

the **EDGE**

People, Places, Theology
Autumn issue 2015

The quarterly magazine of the Diocese of Edinburgh in the Scottish Episcopal Church



GLEN ALMOND Youth Week 2015

SCHOOL RUN IN BETHLEHEM:
Ecumenical Accompaniment in
Israel/Palestine

SPECIAL FOCUS ON MISSION:
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Changing Lives

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Marriage, Holiness and Joy



The Edge

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Erratum

Margaret Coull has asked us to point out that her reference to Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies as 'former' in the Diocesan News section of the last issue (Summer 2015) was incorrect as it is still very much in existence. Apologies for any confusion.

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MARRIAGE, HOLINESS AND JOY

Rt Rev John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh



In June, the General Synod of our church indicated that it wished to alter our regulations on marriage. The intention is to allow same-sex couples to be married in our churches within the scope of Scottish law. The earliest this change will take effect will be two years from now. It does not mean that all clergy will wish to or, indeed, be permitted to officiate at such weddings. The consciences of all will be protected.

The debate in Synod stirred up strong emotions and there is clearly a significant number of Episcopalians who remain unhappy with the result. They found the process of the Synod debate - designed as it was to move towards a decision - to be in harsh contrast to the irenic atmosphere of the Cascade Conversations over the last year or so. Yet, as I commented in the debate, the Cascade process has indicated that marriage is not an issue on which we are divided across 'party' lines. There is no single conviction on marriage that might be described as either 'evangelical' or 'liberal'. Neither is this debate divided between those who love the bible and those who don't. It is a debate amongst those who love scripture and who, when it came to the vote, acted on deeply held and theologically coherent principles.

Christians have disagreed about the bible before. The Acts of the Apostles tells how first century Christians almost came to blows about whether they were required to observe the Jewish law, including circumcision and food regulations, or not. This heated exchange boiled down to the question: What does it mean to lead pure and holy lives? One side focused on Scriptural authority and the long usage of the 'purity laws', the other on the obvious activity of the Holy Spirit in new believers who did not observe these laws. Both sides, in other words, were seeking to be faithful to Christ. The decision that 'it seems

good the Holy Spirit and to us' not to insist on the 'purity laws', was based both on Scripture and on prayerful observation of God at work in Gentile believers. (See Acts 15)

There is a sense in which the present marriage debate emerges from the same concern about purity and draws the lines of disagreement in a similar place. There are those who believe that long usage and Scriptural evidence proves that marriage, in God's purposes, can only be between a man and a woman. Equally, there are those who read Scripture differently and observe that the Holy Spirit is evident in the quality of relationship in same-gender couples every bit as much as in different-gender couples. As I said in the debate at Synod, I place myself amongst this latter group.

Whilst the bible offers us few good role models for marriage and family life, it has much to say about healthy relationships. These grow out of mutuality and self-giving; they are about transcending self just as Christ transcended self on our behalf. In a small way all relationships reflect something of the holiness of relationship that lies at the heart of God, the Trinity. Marriage is a way of seeking this quality of relationship within the context of a physical longing for another. A healthy relationship manifests this in respect for the other, concern for their well-being and a willingness to put them first so that both may thrive. We may extract from this an equally clear picture of unhealthy relationships. Here physical longing and self-interest find expression in unkindness and dishonesty, possession and control and sometimes even in violence, abuse and intimidation. My observation is that healthy and unhealthy relationships exist both inside marriage and outside, between people of different genders and the same gender.

Our liturgies tell us that marriage is 'a gift of God in creation'. I do not take this to mean that built into our sexual relations is a definitive norm or natural law, which offers us – if we could but recognise it – the romantic ideal of marriage prevalent in the 21st century. Rather, it is that, in doing what comes naturally to them, people have always found something worthwhile in marriage (for all sorts of economic and genetic reasons as well as romantic). And the church, seeing this, seeks not only to bless the social stability that it represents and affirm its value for the care of children but discovers that an exclusive, lifelong relationship offers a way into holiness. Indeed, there are some Christian traditions that see the marriage vows themselves as akin to the ascetic vows made by monks and nuns – vows of obedience, chastity and renunciation of possessions.

This is a high ideal of marriage, it goes far beyond the picture of marriage presented in the world at large. Should not all Christian couples of whichever orientation be permitted to, indeed expected to, aspire to this ideal? Can we not offer to all relationships which are faithful, exclusive, life-long, the possibility that they may enter into and reflect to others the joyful longing at the heart of God?

I put this diffidently. I know that many Christians whom I admire would disagree with my position on this. But I am not discouraged by disagreement. Indeed, it persuades me that we are in a process, much like that in the first-century church, in which we are seeking to discern what seems good to the Holy Spirit so that it may seem good to us too.

+John

Erratum? A note for Latin scholars



"Venari lavari ludere ridere occ est vivere."

Or, in the vernacular, "Hunting, bathing, gambling, drinking: this is life!" In the last issue of *The Edge* (Summer 2015), Bishop John used this quotation, and we 'corrected' the word 'occ' to 'hoc', which is certainly in keeping with good Latin usage.

The error, however, was neither the Bishop's nor Charles Gore's. With the help of Alastair Small's archaeological expertise, we have obtained a picture of the original stone at Timgad in modern Algeria (above), and the error is that of the stonemason, who clearly had no spell-check on his chisel, so the eccentric spelling should be retained!

Bishop John also points out that it may not be an error at all, but a representation of a local dialect showing 'hoc' with a 'dropped 'h'.

HOLY BOLDNESS IN THE WEST BANK

by Elspeth Strachan

I have recently returned from three months in the West Bank working as a human rights monitor with the World Council of Churches programme known as the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

The aim of the programme is to help bring about an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and it was an extraordinary experience which I can recommend to anyone who has an interest in or concern for what is happening in that part of the world.

So often we feel powerless and overwhelmed by the news coming out of occupied Palestine and Israel. Indeed, as I write, the newspapers are full of the latest tragedy: "Palestinian fury as 'Jewish settler' arson attack kills child" reads the BBC headline today. It seems that four extremist Israeli settlers threw a Molotov cocktail into the home of an innocent Palestinian family, killing 18 month old Ali and severely burning his mother, father and 4-year old brother, Ahmed.

Graffiti scrawled on the house testified to it being an act of revenge against, not the Dawabsha family, but the Israeli government for demolishing some illegal Israeli settler houses. The perpetrators were condemned as terrorists by

the Palestinian Authority and by the Israeli Government.

The situation in Israel and occupied Palestine is unimaginably complex and this incident alone needs a great deal of unpacking for us to understand why it happened. It is easy to feel powerless in the face of such an intransigent conflict, but I have discovered that there is still a great deal that we can do.

In my three months with EAPPI, for instance, I lived in the West Bank, met ordinary people on both sides, heard their stories, shared meals, drank coffee, visited families,

worked with Israeli and Palestinian peace groups and slowly began to understand a little more of the experience of those living under occupation and those living as occupiers. I also began to believe what we were constantly being told: that as members of the international community, we have power and can bring change to end the occupation. EAPPI is testimony to this.

The EAPPI programme came about in 2002 in response to a call from the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem for support in the face of the Israeli occupation.



The World Council of Churches set up the EAPPI programme in 2003 and since then has sent out over 1500 people from across the world as Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) to work towards a just peace in Israel and occupied Palestine.

Our task is:

- human rights monitoring
- protective presence
- working with Israeli and Palestinian peace groups
- advocacy for an end to the Israeli occupation.

My placement was in Bethlehem and our team worked as human rights monitors by standing at the Bethlehem checkpoint counting how many people went through and noting when human rights were violated (not forgetting the violation of the checkpoint itself); accompanying children to school past fully armed Israeli soldiers and recording incidents such as the burning of olive trees by Israeli settlers, the detention of children by the Israeli military and the issuing of demolition orders by the Israeli Civil Administration.

We wrote regular reports which were sent to various organisations, including the UN. We also worked closely with both Israeli and Palestinian peace groups. In all we did our aim was to be a protective presence to vulnerable communities.

Having spent a life-transforming time in the West Bank and Israel, my main task now is advocacy for EAPPI's vision of a future where the occupation of Palestine has ended and both Palestinians and Israelis enjoy a just peace with freedom and security based on international law. In the UK and Ireland EAPPI is a joint project of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, managed by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). One of its great strengths is its commitment to 'principled impartiality' i.e. it does not take sides but is not neutral about the abuse of human rights. As a Christian programme, it stands firmly on the side of the poor and marginalised.

We may feel powerless about the occupation of Palestine and the suffering it causes to both sides, but as I discovered, there is in fact

quite a lot that we can do: visit Israel and occupied Palestine, become an EA, host an EA talk, make links with Israeli or Palestinian peace groups, twin with a Palestinian village, contact MPs, give money, keep informed through blogs such as www.eyewitnessblogs.com and above all, pray.

Post Script: On the day I wrote this article, the morning prayer in my daily prayerbook, 'Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals', was: 'Give us holy boldness, Lord: to struggle for justice until we die'. Yes, indeed.



www.quaker.org.uk/eappi



Photos: Facing Page (top): Easter Day sunrise at the separation barrier; Facing Page (bottom): Beit Jala Scouts on Palm Sunday; This Page (top): Elspeth and the Bethlehem EAPPI team and their drivers; This Page (bottom): Palestinians crammed into the Bethlehem checkpoint.

MISSION: Renewing and Reconciling

by John Conway

At our Diocesan Synod in March this year, at the suggestion of Bishop John, I took on the role of convening the Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee. As Kenneth Fleming, our Diocesan Mission Officer outlines in his article, our Diocese recognises the need to place mission (or more precisely, our response to the mission of God) more centrally.

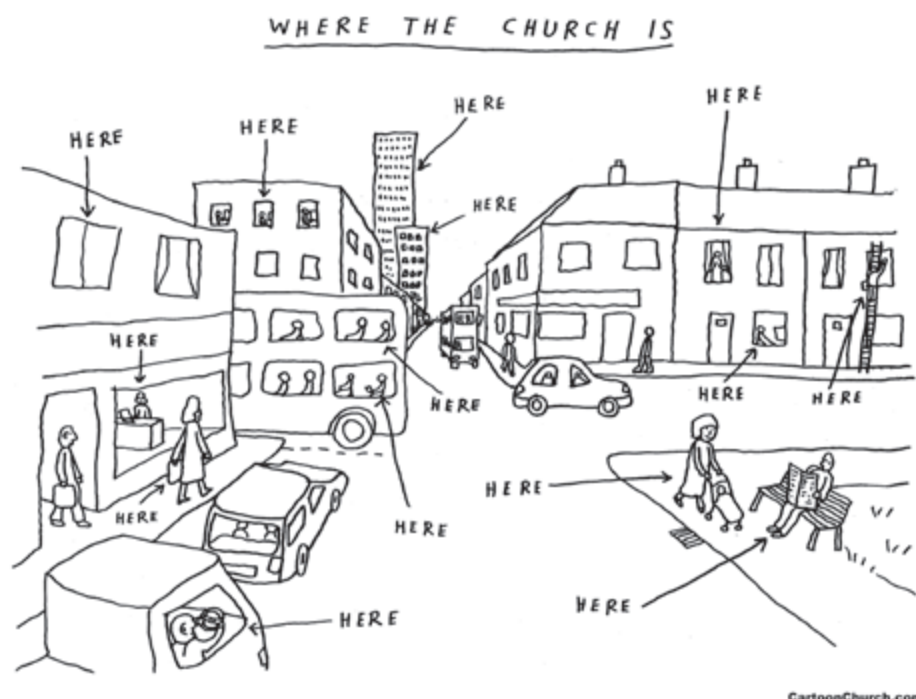
The mission of God, renewing and reconciling creation, is increasingly understood as the central organising principle of the church, its reason for being.

The Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee's remit is to ask how the Diocese in all its diverse life is responding to that mission and calling, and to offer all the help and resources it can so that we are able to live out our calling more faithfully.

It is an exciting, and daunting, time, therefore, to take on convening the committee. Kenneth has done a fantastic job in surveying the state of mission in our diocese, and in producing, with a small working party, proposals on how to best move forward.

Those proposals, to be presented to Diocesan Synod in October, include both a process to help congregations discern and act upon how God is at work in their community and context, and a job description for a full time Diocesan Mission Officer post to support that process and place mission even more centrally in our life together. That involves, inevitably, a financial commitment by the Diocese, so it will be important that the proposals are properly considered and are genuinely seen to provide the fresh resource and development that we need. I look forward to that conversation at our October Synod.

As the rector for 14 years of a small charge in inner-city Edinburgh, I am well aware of the challenge that discerning, and acting upon, our mission demands. Every context is different, and our responses



are understandably diverse: any resources that are offered within the Diocese have to take that diversity into account and respond flexibly. What we all share within our wider culture, however, even if it manifests itself in different ways, is an increasing indifference toward, or alienation from, Christianity. That makes this moment a hard time (but also a fruitful one) in which to try and proclaim the gospel, nurture faith, serve our communities and address the social, political and environmental fault-lines of our time. That is what God's mission calls us to do, however.

To acknowledge that our present moment is hard, and that we wonder sometimes about the future of our church, is not a counsel of despair, but an important part of the process of discerning the right ways forward. We should not blame ourselves, or think there is a lack of effort, when we find it hard – you are not alone in that.

What we can do in response, as a Diocese, is find ever better ways to share resources, ideas, enthusiasm, lessons learnt and support.

The Mission & Ministry Committee already oversees a great deal of that through the Youth & Children Officer, the Ministry Development Service, Stewardship Resources, its international portfolio, the work of the Spirituality Group and more.

I hope that, as Convenor, I can help in developing the ways that that Diocesan expertise and resource can better equip us all to respond to God's mission and calling.



The Diocesan Autumn Synod will be held on Thursday 29 October in Holy Trinity, Haddington



by Kenneth Fleming

"This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming... we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it."

Martin Luther wrote these words in 1521 in the heat of the Reformation debate. I find them meaningful today, in very different circumstances, for Christian life in general and in my present employment as Mission Officer for the diocese: life and mission always in a process of becoming.

I came back to Scotland last year, after eight years in Germany, to begin training for ordained ministry. At the same time, I was given a temporary job as diocesan Mission Officer. The main task has been to scope the post itself - to ask if we need a 'mission officer' and what kind of tasks are involved.

Why this interest in mission across our churches? There are two key reasons. First, the reality of our situation: church decline, the questioning of the relevance of Christian faith, and the political/cultural turn towards more plural and secular societies. Second, the return to a very old concept of mission as being rooted in the nature of God. The first is a matter of great concern, evoking a sense of despair among some, the second is a matter of hope and encouragement.

My interest in mission stretches back to the beginnings of my own faith.

I was ordained before - as a Buddhist monk. It was my old Japanese master who told me to read the bible - an unlikely evangelist! I still love the Buddha, but my heart and mind were touched by Christ, especially his self-giving and humility, and by some remarkable Christians.

After work with homeless people, I started theological studies and ended up being a missionary in Asia - as pastor to three churches - before doing a theology doctorate and joining the staff of the Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church as it was known then.

After six years, I went to Germany and worked latterly at Heidelberg University. I undertook much of that journey with my wife, who is German, an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland, with a Lutheran and Reformed background. Mission issues - interreligious, cross-cultural/linguistic, theological, evangelistic, social justice, ecumenical - have in one way or another shaped our lives. It has been a privilege to further that interest in the Diocese.

Earlier this year, I completed a wide-ranging survey on the state of mission in the diocese, which can be found on the diocesan website. This threw up a host of data with some churches growing and others in decline.

Several common hindrances to mission were identified, such as slow reaction to cultural change, a lack of confidence in sharing faith, conflict

in churches, aging congregations, and an unwillingness to embrace change. The survey findings led to the setting up of a working group, drawing its membership from people that represent different contexts and traditions across the diocese. We have produced a definition of mission to guide the diocese and the outline of a process to help congregations further discern and act on mission.

At present, I am fleshing out the group's proposals with the aim that a substantial piece of work will be presented to October's Synod. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' recipe for mission, but intention and mutual encouragement are two of its key ingredients.

Mission used to be understood as an add-on to church life and worship. Today, we talk about God as being missionary by nature and mission as defining the purpose of the church and ministry. Mission is a simple word really, meaning 'to send'. It begins with a self-sending God, where the Spirit is evident in creation, where Jesus comes for our redemption, and where we, as disciples, are sent out in the power of the Spirit.

As Christians, we are invited to be a part of God's missionary movement, part of God's ongoing love for the world, the church for others. As Luther suggests, it is about growing and becoming in the things of God.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

with Bob Gould



A summer teasel from Garden Leave

DIGGING FOR BEAUTY

The coming of (somewhat) warmer days has increased activity in the garden. *Life Together* (St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow) shows a team hard at work in St Peter's tiny but attractive garden and reports an impressive plant sale. *Church Magazine* (St Ninian's, Edinburgh) gives details of the care of their garden, which is certainly one of the most beautiful (and accessible) in the diocese. St John's Voice (Selkirk) devotes most of their July issue to gardening – or "blooming marvellous" as they call it. This includes an account of the charity Gardening Leave (www.gardeningleave.org) which organises horticultural therapy for veterans.

THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT HIDE ITS NAME

There is no difficulty in picking out the main issue across the Diocese as the cascade conversations on same-sex relationships continue. *Holy Cross Magazine* (Edinburgh) prints a clear case against the extension of marriage to include the union of two people of the same sex, on the grounds that its acceptance

makes "an outright assault on the authority of the scriptural definition of marriage", and hence "the authority of Holy Scripture has been breached." While no one appears to have put an equally strong case from the other point of view, there is considerable coverage of cascade conversations in several magazines.

Starting from the provincial meetings in Pitlochry these carefully designed discussions have literally cascaded into meetings all over Scotland. Janet McKinnell in *News and Views* (St Peter's, Edinburgh) summed up the experience: "Heart-rending stories were shared: of deep personal pain and longing, of fear and concern for the future, of deep rooted literal belief in scripture and also considering scripture together with tradition and reason." *Christ Church Magazine* (Edinburgh) has printed a supplement on the subject, and hosted a conversation with 34 participants from eight congregations.

Some of the experiences are reported in *The Sign* (St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh). A few of the more outspoken comments were: "I continue to favour leaving marriage to the state", "There was also laughter, which always helps", "I cannot and must not allow myself to judge anyone."

Cornerstone (St John's Edinburgh) reports on another cascade, from which some of the comments were: "What is really meant by marriage, whether gay or heterosexual; in what way does it differ from another partnership?", "A man in a civil partnership thought that same-sex marriage is unnecessary, and was concerned at the offence which he perceived it to cause to others", and "I held on to the happy memory from a few weeks previously of the marriage of our eldest son and his partner, who are gay."

Probably the best summing up of all was simply, "I left astonished and

thankful for the levels of honesty shown by every member of the cascade".



Children at the Living Stones school

INTO ALL THE WORLD

The involvement of our congregations in work abroad is extensive and impressive! *Welcome* (St Mungo's, Balerno) has articles about their involvement in work in Africa: Swaziland, Kenya and DR Congo. From Asia, they were visited by a Pakistani pastor from Living Stones Church and School not far from Lahore. In addition to educating a generation strong in faith, the school hopes to raise a generation of professionals "who will speak up for Christians and be opposed to oppression" in a land where being a Christian is not easy.

Magnificat (St Mary's Cathedral) tells of a fascinating project in Malawi, in which pedal-driven threshing machines, based on a classical Orcadian model, have been redesigned and built in-country to greatly improve efficiency. *Holy Cross Magazine* (Edinburgh) has letters from Sally Mair, who 'vacations' at a school run by the Church of South India in Tirunelveli for children with profound intellectual and physical disabilities. In *Outreach* (St James, Penicuik) the approaching 10th birthday of 'Penicuik in Africa' is celebrated. Its work includes repair of wells in Malawi, and it recently supported volunteers from Thames Water in this work.

OUR NEIGHBOURS IN CHRIST

Accounts of ecumenical contacts are not as frequent as sometimes. *Newsletter* (Christ Church Duns) notes one of the problems: "Planning our Holy Week Services with the Parish Church is proving harder ... mainly because they are now linked to five other congregations." Many other churches will have noted this unintended consequence of the great reorganisation going on in the Church of Scotland. *Newsletter* (St Martin's, Edinburgh) is unusual in that it does regularly have an account of activities at its partner churches, including the programme for the Film Club at St Michael's Parish Church.



Kirchentag 2015

Moving to wider ecumenism, in *Cornerstone* (St John's Edinburgh), the Rector gives a stirring account of the 135,000 people who assembled for this year's Kirchentag in Stuttgart. This huge event in ways resembles our Festival, with 2500 events crammed into five days, and is not only ecumenical, it even offered a choice of Bible Studies led by the First Ministers of two different states (and parties)!

WE DO MENTION THE WAR(S)

As the anniversaries continue, so do fascinating accounts occur in our magazines. *Christ Church Magazine* (Edinburgh) reprints extracts from its issue 100 years ago: Two members of the congregation, one of them the eldest son of the Rector, were lost at Ypres on 8 May, and at Aubers on 9 May. *Anneticipation* (St Anne's, Dunbar) records the death in the Dardanelles of the son of Mary Marrow, to whom and "all mothers who suffered in the war" their chapel window is dedicated.

The White Rose (Old St Paul's, Edinburgh) recalls that in 1915, 35 men from the parish lost their lives, many in May and June, which included Quintinshill, Britain's worst ever rail disaster, when 210 soldiers, mainly from Leith, were killed. *Newsletter* (St Martin's, Edinburgh) has a happier story in a fascinating obituary of a World War II veteran from eastern Poland (now Ukraine), who suffered the successive Russian and German invasions, escaped somehow, after being drafted into the retreating German army, to the western front, and served in the British army before being freed to settle in East Lothian in 1948!

THE POLITICS THAT HIDES ITS NAME WELL

Somewhat to our surprise, compared with the referendum, the recent election (remember the election?) seems to have had little impact on our magazines. *Movement* (St Columba's, Edinburgh) has a 'before and after' article which may sum up many people's problems by quoting Yasmin Alibhai Brown in *The Independent*, who stressed how important it is to vote, while giving good reasons for not supporting the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP or UKIP. The Greens weren't mentioned.

FROM OUR NOT-SO-DUMB CORRESPONDENTS

Murphy, the canine correspondent in *Gloria* (Holy Trinity, Haddington), whom we had the pleasure of meeting on a recent visit, provides something of an antidote to all the election "hype and counterclaim", pointing out that none of the candidates promised to lower the price of dog biscuits or put a cap on vet costs.

Meanwhile Lady Gladys, the often severe feline correspondent in *Good Shepherd Magazine* (Edinburgh) has been in good humour and even admitting to giggling at the increasingly hirsute clergy with whom she lives but mainly at her canine housemate, who, after an unexpected bath and towelling, appears to have a permanent wave.



HAIL AND FAREWELL

Now is the time to drop the editorial "we" and say a few words for myself. It was just before Christmas 2009 that I took on this column and this, my 24th contribution, will be my last. I have enjoyed my wanders through the forest of magazines from around the diocese (this time representing 27 single or linked charges), and I rather enjoy the notoriety which the writing gives me – on more than one occasion, I've been referred to as "The Bob Gould". I feel, nonetheless, that it is time to let this column be continued by someone else or to be replaced by something with a different approach.

Magazines have come and gone in my watch. Among the dispatches, I particularly miss St Mungo's on Lyne from West Linton and *The Blether* from St Paul's and St George's, Edinburgh and not just for their titles. But there are hatches: St Ninian's and St David's in Edinburgh and Christ Church Duns have started up new ones.

A parish magazine is produced mainly for the members of a congregation and their visitors. In a way, it is surprising that there are so many things that are worth, as the Americans would say, sharing! I have always tried to quote as many of you as possible, and apologise for my necessary omissions. Some of you do produce truly splendid offerings; keep up the good work – and do keep sending copies to the Diocesan Office!

Dunbar Vigil



It is 70 years ago that the first atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The vigils held at the Peace Pole in the grounds of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in August commemorated those who died and witnessed to the continuing need for peace, disarmament and reconciliation.

The vigil on 6 August was led by members of the Episcopal church and supported by members of other churches in Dunbar. The photograph shows the vigil on 9 August, which was led by members of East Lothian Quakers with support from other churches and the wider community.

Rev David Mumford, one of the organisers, said, "Nuclear weapons are the deadliest threat to the survival of the human race. Even in 70 years we have not achieved nuclear disarmament." He quoted an Easter message by Scottish church leaders which said that, 'Nuclear weapons by their very existence undermine the security of the whole world.' David Mumford concluded that, "The challenge is both to the people of Scotland and to the United Kingdom government to say no to weapons of mass destruction."

Tiberias move for Kate Reynolds

Readers of *The Edge* may remember Kate Reynold's account of her ecumenical visit to Israel/Palestine in the Spring issue earlier this year. Kate has now finished her curacy at Old Saint Paul's and has taken up a ministerial post with the Church of Scotland in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. She will be travelling there for three weeks towards the end of September / beginning of October

for language study, orientation and acclimatisation and start her work as Associate Minister in Tiberias probably in November. The post is an ecumenical appointment. On her blog, Kate says, "It's been an emotional time... But while goodbyes are hard – really hard – I could not have asked for a better send-off from Old Saint Paul's." You can follow Kate on her blog at revisedontology.com



New home for One World Shop

The One World Shop, which is having to re-locate due to the refurbishment work at St John's, Edinburgh - has announced that from October the shop will be based at the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church at Nicolson Square. The One World Shop says, "We're really looking forward to connecting with new organisations and businesses in the new location. Some work is still on-going in the rooms. Once we've completed the main building works, new flooring, decorating and shop fit-out will need to begin.

"Currently, we've raised about £5,000 from various fundraising activities in the 15 months, but we need to seriously step up our game if we are going to have a shop that looks as great as its products. We're planning a few more fundraising events, but we're relying on help from all our friends and members."

More at: www.oneworldshop.co.uk

Eco-award



Holy Trinity, Melrose became the latest church in the Scottish Borders to win an award from Eco-Congregation Scotland, recognising the congregation's commitment to protecting the environment and to forming links with the wider community. Congratulations!

pilgrim

A COURSE FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

by Stephen Holmes

Pilgrim is a series of eight six week courses, with booklets, video and audio clips, that are designed to help groups explore the basics of Christianity. The courses look at: the questions we answer in baptism; the Lord's Prayer; the commandments; the beatitudes; the creeds; the Eucharist; the Bible; and the Church and Kingdom.

At St John's, Edinburgh there is a thirst for exploring the faith in an open and critical way and so we experimented with it last autumn. It was a success so we ran it again during Lent 2015. Each course drew about twenty people on a weekday evening and we met over wine (with a good non-alcoholic alternative) in Henderson's cafe on the Terrace under the church. The groups were a mix of St John's folk and others and I also used it as part of the formation for young adults preparing for baptism. The age range was from late teens to past retirement and this worked well with everyone mixing in and sharing experiences.

It worked well as a refresher course for experienced believers, as further formation for those who have only been going to Church for a short time and as catechesis for new believers. Although it presents itself as being for enquirers, I'm less convinced that it could be a means of primary evangelisation. What worked well was that the courses presented the basic texts and teachings of Christianity in a clear and orthodox way and encouraged open discussion in a context of prayer. There was no attempt to force a particular view and the discussions ranged in all sorts of directions.

Other churches in the diocese have experimented with Pilgrim and I hosted a meeting to share experiences with group leaders from Christchurch Morningside, Falkirk, Haddington, St David's Pilton and Old St Paul's. These church groups differed greatly in size and social and educational background but the experience was almost uniformly good.

I wondered at first if, as a resource produced by the Church of England, it would be too English and need a supplement to speak to our distinctive Scottish Episcopalian tradition, but, probably because it deals with the basics of the faith, this was not so. On the basis of our experience I hope other churches experiment with Pilgrim as part of their mission and formation programme. More details and resources can be found at www.pilgrimcourse.org and the booklets can be purchased at the Cornerstone Bookshop.

Grave Talk

A cafe-based event to talk about death might seem a brave idea but Ruth Green, Rector of St David's, Pilton, thinks it's good to talk about death. Ruth says, "I was inspired to start this because in my experience as a nurse, and now as a minister, most people don't know how to talk about death. This event gives a safe environment, and is a way of trying to normalise such conversation. It is free and is non-religious, so it's suitable for people of all faiths and doubts. At previous events, strangely enough, it is fun, and there's lots of laughter, as people are freed up to explore their ideas and feelings." You can read more about Grave Talk in the next issue of The Edge.

Plans, Hopes & Dreams

The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams has been an Anglo- German initiative focussing on local and European history in a form of a writing project and competition. The aim of the project was to link 1914 to 2014 and beyond, by writing a letter, story or poem in order to link the people of today with those in the time of the war to remember them.

Jenny Robertson of St Martin's, Dalry won the English section of the competition in the adult category and travelled to Braunschweig in Germany in April. Jenny says, "The 17-year old youth winner, Bethany Pearson and I read our pieces from Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams in the awesome surroundings of the thousand year old Braunschweig cathedral. We were also shown some amazing things from the stunning architecture of old Braunschweig to the chilling remnant of the Wall that divided Europe. Our pieces of writing expressed sorrow at the waste of war and hope for the future."

Two beautifully bound books with winning entries in German and in English have been produced. You can read the resulting books in full at www.book-of-phd.com

Jenny is also the author of *Wojtek War Hero Bear*, which tells the story of the 'soldier bear' adopted by Polish forces and which fought alongside them in WW2. In 1945, Wojtek was resettled with his unit in Scotland and moved to Edinburgh Zoo in 1947 where he died in 1963. The Wojtek Memorial Trust plans to unveil a new monument to the 'hero' bear in Princes Street Gardens on 7 November.





GLEN 2015: Dreams and Inspiration

by Tembu Rongong



Let me catch my breath... I have shared gut-wrenching laughter in downpours, profound teaching in housegroups, dizziness in a ceilidh, tears in worship...with the amazing people at Glen. Shared - delegates and leaders alike - we all laughed, we all learnt, we were all challenged, we were all affirmed, we were all renewed, we all loved - many of us found it impossible to blink back the tears in the closing worship; we had shared a spiritual journey.

Through a mixture of formal and informal discussion, delegates journey in faith. Through leading and participation in worship they meet with God. Through creating art, music, drama, and a talent show they express themselves. Through sports, art and activities, they experience fellowship.

There were silly games, a murder mystery evening, morning Eucharist,

disco, swimming, roof-reaching water-powered rockets, debate, craft, night prayers, archery, Great Glen Bake off, night Eucharist under the stars and on Wednesday the camp turned into Glenfest2015 with bouncy castle, Viking sword-fighting, candy-floss, live music and 50 metres of plastic sheeting to turn a hillside into an amazing water-slide.

Glen lives the gospel in a way that is hard to find this side of heaven. Glen is not simply a youth camp but is a Christian community that meets yearly for a week of fellowship, fun, teaching, shared worship, more fun and friendship but it exists through the year in the way delegates continue to stay in touch and support each other. We eat together, pray together, play together, sharing everything in common. In sharp contrast to the places we inhabit in daily life, everyone is accepted and encouraged to be themselves, everyone has a role and part to play in making the whole.

Delegates and leaders alike give tremendously of their energy and their honesty, their talents and humour, their hopes and fears, their dreams and compassion. And God blesses richly our community for the 'magic of Glen' is the tangible feeling of the Holy Spirit working in our midst.

There is a lot we can learn from these amazing young people, the faith they hold and the community they have built.

I thank God that we have in our church such a source of inspiration. Beyond the stereotypes and assumptions are people who want to join the conversation about God. People who want to express faith and live truth. People who love God and want to be recognised as part of God's family.



THE LOW DOWN ...

Simon Filsell, Diocesan Administrator

Where were you before you took on your role here?

Having spent 15 years looking after parsonages, glebe land, stipends and IT for St Albans Diocese in England, I was the Business Manager for a Grammar School in Buckinghamshire.

What was a significant moment in your earlier life?

Having sung in choirs since I was 7 years old, performing a solo in the BBC Proms was a huge privilege, and put an unexpected number of things into perspective for me.

What has been your best day in the role so far - or what would your ideal day be?

Being in the background of the diocesan work is where I am most comfortable, so a day when I can return home knowing I have helped people in a wide variety of ways is ideal. Several of those have happened, involving staff here at the office as well as congregations.

What do you do when you are not working for the diocese?

I sing as a deputy in the choir at St Mary's Cathedral and at the unique and very special Robin Chapel, as well as a few chamber choirs. I am equally as happy, though, cooking a risotto or standing on a windswept Orkney headland, with my camera.

Who would be your ideal dinner companion?

I would have loved to have dined with the composers Gerald Finzi or Herbert Howells - complex men who wrote beautiful, complex music.

What book or film you would recommend?

It would have to be the film 'Local Hero' - scenery, script, character acting, humour, poignancy and an unexpected ending.

Your desert island luxury would be?

A solar-powered camera, so I could have something creative to do as well.



Elizabeth White, Administrative Assistant, diocesan office



Where were you before you took on your role here?

I worked for Nitekirk, an ecumenical, contemplative, 'emerging church' project. I also offered Spiritual Direction and Supervision which I still do now one day a week. Tutoring and coordinating workshops for the Epiphany Group are other 'pies' in which I continue to enjoy having a finger!

What was a significant moment in your earlier life?

When I was in my teens I became unwell and this has really shaped life over many years in both painful and surprising ways. The impact and 'legacy' of those years is still a significant factor in my life, although I also have some sense now of holding together experiences of brokenness, grace and gratitude.

What has your day been like?

Today I have been working on printing costs for our diocesan print service. I also set up visits, organised a delivery and updated the website with the latest edition of The Communicant newsletter, which I enjoy putting together each fortnight. I love the variety of tasks!

What do you do when you are not an Admin Assistant?

I have a bedroom floor covered in half-read books. I love camping - even in the midst of a disappointing summer! And I run a website called Reflective Spaces.

Who would be your ideal dinner companion?

I'd quite like to have dinner with my grandfather who died before I was born, just to see if he is as I imagine.

What book or film would you recommend?

One of my favourite quotes is from the book 'A Tree full of Angels' by Macrina Wiederkehr: 'There are no experts in prayer, only people who have been faithful to the ache.'

Your desert island luxury would be?

A blanket - for the sun and the wind, sleep, companionship and memories of home.

REVIEWS

Raising Children in a Digital Age by Bex Lewis

Lion Hudson, 2014 256pp

Review by Claire Benton-Evans



If you don't know your Tumblr from your Snapchat or your WhatsApp (but your children do!) then this book will help. It's a must-read for parents, grandparents, teachers and youth leaders, as we try to keep children safe online whilst enabling them to benefit from new technology and the amazing opportunities it offers.

The author, Dr Bex Lewis, is an expert in this field. She is also passionate about enabling young people to become critical, constructive and confident inhabitants of the digital environment.

By the end of this book, I felt better equipped to understand the world young people inhabit as 'digital residents'. This is essential if we are going to meet them where they are, and encourage them to share with us their enthusiasms or concerns about their online experiences.

Bex's book contains a wealth of useful information and advice, including risks and safeguarding online, gaming habits and how to balance screen time with family life.

There are guidelines for drawing up a mutually-agreed social media contract with teenagers.

This book is detailed, positive and helpful, and I thoroughly recommend it.

You can contact Bex herself on Facebook or Twitter: @drbexl #digitalparenting.

Letters to Contemplatives by William Johnston

Fount (Reissue: edition 7 April 1997) 128pp

Review by John McLuckie

William Johnston's little book, 'Letters to Contemplatives', is a wonderfully accessible introduction to his teaching. It is addressed to a range of ordinary people seeking to live a faithful life in a complex world and, although he admitted that the characters in the book are really facets of his own character, there is much there that will appeal to any religious person seeking an authentic expression of Christian spirituality in a pluralist world. I have a modest ambition to make Bill Johnston's work better known and this book is as good a place to start as any.

In the first of these letters, Johnston sets out a vision for what he boldly calls a new school of Christian mysticism. It draws on the insights of the past but finds new expression in close and careful dialogue with Eastern religions and with the contemporary world. He cites people like Thomas Merton and Bede Griffiths as pioneers of this approach and sets out this compelling description of the characteristics of this new school:

1. This new mysticism is for everyone, not just religious professionals.
2. It adopts a new language, drawing on insights from psychotherapy, science and other religious traditions, with a rich vocabulary with which to talk about consciousness and about energy.
3. It strongly emphasises posture and breathing as essential spiritual ways.
4. It emphasises faith – pure, naked, dark faith beyond reason. It is the prayer of the 'void'.
5. It talks also of enlightenment – a glimpse of the divine beauty, of transcendental wisdom, of holiness, of the vision of the God of love.

Johnston always rooted his teaching in the gospels, the Eucharist, the mystical writings of the saints, especially John of the Cross. He never flinched from the demanding nature of the life of faith and refused to separate the life of prayer from the life of active engagement with the world of pain and suffering. Above all, Johnston's new mysticism is compelling because it is practical. By this I mean that he sees no separation between insight and practice. Christian spirituality is not a theory to be put into practice, but a practice from which we learn insight.

Rev Ruth recommends ...

Ruth Innes recently returned to her flock in Falkirk after a 3-month sabbatical. She says, "When you have three months off work there is more opportunity for reading without falling asleep after the first page. I wondered whether I should read lots of theology because the Lord knows I have plenty of those gathering dust on my shelves but some wise person on Twitter said 'Read fiction – you're on sabbatical!' so I took him at his word. And let's not forget there is often tons of theology in fiction anyway." Among many others, Ruth read:

- **Runaway** by Peter May. Glasgow, London in swinging sixties, crime, putting things right.
- **The anchoress** by Robyn Cadwallader. 13th century, young woman holed up in church, world keeps interfering.
- **The Girl Who Wouldn't Die** by Marnie Riches. Amsterdam, Cambridge, secrets, fast-paced thriller.

You can read the full list on Ruth's blog at revruth.wordpress.com

The Courage to Be by Timothy Jones

Review by Gillian Boughton



A rehearsed reading of a new play entitled 'The Courage to Be' by Edinburgh based playwright, Timothy Jones was hosted by New College at the University of Edinburgh in June and was followed by a question and answer session both with the actors and a panel who were able to comment on the biographical as well as intellectual accuracy and stability of the dramatisation of the key characters. Panelists included Emma Callandar (Traverse Theatre), Prof Tom Greggs (University of Aberdeen), Dr Alison Jack and Dr Lesley Orr (University of Edinburgh), as well as Dr Russell Re Manning (Bath Spa University).

The fiftieth anniversary of the death of the Paul Tillich falls this year on 22 October. Tim Jones has dramatised an imagined dynamic dialogue between Tillich and Karl Barth in a fascinating play in progress, recreating the problematic relationship between these two towering figures of twentieth century theology, both of whom at one time held professorships in Germany leading up to the Second World War.

Perhaps most telling, in terms of the long shadow it cast over Tillich's experience and thoughts, is the second scene of the play where he reflects and powerfully relives his time in the trenches of the First World War as a chaplain setting his later work on existentialism in poignant personal context: 'None of us were alive! I was dead.. The world was dead. Everything changed: everything had to change.'

The play centres on a meeting at the end of both Tillich's and Barth's lives, after years of implicit rivalry, giving a chance for perspective on the intersection of their private lives and in each case their contribution to intellectual history: prolific, hugely influential theology. The women in their lives brought dimension to the script. The furious daily theological writing regime which resulted in Barth's six million word definitive work was shown to be dependent on his assistant Lotte, his 'intellectual love'. Barth is shown expressing his poignant distress; hoping for Tillich's understanding at Lotte's onset of dementia: 'without her I can't work!'

The dialogue explores key moments in their lives as well as the development of Fascism in 1930s Germany. Tillich escaped to America; Barth returned to Switzerland. His famous protege Dietrich Bonhoeffer did not survive the war. There is a poignant exchange in the play when the issue of conscience, residual guilt and responsibility for leaving Germany rather than remaining to face certain marginalisation, poverty and academic destruction is played out.

This play is an expression of commitment to the mission of bringing key Christian issues to the space of secular culture and debate: in this case raising the whole question of the options open to personal and scholarly integrity when living in a secular world on the cusp of madness and in opposition to Christian conscience (the rise of Adolf Hitler and German Fascism). Tim Jones and the team are to be congratulated for the courage and energy with which these complex themes have been tackled.

GAZETTE

Appointments

Rev Rosie Addis, ordained as priest at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Murrayfield on 27 June 2015.



Rev Dr Michael Hull, St Vincent's Chapel, licenced as priest on 20 June 2015 to service in the Scottish Episcopal Institute.

Retirements

Rev David DalGLISH, priest, St John's Jedburgh (and currently interim priest at St Cuthbert's, Hawick) will retire on 30 September 2015.

John Hopper, Lay Reader and Workplace Chaplain.

Rev Canon Duncan McCosh, retired as Rector, St Peter's Galashiels June 2015

Resignations

Rev Vanessa Conant, Associate Rector at St Paul's and St George's, Edinburgh

Captain Mick McTighe, Church Army officer.

Rev Kate Reynolds, curate Old Saint Paul's, Edinburgh.

Deaths

Rev Peter Kirk, 84 years old, retired priest from St Columba's Church, Bathgate died unexpectedly but very peacefully at home on Tuesday 28 July.

Autumn Synod

Holy Trinity Haddington, on Thursday 29 October at 5.45pm

VACANCY: CHURCH CHILDREN'S LEADER St Margaret's, Easter Road, Edinburgh

8 hours per week, £10 an hour
(1-year contract, may be extended.)

We are a small, friendly, traditional Episcopal church in a multi-cultural area of Edinburgh. We run a successful, vibrant Baby & Toddler group two mornings a week.

We are looking for an experienced children's leader to establish a new Sunday School to help us develop our relationship with families in the community.

For further information, contact alisoncuddeford@hotmail.co.uk. Closing date is Friday 18 Sept 2015.



SIX DAYS

A series of six reflective Saturday workshops organised by The Epiphany Group starting October 2015 at Christ Church, Morningside. 1st workshop is Saturday 3 October: Praying with Icons. More details at www.epiphanygroup.org.uk



GET INVOLVED

YOU CAN USE YOUR FAVOURITE PATTERN OR DOWNLOAD FREE: KNIT IN THE ROUND AND FLAT KNIT PATTERNS HERE.

PDF
Patterns

Help create a host of angels for Advent 2015.

EDINBURGH DIOCESE IS UNDERTAKING A GREAT ADVENT YARN-BOMBING PROJECT.

THE PLAN IS TO SNEAK OUT AFTER DARK, ON THE SATURDAY NIGHT BEFORE ADVENT SUNDAY AND FILL THE TREES, LAMPPOSTS AND POSTBOXES OF OUR COMMUNITIES WITH HOSTS OF HERALD ANGELS

EACH ANGEL WILL BEAR A TAG (AVAILABLE FROM OCTOBER) SAYING "A HOST OF HERALD ANGELS FROM THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH" AND ON THE REVERSE, WILL BE A LINK TO A WEBSITE WHERE WE WILL SHARE DETAILS OF OUR SERVICES AND AN ONLINE ADVENT CALENDAR.

FOR THE HOST TO BE READY, WE NEED TO START MAKING NOW!

ANY YARN ANGEL: KNITTED, CROCHETED, PLAIDED, POM-POM IS WELCOME!

Festival of Prayer

A Celebration of Thomas Merton

Saturday 10th October 2015

10am - 4pm

**Walpole Hall, St Mary's Cathedral
Palmerston Place, Edinburgh EH12 5AW**

Keynote speaker: the Revd Canon John McLuckie,
Vice-Provost of St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh
writer of journal articles on Merton's spirituality
currently undertaking research at Edinburgh University
into Merton's interaction with Zen Buddhism

Workshops by:
The Revd Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson
The Revd Canon John McLuckie
Stephen Dunhill

Cost: £15 / £12 concessions
Tea, coffee and soup provided (bring your own lunch)

Information: Ruth 0131 629 2018 or liverdiet@hotmail.com



SUPERHERO SLEEPOVER

FOR ALL SAINTS EVE

31
October

Contact: youthandchildren@dioceseofedinburgh.org

Many thanks to all who have contributed words or pictures to this edition of The Edge. If you have an item of news for our Diocesan News pages or for this agenda page, please send it to editor@dioceseofedinburgh.org. The deadline for the next issue is 27 October 2015.