4 October**. Once again we are asking for donations to Fresh Start and, in particular, for the Food Pantry.

The cost of living crisis is hitting the Pantry stocks hard and is, therefore, impacting those in need - so if you can add just a few extra items to your shopping trolley it will really help. Many families have to use the Pantry every week just to help make ends meet. Returning to school means money is needed for new clothes, haircuts, stationery etc so being able to use the Pantry takes the pressure off when it comes to being able to afford food. If you can help support the Pantry it means you are also helping parents give their children – not just meals – but moments of normality.

The Pantry shopping list is as follows:

Pasta *** tins of soup *** tins of tuna, sardines *** cereal *** pasta sauces ***
teabags *** coffee *** sugar *** cooking oil *** tinned vegetables ***
sauces (like Ketchup etc) *** tinned meals *** rice *** diluting or
concentrated juice *** UHT milk.

The usual Starter Pack items such as bedding, crockery, cookware, cleaning items, toiletries and small household appliances are, as ever, still needed. Donations of money are, of course, also very welcome.

We are looking forward to welcoming Biddy Kelly to St Michael's on Sunday 4 October and hearing the latest Fresh Start updates.

If you have donations for Fresh Start but are unable to bring them to Church please contact us on 0131 441 1328 or email babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk and we will be happy to arrange a suitable time for us to come and collect your donation.

Many thanks

Alasdair and Babs Webster

Film Club **(all screenings will take place in the Church Hall)**

We like films that give us plenty to talk about and think we've chosen pretty well on that account this time!

We begin with the award winning ***I Swear*** (2025), the fascinating story of John Davidson, a Gala boy afflicted by Tourette Syndrome, a condition which causes involuntary tics, shouts and swearing in the victim. We see its erratic and frightening 'progress' as John starts High School, when it begins, all the way to adulthood as John copes, or not, with his life. It's a moving, funny, empathetic account of his struggles, and his efforts to help other sufferers, whilst helping the public understand the condition. John was awarded an MBE by the late Queen for his work over many years. Scott Ellis Watson and Robert Aramayo star as John, Shirley Henderson as his mother, Maxine Peake and Peter Mullan as mentors to John. The film won the Jury Award at the famed Sundance Festival.

Sunday 4 October at 7pm

No Other Land (2024) records the destruction of a region of Palestine by Israeli forces over a number of years. It's also the story of its makers, mainly two, Basel Adra, a young Palestinian activist, and Yuval Abraham, an Israeli journalist. Not an easy watch, it is powerfully filmed, an important document of its time. It won an Oscar for best documentary film in 2025.

Sunday 1 November at 7pm

We are probably all familiar with the story of Christmas in the trenches; in December 1914 there was an unofficial truce on the 24th and 25th in No Man's Land at various points on the Western Front in World War 1. **Joyeux Noel** (2005) is written by Christian Carion who grew up in the area but knew nothing of the historical events because it had been censored as a shameful event by the French army and governments. His fictional account shows the French, British and German responses to the temporary breakout of Peace in war.

Sunday 6 December at 7pm

Good Night, and Good Luck (2006) was the sign-off from famed CBS broadcaster Ed Murrow, the film telling of his bitter battle with the right-wing Senator, Joseph McCarthy who led the witch-hunt against alleged communists in the USA in the 1950s, ruining lives and creating fear and division as he did so. David Strathairn stars as Murrow while director, George Clooney, has time to act, playing the CBS TV producer Fred Friendly. We may see parallels to our own times in the portrayal of demagogues, spreading of suspicions and divisions.

Sunday 10 January at 7pm

The Outrun (2024) is an adaptation of a memoir by Amy Liptrop, an account of her struggles with addiction, with family and friends, with herself. Saoirse Ronan is totally convincing in her role as is the setting, Orkney, which is as important as any character.

Sunday 7 February at 7pm

For Mother's Day, Sunday March 7, we have a kind of family movie, **Little Miss Sunshine** (2006). Toni Collette is Mom of the somewhat eccentric Hoover family, played by Greg Kinnear, Steve Carrell, Paul Dano, Alan Arkin and the outstanding Abigail Breslin playing 7-year old Olive. When Olive is invited to compete in the 'Little Miss Sunshine' pageant in distant California, the entire family set off in an elderly VW campervan to support her, with comic results.

Sunday 7 March at 7pm

In **First Reformed** (2017), Ethan Hawke is the minister of a small congregation in upstate New York. Beset by problems of many kinds – his church, his history, his family – it is an absorbing study, worthy of its writer and director, Paul Schrader, with a long and distinguished career in film, writer of **Taxi Driver** and **Raging Bull** among many others.

Sunday 4 April at 7pm

We hope to round off the season with a hit from the Glasgow Film Festival this year, and a big hit in Filmhouse, the documentary, **Everyone to Kenmure Street** (2026), recording the events on that street in 2021 when the Home Office attempted to detain two refugees to deport them, choosing a politically sensitive time, Eid. The people in Pollockshields took decisive action to prevent this event, and many people responded in a conflict recorded mainly by mobile phones. Actor Emma Thomson helped produce the film and voiced the words of 'Van Man', the local hero who wrapped his arms around the axle, preventing its departure. We expect that the DVD will be available by May.

Sunday 7 May at 7pm

Jamie Baxter and Derek Wilson

Second Sunday Soup

Second Sunday Soup starts again on **Sunday October 11th**.

Please join us for fellowship and then a bowl of delicious soup served along with a tasty roll after the service. Any donations go to the worthy charities that we support.

A big **Thank You** to all our wonderful volunteers - 'Souperstars' - who help in so many ways to make this happen. We are so grateful. If you would like to join the Souperstar volunteers please speak to Debbie Baxter. There are many ways in which you can help. It's not just about making soup (though that is definitely important!).

Debbie Baxter

Remembrance Sunday, Bereavement Service and Amnesty International

Do keep an eye out in the Friday newsletters for a bit more information regarding Remembrance Sunday (Sunday 8 November) and our annual, Bereavement Service (scheduled for Sunday 15 November). Also for our regular Amnesty Letter Writing (currently scheduled for Sunday 29 November after the Sunday service).

St Michael's shortlisted for Heritage Case Study

St Michael's has been named as one of ten exceptional churches chosen as case studies as part of the Research in Action on Church Heritage (ReACH) project, led by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in partnership with Scotland's Churches Trust. The project is working across Scotland to document not only the physical heritage of churches, but also the stories, traditions and community connections that make these buildings meaningful to the people who use them.

Anyone who has any connection to St Michael's will know how special it is. It is a beloved landmark and a notably fine example of a late Victorian Neo-Gothic church. On our recent visit, we were really taken with the many wonderful examples of artistry and craft in the church's fabric and fittings, from the grand organ to the hand painted reredos, and the millennium glass paneled doors at the entrance. It is also abundantly clear that there is a vibrant social history woven into the church's fabric and spanning many generations – we can't wait to explore this more.

Over the coming months the ReACH team will work with the Kirk Session to arrange to record the church's building, furnishings, ornaments and artworks to capture its heritage value. At the same time, we will be exploring and recording the community connections to the church and gathering oral histories to capture its social value. We also plan to hold an open day, welcoming visitors into the church to explore, engage in activities and share their memories and stories of St Michael's. The dates and times for this are still to be confirmed but we aim to complete all our case studies by April 2027.

The team is very much looking forward to working alongside the congregation and wider community to capture the heritage and spirit of this beautiful church.

You can visit our website if you'd like to learn a bit more about the project: <http://www.churchheritage.scot> and if you'd like to get in touch with us ahead of our planned activities, drop us an email to churches@socantscot.org.

St Colm's@St Michael's Guild – Death of a Member

Marion Windass, a long time Guild member from St Colm's, died in May this year. Marion was 91 years old and, up until last year, attended Guild meetings thanks to another Guild member, Doreen Sherrat, who helped her to get there. Marion's funeral at Colinton Parish Church, where she was a member, was attended by Guild members from here. Many of us had known Marion since our Sunday School days. We give thanks for a long life, well lived, in the company of a loving husband and family and alongside a supportive Church family.

Fay Anderson, co-convenor Guild

St Colm's@St Michael's Guild

It is with sadness that I write this article today.

Given the uncertainty regarding the future of St Michael's the Guild here has taken the decision to close. The age and health of those who preside over meetings and organise speakers and programmes etc also plays a part in this decision!

This branch of the Guild goes back to Dalry Church which became Dalry-Haymarket, then to St Colm's and finally to St Michael's. We have, therefore, been through many changes. It is mainly because of Churches coming together that we are a gathered Guild with members from these combined churches holding meetings with members from other churches such as Gorgie+Palmerston Place, Polwarth, Slateford/Longstone, Greenbank, Colinton and, of course, St Michael's. We also have members with no Church affiliation thus proving to be an example of people, from all over, being welcomed and included in the Church of Scotland Guild – the motto being 'Whose we are and Whom we Serve'. I like to think that we have followed that theme faithfully.

Over the years we have supported, both financially and personally, all of the Guild projects, the Church and the charities associated with it and local community projects. We are thankful for the anonymous donations received too. At the end of every session we give prayerful thanks for the legacy left to St Colm's, and on to us, by the late Miss Ramsay. We have adhered to her request to use it for socials and social outings. Both the Church and Guild have benefited from her generous bequest.

We are to have an **Afternoon Farewell Tea in the Hall on Wednesday 23 September at 2pm**, mainly to celebrate the Guild and its achievements in this place. To name individuals who have supported Guild would take up

too much space but we in the Guild are more than grateful to all in Church and Session who have helped in whatever way – be it making tea, heating the hall and, importantly, to those who have attended, organised and convened meetings. A huge thanks to all.

We may not meet again as a Guild in St Michael's but we will remember the laughter, fun, fellowship and worship that happened in Guild. My hope is that we will continue to adhere to the Guild theme in our daily life – to share our faith in worship, prayer and action.

Whose we are and Whom we Serve

Fay Anderson, co-convenor Guild



Changes to the Church Family

No changes were notified to the Kirk Session or office over the last quarter.

Wedding

Andrea Price led the wedding service for Jennifer McDonald and Theo Masire at Edinburgh Castle on 28 May 2026. Jennifer's grandparents were married at St Michael's many years ago.

Church House Chatter

And that's another three months gone by just like that. I have been pretty much focusing on my summer holidays as it's been quieter in the office – many of our hall bookers take a break when the schools are off. In our haste to get away to the sun we often forget the appeal of our own country. My next trip is to be to Shetland and, although I am not getting too excited about the weather, I am very much looking forward to seeing the raw beauty of it all.

I am genuinely sorry to hear that The Guild shall be finishing up at St Michael's in September. Fay's stamina and enthusiasm to find new and interesting things to inspire the group here and to ensure involvement with the Guild movement more generally has been inspirational and I have enjoyed trying to help out where I could. I wish all the members of The Guild well for the future and hope they will continue to meet up and support each other.

And for the Little 'uns

I think it's fair to say that, these days, folk 'celebrate' Halloween the American way – eg with Pumpkins rather than Turnips. So what should you do with all the scooped out pumpkin? Well I am not a huge fan of pumpkin pie but I do enjoy a warming pumpkin soup.

Why don't you give this a go? As always make sure there is an adult nearby to help out with anything tricky or anything you are not too sure about.

Ingredients (NB this will make enough for four people).

1kg of peeled and diced pumpkin

1 chopped onion

2 garlic cloves

2 tbsps of oil

750g of stock (stock cubes are fine)

Salt & Pepper

Heat the oil in a large saucepan (make sure the oil isn't too hot). Add in the onion and cook this for a few minutes until it has softened. Then add the garlic – make sure you mince this first – and cook for a further minute. Give the mixture an occasional stir to stop it all sticking to the pan.

Add the pumpkin to the onion/garlic and mix it all in using a spoon. Then cook for around five minutes so that the pumpkin is a bit softer.

At this stage you can add the stock and bring the pan to the boil. Turn the heat back down, put the lid on the saucepan and leave the soup to simmer away for around 20 to 25 minutes (or until the pumpkin is nice and soft).

Take the soup away from the heat and use a stick blender to 'mush' the soup together until it is the right texture for you. If it's a bit too thick you can always add some more stock to thin it out a bit.

Add salt and pepper till you think it tastes just right.

It's ready to serve – ideally with some crusty bread and butter. I hope you enjoy.



Fall, Leaves, Fall (Emily Bronte)

Fall , leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the Autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day

Dried leaves and flowers

My brothers and I used to enjoy collecting fallen leaves from the trees in Autumn as they really do come in a variety of colours and shapes – browns, oranges, yellow and red.

We would then carefully place the best ones between the pages of books and 'press' them by piling heavier books on top.

Once they were properly dried out (it takes about 3 weeks) and nicely flattened we could use them to make autumn-themed pictures – with crayon, pencil or paint to help create the picture. Why not give that a go?

And, if nothing else, do make sure that you 'kick' your way through a pile of dry, fallen leaves at some point. Such fun as the leaves crunch underfoot or fly up in front of you! Though do make sure you are on a path or a trail so you don't run the risk of inadvertently disturbing a sleepy hedgehog.



Diary of Events	
Monthly Coffee Mornings	Saturday 5 September, 3 October, 7 November and 5 December. 10.30 to 12 Noon in the Hall
Welcome Hub	Monday 14 September at 7.30pm to 9pm in the Hall
Pious Pints	Restarts on 15 th September from 7.30pm in the Diggers then on 20 October, 10 November and 15 December
Matters, Natters & Chatters	Restarts on Wednesday 16 th September and runs fortnightly from then. 2pm to 3.30pm in the Hall
Fairtrade Fortnight 2026	Monday 21 September to Sunday 4 October
The Guild	Farewell Afternoon Tea to be held in the Hall on Wednesday 23 September at 2pm
Doors Open Days and Impact Arts Exhibition	Saturday 26 to Sunday 27 September with the exhibition running to the start of October
Fresh Start Autumn 2026	Donations for Fresh Start will be requested at The Harvest Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 4 October
Film Club	The Film Club restarts on Sunday 4 October at 7pm in the Hall and runs monthly from then
Second Sunday Soup	Restarts on Sunday 11 October
Remembrance Sunday	Sunday 8 November
Bereavement Service	Sunday 15 November
Amnesty International Event	Sunday 29 November