

# Augustine United Church

Newsletter  
March 2008



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

Dear friends,

To say that Augustine is in turmoil would be sensational, and the Newsletter is anything but sensational. It would be truer to say that Augustine is in a state of change. But there's nothing like a cliché to make the reader turn on the TV, so perhaps we should limit ourselves to the remark that Augustine is seething with activity in its own quiet way.

The search for a Minister has moved on, through three Church Meetings in the New Year to the phase of setting out our table, in the form of the Profile which most of us have seen, and which, for the rest, and for readers at a distance, is summarised on pages 3-6 of this issue. The Profile itself will be presented to the Church on Sunday, March 2nd, and in its determined form dedicated on Sunday, March 9th

Meanwhile, our normal, but by no means unimportant activities continue, as set out particularly in Mary's eloquent message on page 2, concerning Fair-trade Fortnight, which we are now in the middle of<sup>1</sup>, I trust with everyone's active support.

"They also serve, who only stand and wait" is a well-established pun with the best authority behind it; John will be very

pleased indeed to hear from anyone willing to do either task.

*And: Material for next Newsletter, by Easter Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, please: latest Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>.*

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## **A Note of Thanks**

I just wanted to send a note of thanks to everyone at Augustine for the lovely card and the book token. I really appreciate your love and support and the wonderful gift too—I am a huge bookworm so this is perfect for me!

Please pass on my thanks to everyone at Augustine—not only for this but for the wonderful opportunities for ministry we have shared together over the years. I have deeply valued our work together. I have deeply valued our work together.

In Christ's peace,

*Kerri Messner*

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<sup>1</sup> *Should anyone be inclined to find fault with the "proposition at end", I will be glad to give a brief lecture correcting misapprehensions of the point.*

## **Sunday Rotas**

The rotas for Sunday duties in the next three months (April to June) will soon need preparing. Please let me know any dates when you will not be available, either next Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> March, or by post or e-mail, to reach me by 20<sup>th</sup> March (we are away Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March). Any further volunteers for any of the rotas (caretaking, door stewardship, communion, crèche) will also be most welcome.

*John Brockington*

## **Good News!**

By the time you read this, Fairtrade Fortnight will be well under way—for some, it may be over—but that doesn't mean that we can relax our efforts to ensure a better deal for the producers of our favourite foods and clothes. The don't need, or want, our charity. What they want is the chance to make a decent living by their own hard work, unhindered by rich and powerful corporations.

The service on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March will draw to our attention the huge range of high-quality goods that we can buy, knowing that we would not be exploiting their producers over.

How can we all help?

The first way is by resolving to look out for the Fairtrade logo whenever we go shopping, and to choose to buy Fairtrade goods when we can; you might be surprised just how much is now available.

The second is to encourage the retailers to stock a wider range of products, so that the general public will also be attracted to buy them. We have cards at church that you could fill in and send to retailers (you don't have to put your name on them if you're shy: you could sign them, 'Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge', if you prefer, or leave that space blank); or you could write a short note saying you disappointed you were not to be able to

buy such and such goods. And why stop at shops? Not many cafés and restaurants serve Fairtrade coffee, despite its popularity in shops. Let them know their best customers want it, and will desert them if we don't get it!

There are signs that the campaign is succeeding: for several weeks before Fairtrade Fortnight this year, several major non-Fairtrade coffee brands were available on cheap promotions. Clearly their makers were anxious not to lose custom. That's good news, provided we don't let them succeed.

Best of all was the recent announcement that Tate and Lyle will move over during next year to retailing sugar only with the Fairtrade mark. BUT ... they will supply Fairtrade sugar to the vast foodstuff-manufacturing industry ONLY if there is sufficient demand for it—so let's all start demanding!

We CAN make a difference. WE HAVE MADE a difference!

*Mary Brockington*

## **About Prayer**

Thank you, Doris, for your letter about prayer. As we who serve the church and its services from time to time, I have to say that the most difficult part of doing so is always the prayers. I attempt to address Himself, yet I must keep in mind the congregations assumed needs. What am I to do?

'Through Jesus Christ, our Lord' ... That traditional ending is a clue. I must strive to take the humanity which I share with Jesus and with every member present, and set it before God in its humility and frailty, in its hope and its fear. I must try to refocus it on the Kingdom. As a citizen of that Kingdom among fellow-citizens, I must attempt a new act of homage to that Kingdom's Lord.

Grandiose stuff. How to set about it? 'When ye pray, say, "Our ..." I find the set of instructions which we call the Lord's Prayer to be immensely helpful. It gives

me a necklace on which to string the beads. And the central bead of it all has to be, 'Thy Kingdom come'. Prayer ought to re-awaken and re-focus our whole world-view around the Kingdom of God. Get that one petition right and all else falls into place: thanksgiving, confession, petition and intercession.

I agree absolutely about worship leaders who tell God the contents of the newspaper! I also wonder about extempore prayers into which little or no thought has been put. Horror stories abound. I still remember a service during my student days at which a learned professor, his hand in his pocket jingling a set of keys, asked God that we might not have a civilisation governed by detergents — Hastily correcting himself, he said, 'deterrents'!

And than you for introducing me to the word *courrie*. I think I can guess what it means!

Love to all at Augustine,

John Miller

## **Lindisfarne**

It's not too late even now to catch the tide: and join the Scottish URC's **Quiet Day** at Lindisfarne next Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> March. Crossing to the island, 10.30 am, return 4 pm Ring Christine on 0141 332 7667: or e-mail [cpaterson@urcotland.org.uk](mailto:cpaterson@urcotland.org.uk)

## **THE PASTORATE PROFILE: A PRECIS**

*The full Profile is designed principally for those who might be interested in taking on the ministry at Augustine. It fills twelve pages; this précis follows the headings of the original, and is as adequate as we can make it, but it is not to be taken as authoritative.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

'The people of Augustine United Church proclaim God's love in our worship and our care for one another, our local community and the world'

## **Who we are**

"Augustine United Church (AUC) is a gathered church, based in a large late-nineteenth century building, nestled in the heart of Edinburgh City Centre", close to many places of learning and libraries, as well as law courts. "We have a small, but active congregation that wishes to expand spiritually and numerically. We believe in an active God who is concerned with the events of our own lives, with our community and with the world."

## **What we do at present**

"We seek to live out our faith by actively engaging with those around us and across the world." This is expressed in a Local Ecumenical Partnership [LEP] with two neighbouring churches, and a less formal relationship with others. The building is extensively used by Christian organisations, and by others working for a range of concerns in social and political life, national and international. Another congregation, belonging to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) also worship in our building.

## **Where we think we're going**

We have set out our mission in four themes: Proclamation of God's love; pastoral care; concern for our local community; and world concerns. All these we aim to develop, and to make development possible, we wish to appoint an administrator of the Church Centre, to allow the Minister to concentrate on ministry.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

AUC is set in a busy area, though with a small resident population. The Old Town of Edinburgh, a focus for tourism, with many restaurants and clubs; and also a legal centre, with the Sheriff Court and the High Court nearby, and a large number of solicitors' offices. In addition, the National Library and the National Museum of Scotland are close nearby, and Edinburgh University is centred in the area. There are several other churches nearby, including, besides St. Giles, the Society of Friends, the Free Church, the Methodists and the Scottish Episcopalian church which, with Greyfriars and AUC, forms the LEP mentioned above. A

major construction project on the site of the old Royal Infirmary plans to make 900 new homes and many new offices in the next few years. All this makes for a very mixed population, not without its own under-class.

### **HISTORY OF AUC**

The antecedents of AUC lie in the Reformed, Independent and Baptist churches of past centuries. Augustine was built for a Congregational Church in 1861, originally with a local congregation, but the membership now is dispersed around the town and suburbs of Edinburgh. Its close proximity to the University of Edinburgh has brought a continuing connection with students and staff, "pastorally and in worship."

AUC has a long tradition of preaching and ecumenical activity, and of "responding to the social needs of the Old Town", strengthened by "the presence on the premises of tenants organisations devoted to World development concerns and matters of peace and justice".

### **WHO ARE WE? (statistics)**

Number on Roll of Membership:

Average weekly attendance:

This does not include housebound members, and the significant number of those involved in AUC life, adherents but not formally members.

We have one or two baptisms, infant dedication services and weddings a year. We have had 1 adult baptism.

### **HOW ARE WE ORGANISED**

In this section, the details of the nine elders, office-bearers (President, Secretary, Treasurer), their election and tenure, and their duties, are listed. The organisation of the building as Church Centre is covered below.

### **BEING THE CHURCH TOGETHER IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BELONGING TO THE WORLD CHURCH**

#### **The Church Centre**

Its organisation since the 1060s, and its permanent users are summarised.

#### **Christian Organisations**

We provide a home for several of these, in particular the Metropolitan Community Church, and have given temporary accommodation to others.

#### **Community Groups**

"A wide range of groups for concerts, rehearsals and lectures bring several hundred people each week through the building." Ten are listed.

#### **Political and Campaigning Groups**

"In the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in use by groups campaigning for political, development and environmental causes here and in the Developing World," including political parties, campaigning charities, and others.

#### **Edinburgh Festival Fringe**

We provide three theatres, operated by Paradise Green Productions, offering very successful programmes on the Fringe.

#### **Issues and Opportunities for Church and Centre**

"With the active involvement of volunteers and our previous minister the Centre has seen very significant growth. It gives us (and the URC) the opportunity to give visible support to many important causes;" besides, the income it produces is essential to the Church's buildings and all its activities. However, its very success is calling for reorganisation and professional appointments in management.

### **CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

#### **The Open Fellowship**

Is an informal monthly meeting with a varied programme.

#### **Peace and Justice**

"AUC has a long and continuing focus on global peace and justice issues," expressed in many ways, supporting individuals, organisations such as Christian Aid, and major campaigns such as Make Poverty History and opposition to Trident.

### **Christian Aid**

We provide them with offices, and collections at different times of the year.

### **Council for World Mission**

AUC has long been a member of the Council, expressed in prayer, by keeping in touch, and in publicity.

### **Inter-Faith activity**

The wide variety of faiths in Edinburgh is emphasised by the newly-built Central Mosque, and by an annual Inter-Faith week. AUC members support the Inter-Faith Women's Group at the nearby Methodist Church, and our building is used by the Edinburgh Palestinian Forum, and, occasionally, by Muslim wedding parties.

### **Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter contains short articles on the concerns and activities of the church and of individual members.

## **VOLUNTARY WORK**

### **The Veranda Club**

A monthly tearoom at the Royal Edinburgh psychiatric hospital.

### **Greyfriars' Parish Meals**

A 'soup kitchen', founded by Greyfriars, now supported by members of AUC and St. Columba's.

### **Greyfriars' Community Project**

AUC has informal links with this project, founded by Greyfriars, now involving various organisations, not all religious.

### **Fresh Start**

AUC actively supports this inter-denominational church-based charity, which gives practical support to people, previously homeless, who are moving into a place of their own.

## **WORSHIP**

Full details of Sunday and special services, including Communion, are given. "The style of worship is varied, using diverse models in

the Reformed tradition." Members of the congregation participate in various ways. Children are normally present at the opening of service, then withdrawing to their own groups.

The sound of the electric organ, installed ten years ago, is indistinguishable from a pipe organ; we are fortunate in the abilities and dedication of the organist. The hymn-books in normal use are *Rejoice & Sing* and *Common Ground*.

The facilities for worship are ample and variable, with an excellent sound system, and up-to-date projection equipment.

## **CARING FOR EACH OTHER**

### **Care of the Elderly**

Care is taken, through elders' meetings and in other ways, to be in touch with the elderly, especially those who are ill. We are looking at ways of extending our outreach to the elderly.

### **Youth and Children**

Numbers are small: 3 (aged 4-7) in Junior Church, and 4 in the crèche, with 6-8 helpers. We recognise the need to develop this part of our ministry.

## **OUR LOCAL ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS**

### **The Local Ecumenical Partnership**

#### **Origins and Activities of the LEP**

At Pentecost, 2002, after years of engaging together on various issues, the three churches, AUC, St. Columba's and Greyfriars, entered into a formal covenant (see Appendix 2). Besides collaboration on local and international concerns, and such activities as joint study cycles in Lent, and pilgrimages (e.g., to Inchcolm and Lindisfarne), we share four united services a year, normally communion, open to all and led by the clergy of all three denominations. Our congregation keenly supports all these activities and wishes to develop them, as do the ministers of all three churches.

#### **Metropolitan Community Church**

We are developing our friendship with MCC, aiming to understand better the challenges of ministry in congregations of different backgrounds.

### **Friendships with other local churches**

Besides our friends in the LEP, there are several nearby churches, e.g., St. Giles' (High Kirk of the Church of Scotland), Old St. Paul's (Scottish Episcopal), Nicholson Square Methodist Church, and St. Patrick's (Roman Catholic). We have developed friendships with all these, though less formally than in the LEP

### **RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO MEET OUR NEEDS AND THE NEEDS OF OTHERS**

#### **Our Buildings: The Church Building, and the Manse**

In two detailed sections, the Profile details the complex structure of these buildings, and outlines the plans for maintenance and upgrading, and summarises the present healthy condition of the finances.

### **FUTURE MINISTRY OF AUC**

#### **Where we stand**

"We believe in an active God, concerned with the events of our lives, our community and the world. Christian faith at AUC is living and reflective; for us, asking questions is as important as knowing answers. We are committed to being a congregation which offers worship and prayer at the heart of the city. We seek to live out our faith by actively engaging with those around us and across the world. We are a friendly and diverse group; our worship is informal, drawing on material from the Iona Community and from the World Church. Although a small congregation, we are blessed with families whose children are very much part of our congregational life. This we are keen to develop."

#### **Ministerial relationship with AUC Centre**

The Church Centre is part of the life and ministry of AUC. The minister would not be expected to run the daily activities of the Centre, but would have an overall concern for it as an expression of our Christian life.

#### **Our Vision**

We wish to grow, not only in numbers of Members, friends and helpers, but also to

grow in spirituality (in prayer and understanding of the Bible), in caring for each other and for our neighbourhood, and in our response to world issues and world problems. We are looking for a Minister who will inspire us in these directions, and also point us in new directions, and help us to be guided by the Holy Spirit in new ways. Accordingly, we wish to work with the new Minister to develop the key aims of our mission plan (see Appendix 1).

### **TERMS OF SETTLEMENT**

A series of specific questions and answers—which must be completed—to questions put to the congregation as the basis, on our part, of the formal understanding as to the provisions the congregation will make for the minister's practical needs.

### **APPENDICES**

The full Profile includes the following appendices:

- 1. Mission Plan for AUC**
- 2. The Covenant of The Local Ecumenical Partnership**
- 3. Letter from Richard Frazer, (St. Columba's by the Castle Episcopalian Church)**
- 4. From the Rev. Alison Fuller, (St. Columba's by the Castle)**
- 5. From Rev. Keri Messner (Metropolitan Community Church, Edinburgh)**

\* \* \*

## Other Places:

*I have had notices about three educational openings, near and far:*

### China

First, a presentation on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2-4 pm in the Cathedral Hall at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral (the one at the east end of Queen Street and the foot of Leith Street, not the one in the West End), and organised under the aegis of the Archdiocese

This will be given by Jeff Bagnall, (whose latest study visit was October 2007) with pictures, information and Chinese artefacts:

“Come to learn more about the Christians in China—the House Churches, the registered and unregistered churches, the structure of Church organisation, the academic Christians ...”

The cost is £5: those interested should book with Jennifer Myles (secretary) before 7<sup>th</sup> March, at the Gillis Centre Office, 100 Strathearn Road, EH9 1BB; phone 0131 623 8912; or e-mail to: [jennifer.myles@staned.org.uk](mailto:jennifer.myles@staned.org.uk) (Cheques payable to *Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh*)

### London

#### Roehampton University

The second is more completely academic:

Anyone interested in a higher degree can look at the MA degree now being offered by Roehampton University in London in Religion and Literature, covering the relationship between the two disciplines, and the capacity of each to contribute to the understanding of the other.

The core of the course is designed to provide a thorough grounding in the

theories, skills and practical knowledge of research work, and also through a study of religion and the novel, to open up different ways of thinking about religion and literature.

Students will have the opportunity to attend regular research seminars led by scholars in both areas, with expertise in subjects such as hermeneutics, romanticism, atheism, nineteenth-century theology and culture, religion and the novel, gender, and secularisation.

For more detailed reading list information, please contact the Enquiries office at either ([enquiries@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@roehampton.ac.uk) or 020 8392 3232)

### Edinburgh

The third notice is not about a single event, nor about a full-length academic course. Nevertheless it has proved most interesting, even to those totally theologically unlearned. This is the College seminar which has been held in recent weeks at Morningside United church on Wednesday mornings at 10.30, on the theme of “Abraham’s Children”.

Who are, of course, all the tribes descended from him, through Isaac and through Ishmael; and the followers of those religions which trace their origins to his departure from Ur.

That is, ourselves; and the study of Abraham’s children leads inevitably to the consideration of the likenesses and differences of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and that very topical subject, the relations between their adherents.

. *Reflection: We often talk about “the road to Calvary”. Shouldn’t we speak instead of “the road to the empty tomb”?*

## Services and Events in March

Sunday 2nd March: **Mothering Sunday**, and **Fair-Trade** Sunday:  
11am. Rev. William Young. Communion.

Mon. 3rd, 2 pm: Women's Union at Saughtonhall.

Wed. 5<sup>th</sup>, early: Lindisfarne Quiet Day (see p. 3 above).  
2 pm, Greyfriars: LEP Lent study group.

Friday 7th, 2.30 pm, St. Patrick's, Cowgate: **World Day of Prayer** service.

Sunday 9th, 11 am: Rev. Jan Adamson: Dedication of the Pastoral Profile  
12.15, Church Meeting

Monday 10th, 2 pm: Women's Union at Saughtonhall.

Wed 12th, 10. 30 am, Morningside United: last study of "Abraham's Children".  
2 pm, Greyfriars: LEP Lent study group.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm, St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral, York Place: China & its many  
Christians (see page 7 above).

Saturday 15th, 8 am, St. Columba's: Morning Prayer, followed by breakfast.  
7 pm, St. Cuthbert's: J.S. Bach's St. John Passion (tickets £13.50-£20)

### **Palm Sunday** 16th

10 am, St. Columba's: Sung Eucharist with Procession

11 am Augustine: Dr. Paul Middleton

11 am, Greyfriars: Morning Service: and 12.30 pm: Gaelic Service

Each day, Monday 17th to Wednesday 19th, 8 am, St. Columba's: Holy Communion,  
followed by breakfast.

Thursday 20th, Maundy Thursday:

8 am, St. Columba's: Holy Communion, followed by breakfast.

7.30 pm: T. L. C., at Augustine: Communion Service, led by Rev. Peter MacKenzie.

### **Good Friday** 21st:

8 am, St. Columba's: Mass of the Pre-Sanctified, followed by breakfast.

12 noon, Greyfriars': three hours' Vigil (arrive and leave at your chosen times).

8. 30 pm, St. Columba's: Tenebrae (sung).

Saturday 22nd, 8 am, St. Columba's, 8 am: Morning Prayer, followed by breakfast.  
2.30 pm, Princes Street Gardens: Easter Play.

### **Easter Day**, 24th. Rev. Ross McLaren.

10 am, St. Columba's: Sung Eucharist.

11 am. Augustine: Easter Communion, led by Rev. J. Ross McLaren.

11 am, Greyfriars': Morning Service: and 12.30 pm: Gaelic Service.

2 pm, Augustine: Jazz Service, led by Rev. William Young.

Sunday 30th, 11 am: Rev. Lindsey Sanderson.

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