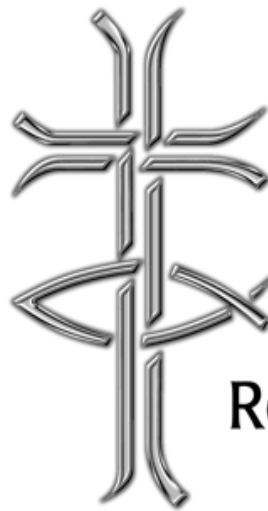


# Augustine United Church

Newsletter  
Summer 2008



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

Dear friends:

*Too much of substance this month for improving comments from the Editor. Enjoy the summer; and do remember William Young's Wednesday midday services. Also note the Inchcolm visit on August 24th; and think of signing for the Retreat at Cumbrae (see page 6).*

## "Whose Holy Land?"

—was the topic of the Women's Inter-faith meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Time was too short to allow discussion to develop with the three faith representatives speaking, but there was a good picture of the historical background and present problems.

Lies have been told to make people believe that no-one is displaced—and villages were razed; We have all seen pictures of the Wall, each time these shock us anew. What suddenly struck me last night was how much shadow they cast, literally, over the people. Diagrams demonstrated the on-going break up of Palestinian areas and the difficulties of every day in getting to and from work, keeping contact with family. The boundaries snake round, taking over wells and good land.

The next meeting is arranged to consider the future status and aims of the group but it is hoped that there will be time to recap and hear more on what is a very complicated position. The meeting concluded with a young woman, who had

grown up as "black" in South Africa, giving hope of a peaceful outcome, if the right leadership can be found.

*Doris*

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## Sunday Rotas

To those already on the rotas: please let me know of any dates when you will not be available for Sunday morning duties during July, August and September by Sunday 15th June at the latest. We shall be away on Sundays 1st and 8th, so please post or email them if you will not be in church that Sunday (that is the *final* date even for e-mail, since we are away again for the second half of that week).

To others in the congregation: please consider helping in this way to keep the church functioning as we would all like on a Sunday and let me know.

Thank you,

*John & Mary Brockington*

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## Greetings from Cyprus (part one)

*6<sup>th</sup> May 2008*

Many apologies for the time it has taken to provide our friends at Augustine with this update on our new life in Cyprus. Despite spending a lot of time putting our stamp on the house and garden, we have enjoyed some short breaks since coming here in October.

Firstly, there was a most relaxing Christmas spent at a beach hotel in Limassol. To look every day at the turquoise sea and be able to stroll along the beach in the sunshine felt really strange (but very welcome) for that time of year.

Green Monday (10<sup>th</sup> March) marks the start of Lent in the Greek Orthodox Calendar and is also a holiday time in Cyprus. Along with our mainly Cypriot companions, we took a four-day trip to Jordan and made the one-hour flight to Amman. Our itinerary included Petra, Mount Nebo, the Dead Sea and the ruined city of Jerash. The presence of heavily armed soldiers (even the tourist police carried guns) could not detract from our enjoyment and—more often—amazement at the sites we visited. Particularly, we found standing atop Mount Nebo, where Moses looked over to the Promised Land, quite an emotional experience.

Our trip, last month, to celebrate Jim's birthday [*which?* Ed.] was a weekend break at a hotel in Platres. This Cypriot village is situated on the fringe of the forest on the south slopes of the Troodos mountain range. Platres has been popular since the 1940s, visitors coming in the summer to escape the heat of the lowlands and in the winter as a base for people ski-ing in the higher slopes of the Troodos.

Our hotel, the Forest Park has an interesting past: first opened in 1936, from 1941-43 it was used as a British Military Hospital and in 1955 was taken for use as Field Headquarters reverting, once again, to a family-run hotel in 1959. We had a very relaxing time, enjoying the magnificent views over the mountains. Nor did we forget to order a brandy sour—the drink that was specially created at the hotel for King Farouk of Egypt.

This month we will be off on our travels again – this time to Poland, initially for a family wedding and then to stay with Polish friends in Cracow. It is 20 years since we were in Poland, at a time when the people still queued outside food shops

which had little to sell. Thankfully, times have changed.

As well as these trips, we have also been delighted to welcome our first visitors who came over from Edinburgh last month. We did so enjoy showing them around our favourite spots. This month sees the arrival of more friends from the capital and in July we will be reunited with our grandsons.

The weather has now reached over 30°C [86°F], but we are coping well with the heat. Our swimming pool will soon become a welcome feature, though for the moment it lies clean, but unused. Our landline now is 00357 26621387; and [chriswaiting@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:chriswaiting@cytanet.com.cy) is our additional Email address. If anyone would like to get in touch we would be very pleased to hear from you.

With our very best wishes to all at AUC,  
*Jim and Christine McLennan*

[*The second instalment will follow in the August issue.*]

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### **Parish Meals and The Local Church**

One of the great successes of the cooperation of Augustine, Greyfriars and St Columba's, has been our joint work providing "Parish Meals" for the homeless on Tuesday evenings in Kirk House, as part of the work of the Greyfriars Community Project (GCP). Many people from all three congregations have enjoyed working together there in what, it has to be said, were pretty poor facilities. The shift to "Building 3" just a bit along the Grassmarket from Kirk House has made a huge improvement, and, thanks to David Todd and his team, we now have really excellent conditions in a large, bright and well furnished kitchen and dining area. Any of you who haven't been to the new setup should come along any Tuesday between 5 and 7 p.m. to see and possibly try your hand at manning a teapot or a ladle! Among other changes, though, is the need to upgrade our financing of the enterprise. Central to our supply of food

has been the wonderful array of things we get each week from FareShare, as subsidiary of Edinburgh Cyrenians, who redistribute food kindly donated by supermarkets. Up to now, we have received the food, with a shop value of up to £100 per week, entirely free. They now need help in the costs of delivery, and our share of the bill is £940 per year. We would like to suggest that this be divided equally among the three congregations. There is also an expense of about £20 per week for other food not provided by FareShare. Up to now, funds for this have been provided by Greyfriars, but it seems reasonable that this should be shared as well. We are therefore suggesting that each of our congregations donate £650 for a year to cover these expenses. It may be that a special collection would be the best way of raising this money, but we hope that however it is done, we may continue to support this work which is greatly appreciated by our clientele and which has helped us to grow in real Christian unity.

*Kate Frazer (Greyfriars)*

*Bob Gould (St Columba's)*

*Kathleen Ziffo (Augustine)*

P.S. Up till now, AUC (not Greyfriars) has funded its own "extras" not provided by FareShare, from members' and helpers' donations and funding from the Treasurer as we have requested. From now on, I would suggest that anyone wishing to donate should give the donation via the Treasurer, so that we take part in the suggested new scheme.

*Kathleen Ziffo*

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### **Reflections on Synod at Tulliallan: (Part Two)**

There was one new aspect of the management of business at Synod this year: the introduction of 'consensus voting.' In our papers we had each received two blank cards – one yellow and one blue. If we agreed with, or felt warm towards, a proposal we were to hold up the yellow card; if we opposed it, or felt cool towards it, we were to hold up the

blue card. If our feelings were mixed we could hold both of them up together in one hand, overlapping. This allowed for a variety of views to be expressed if, after discussion, it was clear that a variety of responses was likely, when the matter came to the vote. This method of dealing with complex issues avoids the necessity for a series of consecutive amendments which can so often be tedious and confusing. It does place a considerable burden on the chairman, who has to interpret the show of, in this case, over seventy, cards, and to present an interpretation in a way acceptable to all present. Fortunately, in our chairman, the Moderator, we had an excellent interpreter.

The attractions of consensus voting was seen above all in the debate on the future of Sannox, the URC's delightful but underused and financially burdensome church and meeting facility on the Isle of Arran. This has been on the agenda for several meetings, ably presented by Patrick Smyth who has devoted much professional time to presenting the options. When at the first show of cards there was a fair show of blue cards raised, the Moderator heard further comments and amended the resolution in the light of them. This he repeated until a wording was reached which produced a show of yellow cards only, and declared that consensus had been reached. It was not a rapid procedure, but I doubt whether a traditional 'yes/no' vote would have produced a quicker result, and I am convinced that it would not have been as fair. We often speak of seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a meeting; in a large meeting I believe that consensus voting is probably in human terms as close as one can get to finding it.

Another aspect of Synod which I found rewarding, was that each 'Link'—the Synod of Scotland has four 'Links', North, South, East and West—had an opportunity to meet on its own on the Saturday evening. The Links are the successors to the old Area Councils, and I knew that each has a Pastoral Committee, concerned

with the induction, deployment and welfare of its ministers, (Doris Caldwell is the Convener of the East Link Pastoral Committee), but I had not heard of any other East Link activities since they were established over a year ago, so it was refreshing to have an opportunity to meet in the smaller group many friends from Area Council days, with the added attraction of East Link members from the Youth Forum. In Helen Mee's expert hands the East Link's meeting was a cross between a game and a revelation. We began by creating a map from our separate pieces of a paper 'jigsaw puzzle', ensuring that we knew where all our Link churches and church partnerships were located. We told each other news of our church activities. We were then asked to introduce ourselves by forename, and for each letter of our name to give one word which in our view described us as a person. Other members of the group were invited to comment! (I thought of Alexander Pope's words: 'Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; The proper study of Mankind is Man.') In the space of under an hour Helen had coaxed us into examining the distribution of churches in our Link, the variety of pastoral oversight, our ecumenical associations, and even our individual natures. I wonder whether the other three Links were having such a good time!

On the Sunday morning we were all together for our Communion service, for committee reports for which there had not been time earlier, for a theological reflection from our Church of Scotland friend and its former Moderator, Alison Elliot, before the last of our welcome soup-and-sandwich lunches, and departure in much better weather from Tulliallan. You will be able to read a more official account of the Synod meeting in *SynNEWS*, and when I receive the Minutes I shall be happy to show them to any member who wishes to see them. We owe a great debt for such records not only to the meticulous work of the Synod Clerk, Dr Jim Merrilees, but also to our friend Peter Ranscombe, who was using all his

journalistic skill and technical wizardry throughout the formal proceedings to give us a minute-by-minute display on the screen

*Brenda Moon*

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### **Eco-Congregations**

At the last Church Meeting it was agreed that we should consider belonging to Eco-congregations, the Churches' Environmental Programme, an Ecumenical endeavour with over 180 different local churches in Scotland taking part, and many more in England and Wales. The URC has supported the programme for several years, but the Synod Church & Society Committee is only now encouraging us to become involved.

All of us have heard of Climate Change, whatever we make of it! The world climate is changing, but not every unusual quirk of temperature or storm at the "wrong" time of year is attributable to world climate change. Nor does everyone agree that Climate Change is totally due to human damage to the planet. What is certain is that about 95% of scientists world-wide *do* believe that we are seriously damaging the planet by the overuse of scarce fossil fuels, and the refuse and pollution we produce. This is obviously worsening with increased world population and increased living standards and acquisition of goods by people in developed nations. Previously poorer countries like China and India are now fast developing and are aspiring to the same as us, with the inevitable increases, including in transporting everything and everyone around the world. It sometimes seems like an intractable problem.

This is where the Eco-congregations programme comes into its own, because this starts from the different position of first considering what the Bible says, and what God requires of us in our stewarding of the planet, for the benefit of all humanity and all creation. God has decided that we have this wonderful resource of the earth and has given us, as Christians, the knowledge to live fully and

wholesomely, rather than persisting with excesses that cause damage to fellow human beings, creatures and all of nature.

A small group will make an initial check of the church to find out what we are already achieving that is environmentally good—like using less polluting cleaning materials and recycling old spectacles. We will try to prioritise what might be possible to achieve for the future, and bring the findings to the Church Meeting for a decision on whether to continue with the programme, and register as an Eco-congregation. At present the programme supplies free packs of study material to help with services, work with our young folk and community action, and so on. It is not a time limited programme, but the aim is to achieve a different sustainable life-style for the church, our community and for individuals.

If you would like to be involved in any way, please let me know.

*Kathleen Ziffo*

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### **Climate Change: a URC Synod Workshop**

Two further workshops were held at Synod. One was on Local Collaborative Ministry, a programme of the Scottish Episcopal Church on empowering small congregations (be they rural, suburban or inner city) to participate more fully in God's ongoing mission and ministry. This is especially so in times when no minister is available. This develops "our" idea of the priesthood of all believers, and is founded on the belief that all Christians, lay and ordained, should participate in Christ's ministry according to the different gifts given them by the Spirit. The programme helps equip people through a variety of ministries, wherever they are, whatever they do. An example was given of a Christian Postman with van in a rural area (postman Pat?) who was helped to develop his skills in communicating with

the more isolated people he visited and becoming more able to give Christian care to them. who then developed his ability to lead small groups of local worshippers. In another example, others with "hidden" talents were encouraged to use these during "vacancies", and were given encouragement to continue to use these once a "minister" was eventually found.

The topic of the second workshop I attended (*Climate Change*) could be linked with the content of the keynote speech at Synod. This was *How we need to communicate "what is essentially different" in being a Christian - our Mission* i.e. that *we make a response to problems due to our belief in a concerned God who loves all people and parts of his creation and who has entrusted all this to our human care.* We should never be afraid to accept failure in others, as "success in worldly terms" is not what Christians aspire to. Economically aspiring to accumulate more and more belongings and goods (wealth)—discarding as we go along—must be considered alongside environmental needs for respect and care of creation and people, whether they be our neighbours and decay in city streets in this country or people and habitats on the other side of the world.

The *Theological Reflector* at the culmination of Synod (our friend Dr Alison Elliot of Greyfriars) emphasised that what is distinctive about Christians—in issues concerning the church and what happens generally in society—is the "added value" we as Christians can give to people's lives. This added value results from our God-given belief/motivation, which leads to our treating people as equals, and nurturing the knowledge that we can cope with limitations in life style and human failures, and the art of achieving what is possible, given the hope that is within us from God.

*Brenda Moon*

## **Church Calendar for June and July**

MIDWEEK SERVICES will be held on WEDNESDAYS at 1.00pm during June and July. led by Rev. William Young, with Communion on June 4th and July 2nd. We hope to see those who are free, to meet some who cannot come on Sundays, and passers-by. Tea, Coffee and Soup will normally be available

## June

SUNDAY 1st June 11.00am: Rev. Ewan Aitken; Communion  
Monday, 2nd. 2.00pm: Women's Union meets at Saughtonhall  
Wednesday 4th. 1.00pm: MIDDAY SERVICE led by Rev. William Young  
7.30pm CHURCH MEETING  
SUNDAY 8th. 9 am: Afrikaans service.  
11.00am: Environment Sunday, William Young & members of the congregation  
Wednesday 11th 1.00pm: Midday service led by Rev. William Young  
Friday 13th. 7.30pm: INDUCTION of Rev Kathryn Price to Dunfermline and Coaltown-of-Balgonie at Dunfermline Church, Canmore Stree.  
Saturday 14th: Scottish Friends of Ecumenism, AGM & Gathering, at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane Theme: "Trafficking",  
SUNDAY 15th: Jane Blackley, Greyfriars Tolbooth and Highland Church.  
Wednesday 18th: 11.00am. Users Meeting  
1.00pm Midday Service led by Steven Manders.  
SUNDAY 22nd: 11.00am. Stewart Cutler, Youth & Children's Work Development Officer for Synod.  
Tuesday 24th: 7.30pm Elders meet.  
Wednesday 25th. 1.00pm Midday Service led by Doris Caldwell  
7.00pm Inter-Faith Women in Nicholson Square Church: "Where do we go from here?"  
SUNDAY 29th: 11.00am. David Todd.

## July

Wednesday 2nd: July 1.00pm Midday Service led by Rev. William Young.  
Sunday 6th: 11.00am. Rev. John Richardson, St. Columba's.  
Wednesday 9th: 1.00pm Midday Service led by Rev C. McPherson.  
Friday 11th: Monday 14th General Assembly of the United Reformed Church meets at Riccarton Campus of Heriot Watt..  
SUNDAY 13th: July 9 am: Afrikaans service.  
11.00am Rev William Young.  
Wednesday 16th: 1.00pm Rev Hilary Smith, St.Giles.  
SUNDAY 20th: 11.00am to be confirmed.  
Wednesday 23rd:-1.00pm Midday Service led by Rev William Young.  
SUNDAY 27th: 11.00am Father Ed Hone, St. Patrick's.  
Tuesday 29th: 7.00p: Elders meet.  
Wednesday 30th: 1.00pm: Midday Service led by Rev.William Young.

## August

31st July-4th August: **a retreat** at Cumbrae Cathedral, with members from St. Columba's, cost £200 for the 4 nights. Names as soon as possible, please. More details at Church meeting.  
SUNDAY 3rd. August 11.00.am Interim Moderator, Rev John R. Smith.  
Saturday 24th: Visit to and service at Inchcolm.

*Material for the next Newsletter by Sunday 27th July, please,  
by hand, or email: Newsletter@augustine.org.uk.*  
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