

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

## WELCOMING THE STRANGER

## A MURAL OF US

## WHAT IS A DIOCESE FOR?

## THE LORD LOVES A HUFFLEPUFF



# The Edge

Vol 22: 2

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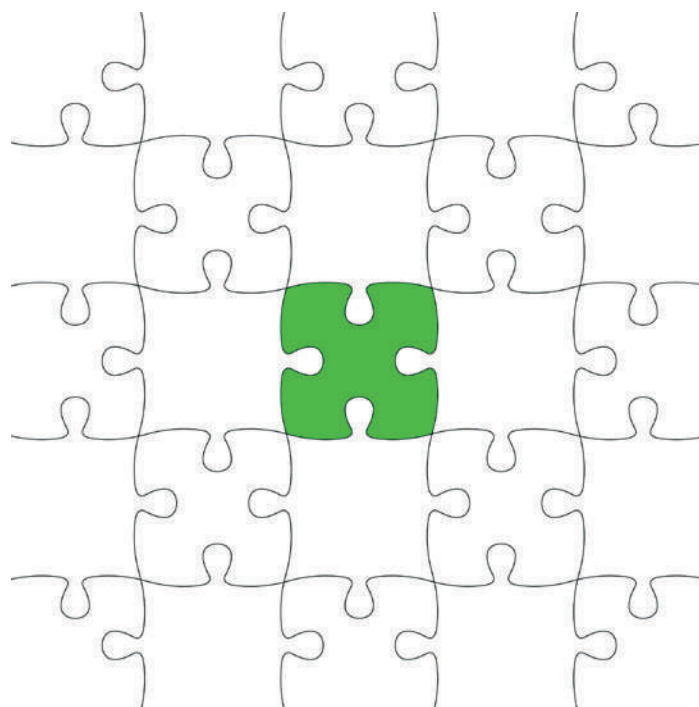
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# CONSPIRACY!

Rt Rev John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh

Many parts of the world have been devastated by hurricanes recently. Even the UK has been affected. To me, one of the surprises about Ex-Hurricane Ophelia (as the Met Office called her) was that she brought warm weather. Apparently this was because warm air (and Saharan dust) was sucked from southern Europe and North Africa up into the British Isles. It was a reminder that whatever artificial boundaries we erect around ourselves we belong to one planet and breathe the same air.

In the 1960s, there were those in America who feared a Roman Catholic conspiracy to seize power. They had their first Roman Catholic President after all: J F Kennedy. Contradicting this theory, the theologian, John Courtney Murray, suggested that the USA could do with more, not less, conspiracy. 'We need,' he argued, 'a conspiracy that can contain us all.' For to conspire means, literally, to breathe together, to breathe the same air. Rather than breaking into fearful little interest groups, plotting to take advantage of one another, it was far better, surely, to develop an open public discourse that acknowledged that the destiny of a nation depends on what is held in common. That, whether they like it or not, citizens of one country breathe the same air.

Half a century later, conspiracy theories still abound, each becoming an excuse to fragment our perception of the world into 'those for us' and 'those against us'. Let us be honest: the world is not a comfortable place to be at the moment. We naturally feel anxious when nation states posture about the use of nuclear weapons, when terrorists threaten our safety, when we live with daily uncertainties about our political and economic future. Courtney Murray's advice seems counter-intuitive when the temptation is to huddle closer to people we know and build ever-higher walls around us.

Yet now, more than ever, we need a 'conspiracy that can contain us all' and to heed the reminder of Ex-Hurricane Ophelia that we really do breathe the same air.

This is not a new idea for Christians who believe that all humanity breathes the breath of God; that this is what should unite us. That breathing together of the Spirit of God enables us to be more completely what God means us to be. And we believe that although human beings are often at odds with each other, yet God always invites us beyond our divisions and works to reconcile our differences. He helps us rediscover our one-ness in Christ. Perhaps this is why, at our best, we long to break down barriers and delight in discovering that truly nothing can separate us from the love of God.

As we approach the darkest season of the year, there are opportunities to get this message across. Opportunities to reclaim the light of Advent hope, to join the angels' Christmas song of joy and to speak of a God whose incarnation, whose being-with-us, gives meaning and purpose to human existence, in its sorrows and brokenness as well as its delights and dreams. In an angry and fearful world, we have the opportunity to speak of peace and trust, hope and love, for these are some of the names we give to the Spirit of God breathing in us.

At the birth of Jesus, as at his resurrection, the oft repeated message is, 'Do not be afraid.' These are God's words for us, but we have discovered that they are not just for us, not just for a few, but for everyone: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine.'



+John

# WELCOMING THE STRANGER

by David Bradwell

Two years ago, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced that the UK would resettle up to 20,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees over five years. This decision came just a few days after the photograph of three-year-old Alan Kurdi was published, showing the drowned toddler on a Turkish beach, which prompted international outcry and concern.

Unlike asylum seekers, who make their own way to the UK and have to make a claim for refugee status, these refugees from Syria are identified as being in greatest need by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in camps and are brought directly to the UK. Local authorities and the UK Home Office negotiate details about how people are resettled, and usually families come as a unit. In Scotland, 31 of the 32 local authority areas have received Syrian families over the past two years. Around 300 individuals have come to the local authority areas covered by Edinburgh Diocese: East Lothian (33); Edinburgh (153); Falkirk (28); Midlothian (23); Scottish Borders (21); and West Lothian (46).

While these numbers are very small compared to the scale of the humanitarian emergencies around the world and the response of other countries, it is still important that people who arrive here are welcomed and treated with dignity and supported in settling in to their new lives.

While local authorities and statutory agencies provide accommodation, health and language support, there is a role for volunteers and community groups to help people make friends, share interests and feel safe and at home.

For Christian churches, and for faith groups more generally, this is an important aspect of faith and belonging to a religious tradition.

The commitment to welcome the stranger, to love your neighbour, to remember that Jesus was himself a refugee, that the Bible



is full of examples of inclusion of people who were outsiders (tax collectors and sinners), foreigners (Ruth) or strangers (on the road to Emmaus); but who ended up challenging prejudices. They provide us today with a reminder that difference is nothing to be afraid of. It is the means of growth and understanding.

The work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is to help faith groups to support responses which put these beliefs into practical action. It is a multi-faith project that was set up in 2015 soon after the announcement concerning the Syrian resettlement programme. Scotland's main Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations agreed to work together to try to co-ordinate ideas and support joint responses. It is led by the Church of Scotland but is actively supported by the other main churches and faith groups in Scotland.

Some of the responses from Episcopal churches in Edinburgh Diocese have included:

- **Christ Church Morningside** who had a 'Journeys in Faith' talk on migration and refugees;
- **Holy Trinity, Haddington** provided meeting space for events for East Lothian Welcomes Refugees;



- **Livingston United Parish** participated in West Lothian faith group discussions about potential responses and actions;
- **St Columba's-by-the-Castle** hosted an 'Edinburgh Weekend Club' in January with a Burns Night Ceilidh;
- **St Cuthbert's, Colinton** hosted the Edinburgh Weekend Club in April for an Easter Egg hunt, walk in Colinton Dell and offered a High Tea refreshment;
- **St John's, Edinburgh**, as part of Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together, has been active in considering what practical support they can provide;
- **St Mary's Cathedral**, as part of a service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with Palmerston Place Church of Scotland, held a collection for the work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees;
- **St Paul's and St George's** church offers regular services to refugee families in the City and participates in an Edinburgh-wide forum of local groups offering projects and activities to refugees.

In the summer we hosted an online 'webinar' to bring together Anglicans/Episcopalians from across the UK to discuss ideas and responses to refugee integration. The audio of this meeting is

available on our website (see the link in the info box). On behalf of Scotland's faith groups, we have been engaging with the Scottish Government on a process which will lead to a new strategy to support refugee integration. We believe that integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation where all parties give and receive. In this sense, integration means respect for different cultural identities. This involves a shift in ways of thinking by the majority communities.

We try to encourage practical action as well as reflection and prayer to help people think about what this might mean for them. Especially important therefore, are our commitments to:

- Prayer and Bible Study
- Seeking to improve our understanding of the situation in the world and at home
- Working in partnership to deliver practical responses, locally to support integration and internationally to support humanitarian work
- Advocacy and campaigning
- Interfaith and intercultural dialogue, action against racism and religious hatred.

Many people have been angered and upset by the way that asylum seekers are treated in the UK - facing poverty, risks of destitution, detention and deportation. The Syrian resettlement programme is for up to 20,000 people over a five year period, which many also feel is a very small number compared to the scale of the international crisis, the response of other nations and the fact that the UK is a large and wealthy society. The responsibility for policy decisions on all these questions is reserved to the UK Government and Westminster Parliament, and so you are encouraged to contact your MP and let them know what you think.

*David Bradwell is the Refugee Co-ordinator for Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and is part of the Joint Public Issues Team. In June 2017 he was elected to the Executive Committee of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe.*



For more information about Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees visit their website at: [www.sfar.org.uk](http://www.sfar.org.uk)

You can also follow them on Facebook (search for 'Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees') and Twitter (@WithRefugees)

You can listen to the Anglican Alliance Webinar Audio here: [www.sfar.org.uk/scotland-hosts-uk-anglicanepiscopal-online-meeting/](http://www.sfar.org.uk/scotland-hosts-uk-anglicanepiscopal-online-meeting/)

If you would like to invite someone to come to speak to a group, congregation or vestry meeting, or find out how to donate to Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, or if you would be interested in finding out more about being part of the With Refugees Scotland network for faith groups, please contact David Bradwell

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Tel: 07341 478 174



# CREATING A MURAL OF US

by Colin Finlayson

St James' church has been serving the Leith Community since 1693. The church has moved several times to new buildings and we now worship in what was our church hall.

Church insurance company, Ecclesiastical, launched its 2017 competition in May this year, with entrants asked to submit an original piece of artwork for a mural that captures and celebrates the role their church plays in the local community. As well as a top prize of £10,000, the best mural sections would be put together by Ecclesiastical to form a larger mural to be displayed at St Paul's Cathedral and then at other venues in the UK. The artwork was to be A3 size.

We decided to enter. And ... we didn't win! (The winners were announced in October.) But here's the story of the valuable creative process we went through as we

developed our mural section.

In creating our mural design, we began by enumerating the many facets of the role that St James' church plays in our community. We identified these as:

- Our commitment to work in partnership with the local charity L'Arche Community. Several members of the community are long-term members of St James' and we financially support the community and share a Stations of the Cross walk across Leith Links.
- Our partnership with major local charity Leith School of Art who share our building Monday to Friday as one of their campuses.
- Our commitment to working with those active in our local community through Leith Community Crops in Pots at their urban farm, The Croft (a local charity promoting sustainable food growth, biodiversity and community cohesion) & participating with a free St James' church tea & cake stall at the Leith Gala Day.
- Our support for children in our community, funding and staffing an annual multi-artform project in Leith Primary School.
- Our commitment to promoting the performing arts through our own Adventfest festival, hosting artists such as the Edinburgh Quartet and the National Youth Dance Company of Scotland.
- Our commitment to seeing 'local' as international, caring for others in the wider community by supporting the work of The Rock Trust, a local charity preventing youth homelessness. We also support the global humanitarian organisation Mercy Corps and the international Christian charity Tearfund.

In the mural, our Christian commitment to working in our Leith community is depicted by:

- the sower (The Croft, a community garden in Leith);
- the central element shows arts participation (our weekly worship, participatory transformations of the space for each season of the liturgical year, Leith School of Art, Adventfest);
- the port of Leith/international - local and overseas charities we support financially (Rock Trust, Tearfund, Mercy Corps);
- young people's involvement - at St James' and through our school's work (past, present, future);
- the church building itself and Leith Links with gala day bunting;
- the Book & the Cross;
- L'Arche - images from the Stations of the Cross procession and an Edinburgh skyline.

Our team contributing to and developing the design of the mural ranged in age from seven years the late 70s.

We met several times to share ideas and make sketches. The initial sketches were further developed by one of our members. We met after church to review, debate and agree the best outline sketch and to allocate development of individual panels of the mural to individual people. The sketch was further refined, then worked on at church, by some of our young people (see selfie photo!) including sketching in more detail and looking at colour palettes, with other tasks taken on by adults.

Individual submissions and changes were then collated electronically to support the creation of the final version. Our team met two more times to work on, and then complete, the final draft version of our mural. During this time, the mural was transported between individual members of our team who completed different panels.

A true collaborative effort and, hopefully, also a true portrait of our church community.



*Ecclesiastical Insurance combined the best mural entries to create 'The Great Community Mural', a 10m long, 3m high piece of community art that celebrates the role of churches in the community. It was at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh in early November and featured St James' artwork.*



# WHAT IS A DIOCESE FOR?

by Jonathon Jensen

"What is a diocese for?" I have never heard or read that question posed by anyone. But would it be a helpful question for anyone else to ask from time to time?

## **Where does the term "Diocese" originate?**

The earliest meaning is from the Greek word '*diokesis*' which may be translated as "to manage a household." Our understanding of a diocese comes from Rome, when the early Church was forming. It was a term for an administrative or tax-collecting district. (Rectors and church treasurers are invited to insert their own joke here!) It was convenient to divide geographical areas or territories for administrative purposes much as we might divide a state into counties. Over time, as the faith spread throughout the world, the term and idea were 'blessed' and modified by the Church to mean the territory of a bishop.

## **What is a diocese?**

The idea of a diocese is so fundamental to our very being as a Church, that we do not even define it. This all assumes everyone agrees, in general, what a diocese is, which may or may not be the case. That is part of the problem. We assume we know what a diocese is and that most people share the same ideas. Do we also assume, and agree on, what it is for – what its purposes are?

A very limited understanding of the idea of a diocese seems widespread.

A diocese is "The territorial jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop." That may be true, in one sense, but we all know and experience a diocese as much more than that. A diocese is also, at least, a form of *koinonia* or Christian community that is a full expression of the Church catholic in its smallest form.

## **A more inclusive understanding...**

A diocese is the people of God, the baptised and ordained, in a specific place, led by a bishop, engaged in proclaiming and embodying the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what we mean when we say the diocese is the 'local church' or the "smallest unit" or the "fundamental unit" of the Church. The diocese is the smallest gathering that includes all the people of God (baptized, bishop, priests, and deacons) in a particular place engaged in the mission of Jesus together.

Every diocese is always universal or catholic in the sense it represents the fullness of the Church, and is always local in that it is incarnate in a place (geographical area) among a particular people (baptised members, bishop, priests, and deacons). In a theological sense, a diocese may be a good thing in itself. That is, just by its being, a diocese demonstrates the catholicity or essence or fullness of the Church, in an incarnate way, in a particular place among a particular people. A diocese is a community much greater than the sum of its parts.

## **What does a diocese do?**

A piece of wisdom present in our tradition is the maxim, *Lex orandi, Lex credendi*: "the law or rule of prayer is the law or rule of belief." This is more commonly paraphrased as "we pray what we believe" or vice versa. What we believe about something is revealed in how we pray about it or practice it. A common way to express this is, if one wants to know what The Episcopal Church believes about something, examine how or what we pray about it in liturgies.

The basic idea might also be applied to the expression of the polity of our faith. What we believe about a diocese is best learned, not necessarily from what we write or say we believe about it, but how we, in fact, live out the ministry in practice. By observing how a diocese functions, we might come to a fuller understanding of the presuppositions people have about what it is and what its purposes are. How is the idea of a diocese incarnate or "fleshed out" in practice? Our faith is always incarnate in people, prayers, budgets, buildings, committees, and sacraments.

A diocese serves multiple functions; theological, pastoral, sacramental, administrative, practical, and so on. They are expressed in various incarnate forms; bishop, geographical area, congregations, baptized and ordained people,



convention, standing committee, council, trustees, staff, committees, canons, programs, community, and related incarnate ways.

A suggestive list of diocesan functions might include:

- ✚ Connection to the Church catholic, the Anglican Communion, and The Episcopal Church through a diocese.
- ✚ Support and empowerment of congregations and their people.
- ✚ Support for congregations in transition or crisis.
- ✚ Formation of new congregations and/or support of congregations with fewer resources.
- ✚ Connections among shared ministries and congregations.
- ✚ Ecumenical and interfaith relationships.
- ✚ Common vision, priorities, values, and communication.
- ✚ Shared sacramental life such as ordination, and celebration of new ministry.
- ✚ Discernment and formation for living out vocations, lay and ordained.
- ✚ Formation such as training for anti-racism, PVG and continuing education.
- ✚ Clergy deployment, clergy discipline.
- ✚ Various programs and committees.

✚ Stewardship of diocesan assets and record keeping.

✚ Support and calling of a bishop, whose ministry includes expressions such as chief priest, pastor, teacher, encourager, representing the Church to the world, and governance.

### ***Congregationalism is more than it is cracked up to be***

While all of this may be true theologically and canonically, it is also practically true that most people have little perceived contact or connection with 'the diocese' other than a crisis in the congregation, a clergy vacancy, or participation by a small number in diocesan synods and committees. When many refer to 'the diocese' it often means the bishop, diocesan staff, and the place we send money every month. While the diocese is always 'us', it can often feel like 'them'.

### ***The Goldilocks Principle***

The short answer to the question 'What is a Diocese For?' is that it depends on what the people want and what God needs for mission to occur. The people set the budget, approve priorities, call a bishop who leads them, and engage in all the communion building and functions that make up a diocese.

The people of God in a particular area, engaged in a holy mission, led by a bishop, will need something that is neither too big, nor too small, nor inadequate in structure.

They will need a high enough assessment to share the ministry they need, and low enough to engage in parish mission. It needs to be just right for that place and people. What is just right for a diocese is subjective.

What we believe a diocese to be and what it is for depends on how it is incarnate or expressed through its form and functions. The historic episcopate and the diocese will always be locally adapted to serve the needs of God's people engaged in proclaiming and embodying the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### ***Our Main Purpose***

The purpose of this article is to encourage all the people who make up a diocese to reflect on how God is calling us to re-imagine our communities to serve faithfully and effectively in the church in the present and the future.

*Rev Jonathon Jensen is Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh. Jonathon's original article is summarised here by Ruth Green by arrangement and with permission.*

## St Mark's Community Artwork: 'A Cloud of Witnesses'

St Mark's Portobello participated in the local art festival, Artwalk Porty, in September again this year, opening the church and garden to the public to provide tea, coffee and home baking.

Lay Reader and organiser, Jenny Floether, says "Our artwork in the church garden attracted much interest. Based on the idea of the family washing line, it conveyed our sense of belonging and community; but it also signified the open arms of the Christian family, ready to welcome all who come into our midst. The varied shapes, colours, styles and sizes of the individual garments expressed how different we all are and yet connected to each other, symbolised in the sleeves 'holding hands'."



## Sowing a Seed

by Rich Cornfield

Mustard Seed Edinburgh is a new 'community of mission' based at St Margaret's, Easter Road and planted by St Paul's and St George's church in Edinburgh. From June this year, about 50 of us started to meet every Sunday at 4pm for food and worship. We value hospitality, kindness and justice and we are slowly working out how we can join in with Kingdom of God initiatives in the local community.

Whilst at St Paul's and St George's many of us have been involved in the Soul Food Community, a special meal for homeless people held every Saturday evening. At Mustard Seed we are looking to develop this ministry. As a community we hope to walk alongside those who are homeless, learn from them and support them as they navigate the complex journey away from homelessness. As part of this we are beginning to develop significant relationships with Christians Against Poverty and Edinburgh City Mission so we can offer broader and more focused support.

We are very much in our early days as we work things out. One value we have is that 'all of us are on the pitch' and it's been exciting in our first few months seeing things come together as we offer our spiritual gifts to this new community and to God.

## pisky.scot

Pisky.Scot is a new online magazine and forum of the Scottish Episcopal Church. It was launched earlier this year by the church's Information & Communication Board at the General Synod, when the printed Inspires magazine came to an end. Pisky.scot is designed to be a forum for information, articles, the proactive curating of blog posts from across the Scottish Episcopal Church and beyond, and the telling of our stories through word, image, sound and video; and will hopefully provide a challenging yet safe space to encourage dialogue and debate.

# Autumn Synod Report

by Andrew Cooper

I have mixed feelings about synods. I enjoy the feeling of being part of something bigger than my little church world and the opportunity to catch up with (or in this case meet) other clergy and lay reps but sometimes I feel a little lost in the crowd. And my experience in Australia suggests there is usually a bit of, as we like to call it, 'robust debate' ... and even a little grandstanding or political machination. So imagine my surprise at finding the synod of the Diocese of Edinburgh warm, welcoming and engaging, thanks to the hospitality of St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow and the open friendliness of the natives towards an antipodean interloper.



Bishop John startled me a little in his address to synod by leading with some comments about President Trump and the parlous state of world politics. Here we go I thought... some meaty quotes for the media who are obviously following every word! I wish they had, as Bishop John spoke wise words of reassurance that the church still has a vital voice to be heard. He suggested that the church has "a long perspective and a broad one. ...Whatever else changes, there are within our scripture and liturgy reminders of God's constancy through everything. We can take a step back, breathe in the love and peace of God and be still. No need to panic." Don't panic! Great advice.

Thankfully, controversy and panic were not aspects of the careful explanation of our financial situation by Diocesan Treasurer, Nigel Cook and an inspiring sharing of the ministry undertaken by the West Forth Area Council. I was particularly impressed at the focus on mission and outreach co-ordinated by Rev Ruth Green, convenor of the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Committee. I felt that highlighting the work of the Annie Naish, the Bishop's Enabler of Mission and of Claire Benton-Evans and her work with youth and children, before presenting the budget for the year ahead was a great counterpoint to the discussion of finance.

Two offerings stood out for me. As a lover of incarnational theology and ministry, I was intrigued by the theme of 'table hospitality' that ran through the sharing of the birthing of the Mustard Seed ministry by Rev Richard Cornfield. Mustard Seed is a new community of mission based at St Margaret's, Easter Road, and is possible through the hospitality and generosity both of the existing St Margaret's community and of St Paul's and St George's. People are being fed and community formed as they gather around a common table to eat and to be nourished in faith.

I was also inspired by the articulate and passionate sharing by Olivia Smith on the impact of the Glenalmond Camp and her desire to see us engage young people with serious conversation of matters of faith and justice rather than superficial entertainment. You can read the full text of Olivia's speech on the Diocesan website ([edinburgh.anglican.org/2017/11/diocesan-youth-synod/](http://edinburgh.anglican.org/2017/11/diocesan-youth-synod/)) All in all a positive experience, and I'll probably show up in March for the next instalment!

*Rev Andrew Cooper is the new Priest in Charge of the Church of St John the Evangelist, Jedburgh and comes from the sunny sub-tropics of the Diocese of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. He doesn't regret the move yet but ask him in February when it is properly cold.*

## Sea mission aid for refugees



Since September, Rev Tim Tunley, one of our diocesan clergy, has been on board the ship, the *MV Phoenix*, as part of a mission to take aid and set up an offshore clinic for Myanmar Rohingya refugees in a camp in Bangladesh. Tim is The Mission to Seafarers' Scottish full-time Chaplain based in Grangemouth. En route, they braved the front of a tropical storm and, at one point, the ship was put into lockdown as pirates and bandits were operating in the area. Tim has been working with the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) relief team on board. He has provided pastoral care to the crew and is also Assistant Mess Man. He has asked for your continuing prayers for the refugees in the camp, and for MOAS - the sister charity to the Mission to Seafarers, which continues to run the first aid post in the refugee camp.

## Adventures in Faith

Elizabeth White has left us as Adventures in Faith coordinator to move on to develop a Spiritual Direction project. We are sad to see her leave her diocesan role, but wish her well as she takes on this new challenge. At the same time, fresh and exciting developments are in the air; the diocesan 'Growing Together' roadshows over the summer have generated lots of interesting ideas and possibilities for building on the rich offerings in learning and discipleship which have been channelled through Adventures in Faith over the past 15 years. So, we are standing back and taking time to reflect on what the next stage of Adventures in Faith might look like, especially in the context of the diocesan mission strategy.

## Sleepover by the Castle

by Claire Benton-Evans, Diocesan Youth and Children's Officer



Where would you find a castle-building competition, indoor jousting, a feast for over 50 people and young people preparing worship together? A youth sleepover, of course! This year's Edinburgh event was the Sleepover by the Castle and was hosted by St Columba's by the Castle. Over 30 delegates and 18 leaders came from all over Scotland, plus extra guests who joined us for the fun and games (and food). We were delighted to welcome Bishop John, not least because Glenalmond delegates who had brought their Pisky Bingo cards (which encourage their attendance at youth sleepovers throughout the year) had an opportunity for #bishopbagging!

On Sunday morning we all joined the regular congregation of St Columba's for worship. The young people joined with the church's own musicians to provide music throughout the service; they presented a dramatised version of the Gospel reading in two parts, and two delegates addressed us during the 'sermon slot'. Samuel spoke powerfully about the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22: 34-40) reflecting on how hard it is to love our neighbours. He surveyed historical progress towards this goal, for example in the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movement; he also challenged us to examine worrying examples of backsliding in recent years, such as the undercurrents of xenophobia in Brexit debates. He ended with a challenge to each of us: what can we do to love our neighbours better? One of our younger delegates, Michael, spoke to us about the second half of the Gospel, in which the Pharisees questioned Jesus (Matthew 22: 41-46).

A group of delegates also led us in prayer. Their thoughtful intercessions invited us to pray for peace: in Spain and Catalonia; between America and North Korea; in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. They offered prayers for refugees, that they might find "a safe place to live and thrive." They prayed for countries affected by recent hurricanes, that they might find "a way forward and repair the damage." They prayed for LGBTQ+ people and for equality; for people who are bullied and misunderstood; for the finding of new bishops. They prayed for people who have died and those who are ill, and for their carers. Finally they prayed for the family they have found through the Scottish Episcopal Church's Youth Week at Glenalmond: "We pray for our pisky fam, for wherever they are and whatever they are doing, that God will always be with them and love them." These sleepover events are all about bringing this special family together at regular intervals throughout the year, so AMEN to that!

## St Ebba's plans go ahead

The congregation of St Ebba's, Eyemouth approved plans for their church redevelopment in November 2016. Since then, their Parsonage was sold, realising much of the funds needed. Plans also included the demolition of an old dilapidated hall which makes way for the new extension and car parking spaces. The extension will house a small meeting room, kitchen, disabled toilet and baby change and storage area. Church pews will be removed to create a flexible social space. Recent good news is that St Ebba's application to the Scottish Landfill Community Fund via Viridor Credits for the maximum £50K grant to aid completion of the project has been successful. The building work begins in January 2018.

## Yarn Poppies at Easter Rd



A wonderful display of poppies this November at St Margaret's Easter Road. Lynda Anderson explains, "One of our congregation, Sandra Carr, is a member of a 'yarn bombing' group and they kindly lent the display for the outside of the St Margaret's Easter Road church this year. This was supplemented with poppies others of our congregation made. It really stands out that we are supporting our heroes.....in all wars."



# GOD ON THE MOVE

by Annie Naish

It is over a year since I became the Bishop's Enabler of Mission, and what an extraordinary adventure it has been thus far. Everyone told me that the Scottish Episcopal Church is different from the Church of England, and whilst this has proved to be very true, it has been a delight to discover that God is the same, alive and well and at work in Scotland. Indeed I believe that God seems to be on the move here, stirring up a greater desire for unity, change and growth across the denominations, throughout the Episcopal Church and in this glorious Diocese of Edinburgh.

One of the real privileges of my role has been to work with Bishop John and others on discerning our diocesan vision and priorities through the Growing Together initiative. When I suggested holding regional Roadshows, I must admit to being very nervous, but I look back now on four great events where over 250 people gathered, representing 80% of our churches. Whatever the location, there was always a fabulous buzz of conversation, and I have heard many comments of people feeling encouraged and inspired. It has been wonderful to see hope and confidence increase and to know the presence of God leading and guiding us through this journey and onwards as we discern and implement the next steps.

"Mission is seeing what God is doing and joining in", is an often quoted, if rather simplistic, definition of mission. It has been amazing to experience the truth of this in my encounters with the parent/toddler group at St Margaret's Easter Road. Over the past year it is clear that God has been at work in the growth of this outreach, which has developed from one morning a week, to two mornings and then Messy Church, a small Sunday group and now work in the local school. It is wonderful to see people being drawn into God's love as relationships are built with those on the margins of society. Further exciting evidence of what God is doing is the launch of the new Mustard Seed Community who, 'it just happens', are now also using St Margaret's church building and so these two separate communities are exploring possible ways of working together more.

Travelling across the diocese it has been great to meet so many different people and congregations. All around from west to east and north to south, I have heard of seeds of faith being sown in a wide variety of ways, through both individual relationships and community initiatives. One of these projects is a new partnership between St Barnabas Church at Moredun and the Bethany Trust, to employ

two part-time workers to support vulnerable children and families and help prevent homelessness. God has a heart of compassion for the poor and broken, and it is a joy that his love is being demonstrated by such practical action.

Back in the spring I was asked to teach a mission entrepreneurship module with the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) ordinands which proved to be both a big challenge and a real delight. We had a number of experienced church pioneers as guest tutors, and it was wonderful to see how deeply the students engaged with their stories as we discussed the realities of mission and church growth in Scotland today. I am amazed by the calibre of our ordinands, such a gifted group with a passionate and infectious faith in Jesus and a profound commitment to serving God. Please pray for them and the SEI staff.

These are only a few snapshots of where I have encountered God at work, but they inspire me with increasing confidence that God has a great future and hope for us. As we step out in faith to follow where Jesus is calling us, we continue to put our trust in the One who can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, and move forward as a diocese into the next chapter of the adventure we are on together.



# THE LORD LOVES A HUFFLEPUFF

by Philip Blackledge

There was a recent social media fad concerning what Hogwarts house one belongs to. Of course, almost everyone likes to think they're going to be in Gryffindor. Particularly the liberals in the church like me. We like to think we're a little bit edgy, eccentric, rumbustious, bold. The reality is more often that we think we're Gryffindor, but act like Hufflepuff – cautious, careful, not too hasty.

At the recent vote on same-sex marriage, it felt to me that we were being a bit, just a bit, like Gryffindor. We were doing something difficult, but right. And now we have apparently been censured by the rest of the Anglican Communion because of it. Although not being allowed to be on a few committees doesn't really sound like all that much, it is quite a big deal – it means we're not trusted to take leadership roles in the wider church.

So when something like that happens, we feel a bit Hufflepuffy: and a bit sad. But being a good Hufflepuff is not a bad thing to be. But there was there, I am slowly realising, the true courage of the Hufflepuffs, an inner steel in caution, a determination and heroism which belongs not to the liberals in our church, but to the conservatives.

There has been a lot spoken about how brave we liberals have been in voting for same-sex marriage. But to my mind there has been great bravery and decency on the part of the conservatives in our church. They are the ones who have had to bear the brunt of the implications of our decision; their ecumenical

connections with conservative churches have doubtless become strained; they have had to explain to their congregations why this decision has been made, without having the luxury of believing it to be the right thing. Theirs has been a hard road as a result of our decision.

The church of which I am a part has often spoken of radical inclusion. That has tended to mean including those who have traditionally been isolated and sidelined by the church and society, such as LGBTQ people, refugees, women. But what I witnessed in our debate over same-sex marriages was a different but equally profound sort of radical inclusion. The radical inclusion in this instance was on the side of those conservatives who have kept loyal to people like me – who have refused to turn their back on their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, even when they have had every opportunity and every excuse to do so. They stated their views with passion and compassion, they spoke up but not with anger or exclusion. But when the deed is done, they have stuck with us, even though we are, to their eyes, leading us in the wrong direction.

Why they have done this is truly I think the grace of God. They know, in some way, that we need them. We don't often tell them that we do, but hopefully they know it. Perhaps they even think that in some way they need people like me. Their desire to keep faithful to God's call to be one church is stronger than this one issue. But now they are suffering the consequences of the decision

that we made against their better judgement, and with the Anglican Communion's decision about the pisky church, they are being excluded by the people who agree with them.

I feel honoured to be a part of their church. That sort of bravery may be more the bravery of Sam Gangee than Frodo, more Hufflepuff than Gryffindor, but it is as courageous, and more loyal, more decent and more brave, than those of us who like to think of ourselves as Gryffindor.

I think the Anglican communion can learn a lot from the Scottish Episcopal Church about how to debate things with courage and decency. But I think much of that learning can come from the conservatives in our church, who never let anger or frustration calcify into opposition. I have never felt I didn't belong. And that is a radical inclusion the church can listen to.

I profoundly believe our decision was the right one, and that in time God will show us the next step forward. But I have learnt something more that I thought I would in this time. I have learnt about qualities I don't really have, qualities that the conservatives in my own congregation, my own diocese and my own province possess. And I am truly humbled and honoured to be part of their church.

*This article first appeared as a post on Pip Blackledge's blog [here](http://frpip.wordpress.com):*

# REVIEW

## Unexpected Grace: a Life in Two Worlds

by Farifteh V. Robb

Great Writing Publications, March 2017. £12.99

Reviewed by Hugh Goddard

Religious conversion is always an interesting topic, whether it involves changing from membership of one religious community to another (St Paul, St Augustine), or from one branch of a religious community to another (John Wesley, John Henry Newman), and it is particularly interesting if the process which lies behind it is explained through autobiography.

This account of conversion from a Muslim background to Christianity in the context of Iran is a fascinating example of this genre, and the author, who is a member of the congregation at Christ Church in Morningside, has told her story in a clear and informative way, outlining very effectively the range of factors which was responsible for her life-changing decision to be baptised into the Anglican Church in Iran in 1978.

Without giving the whole story away, the main factors involved were aesthetic (the atmosphere in a Roman Catholic church in Switzerland opposite to the school which she attended); cultural (an interest in English and French literature, leading to enrolling for a PhD in the University of Nottingham on 'Faith and Doubt in 19th century English Poetry'); and, personal (the hospitality offered, especially at Christmas time, by the Methodist university chaplaincy in Nottingham, by the Department of Theology and a local Anglican church in the same city, and by several Roman Catholic communities in connection with her PhD research).

The author also chronicles very effectively how, after a long gestation period, her encounter with a Persian-speaking expression of Christianity, back in Iran, led her to join the small Christian community in her home country, under the leadership of Bishop Hasan Dehqani-Tafti.

Just a year later, Iran underwent the Islamic Revolution, which resulted in the closure of the Department of English in which the author lectured. This led to a complete change of career, to nursing, which led to the resumption of a previous friendship, which in turn led to marriage and family life in Edinburgh, and the pursuit of many other interests such as music. The whole story is beautifully told, and the book can therefore be thoroughly recommended as an example of a remarkable 'Journey of Faith' in the 20th and 21st centuries.



# GAZETTE

## Appointments

Rev Andrew Cooper was instituted as rector of St John's, Jedburgh on 13 September

Rev Christine Downey is to be instituted as rector of St Mary's, Dalmahoy on 14 December



Rev Rosie Addis (above) was licensed as a Team Priest at St John's Princes Street, Edinburgh on 29 October

Rev Jane Green was ordained Priest on 14 September

Rev Oliver Brewer-Lennon was ordained Priest on 21 September.

Rev Margaret Pedersen and The Rev Jacqui du Rocher were ordained to the Diaconate on 24 September.

## SAVE THE DATE ...

Saturday 28 April 2018 at St Mary's Cathedral, there will be a Growing Together All Age Celebration. Look out for more details closer to the time.



## MARTIN LUTHER EXHIBITION

10 November - 8 March 2018

New College Library and the Edinburgh University Main Library at George Square are holding an exhibition in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. The exhibition draws upon the rich Special Collections of the two libraries, focusing on the role of books of various kinds in the rapid geographical spread of the Reformation.

## MORNINGSIDE JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP

Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, Edinburgh.

Wednesdays 10.30am - 11.30am.

December. 6 Naima Minhas, Manager of Nari Kallyan Shango, an organisation that aims to alleviate deprivation and isolation experienced by South Asian women and their families living in Edinburgh and to promote positive health and well-being among them. All welcome to this and the other talks in our series. To help cover costs, a donation of £1 is requested at the meetings. More information at [www.morningsidejandp.org](http://www.morningsidejandp.org) or email Barbara Darcy at [b.darcy20@gmail.com](mailto:b.darcy20@gmail.com).

## ONE WORLD SHOP



Edinburgh's pioneer Fairtrade shop, The One World Shop has now returned to St John's and the new Cornersone Centre. Open Mon - Sat 10am - 5.30pm; Sun 12noon - 5.30pm.

## MISSION ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODULE

Wednesday evenings 28 February, 7, 14, 21 March and 11 April, 7 - 9pm at the Scottish Episcopal Institute, General Synod Office, Edinburgh.

This Common Awards-validated module is for those with a basic knowledge of the study of mission who want to learn more about pioneering and entrepreneurship. It will include theological reflection on mission, especially in relation to engaging in non-church contexts, as well as the starting and sustaining a pioneering mission project. Along with the Tutor, Rev Annie Naish, this module is taught by a variety of practitioners from across Scotland. For those looking to use this module for credit, a further ninety hours of personal study and a formal assignment are expected, and the fee for this is £100. Those wishing to take the module simply for pleasure are also warmly invited, in which case there is no cost (except the possible purchase of a text book). Further information is available from Rev Dr Michael Hull, Director of Studies on 0131 225 6357 [dos@scotland.anglican.org](mailto:dos@scotland.anglican.org)

## POSITIF ORGANIST

*Do you dream of playing the organ? Are you a church organist that wishes to broaden your skills and knowledge of the organ?*

Sheila Chisholm is a musician, teacher and the organist at St Peter's Lutton Place. She runs the Positif Organist Programme to encourage people of all ages, denominations and abilities, who all share a love of the organ, to broaden their skills and knowledge of church organ. She is particularly keen to encourage teenagers. Monthly sessions run in Edinburgh from September to June. It's a lively hands-on course for anyone wanting to explore and play effectively 'the King of Instruments'. For more information, contact Sheila on 0131 629 9085 or email [sheilachis28@gmail.com](mailto:sheilachis28@gmail.com)

## WEEKLY DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS SURGERY

Come along to the Diocesan Office at 21a Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 5EL, bring your laptop or your newsletter, or whatever other communication challenges you have, and you can sit down with a cup of tea along with the Diocesan Communications Coordinator, and we'll figure it out. Surgery runs 2-4pm, every Monday until the end of the year. This service is in addition to the current support and is intended to make it easier and more pleasant to deal with complex or technical challenges by talking face to face. You can, of course, still contact our Communications Coordinator, Siân Harris, outwith these times, and she will do her best to help.

Many thanks to everyone who has 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@edinburghdiocese.org.uk](mailto:editor@edinburghdiocese.org.uk)

The deadline for the next issue is 31 January 2018.