



Augustine  
United Church

# Seeds

encourage | inspire | challenge | No.62 | WINTER 2016/2017

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The  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

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## *Light the Way this Christmas*

*By Rev Fiona Bennett*

**L**ight the Way this Christmas' is the theme of Christian Aid's Christmas appeal. The appeal invites us to Light the Way for our world living in the darkness of the refugee crisis.

Lighting the Way has many layers of thinking and action. It is inviting us to support refugees through prayers and financial giving, but it is also asking us to do more.

Light the Way is asking us to remember that the 65 million people across the world who cannot be at home this Christmas time (even if they don't celebrate Christmas), are all human beings made in the image of God with dignity and worth. Light the Way is asking us not to turn away from their suffering but to face it, to stand in solidarity with those forced out by violence and fear, who are searching for safety and refuge.

Lighting the Way is not just about helping others it is also Lighting the Way for

ourselves. Enabling us to see ourselves as part of an interdependent global community and planet. Humbling ourselves to appreciate the grace and generosity we have received and responsibility we hold. Awakening ourselves to the reality that it is only in expressing the same grace and generosity that we will begin to taste the abundant life which Jesus offers us.

There is a message in much of our society that it is wise to stockpile and build walls to protect our own. Jesus was the antithesis of this. He broke down walls of class and acceptability. He opened up the treasures of his faith to all humanity, not just those who conformed. He shared all he had. In his behaviour (which was and still could be perceived as reckless and outrageous) he showed our world a new way of living; a way fuelled with love rather than fear, a way which no empire has of yet been able to fully

## Getting involved

Within AUC there are 7 Ministry Teams which are responsible for different areas of Church Life. If you would like to know more or get involved with one of these please e-mail the contact person

### Children & Young People

Kirsty Murray

kirsty.murray@ed.ac.uk

### Membership

Alex Peden

a.peden@ed.ac.uk

### Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

Nicola Robinson

nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com

### Commitment For Life

(Social Justice Ministry)

Kathleen Ziffo

secretary@augustine.org.uk

### Pastoral & Mental Health

Doris Caldwell

hhfcaldwell@gmail.com

### Worship & Christian

Education

Rev Fiona Bennett

minister.auc@gmail.com

### Centre, Property & Finance

Tom Murray

murray.tom@blueyonder.co.uk

If you would like to get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

### AUC Volunteering

Anne and Nicola Robinson

rota.auc@gmail.com

### Local Community

Volunteering

Della Morris

dellagreenlanes@gmail.com

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express or own. There seems to be darkness always around in the world, but hope lies in going the Way of Light.

How appropriate then it was that the great Way of Light came amongst us as a vulnerable baby, dependant on the love and care of his parents, community and strangers to survive, in order to show us all the way. The Way of Jesus is the Way of Light. It is the Way of Hope for our world. It is the Way which enables us to see all humans as people made in God's image with dignity and worth. It is the Way which reveals to us the treasure and interdependence of our planet. It is the Way which calls us to walk with humility, grace and generosity, that there will be abundant life for all of us.

Through this Advent and Christmas Season may we share in Lighting the Way for ourselves and our world.  
([www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas-appeal](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas-appeal))



## 'Light the Way'— Communal Christmas Card

As our thoughts turn once again to sending seasonal greetings, please consider making a contribution to the work of **Christian Aid** and signing our **communal AUC Christmas Card**. Our communal card allows us to show that we will be thinking of our AUC friends and family as we celebrate, whilst contributing too to the invaluable work of Christian Aid in supporting the poorest of the poor across the globe. This Christmas, Christian Aid invite us to join together to 'Light the Way'. As we celebrate Jesus, the Light who came into the world, we fill our homes with light and laughter, family and friends. Yet for more than 65 million people who are currently fleeing conflict and crises, a joyful home is a distant memory. Forced out by the darkness of violence and fear, they are searching for safety and refuge. This Christmas, let us together be that beacon of hope, shining the light to a brighter future, helping to Light the Way.

Harriet Davidson



## *Project Elpis – Edinburgh University reaching out to refugees*

Edinburgh University Students visiting refugee camps in Greece this summer realised the importance of mobile phones for the refugees they met. It is communication through mobile phones which enables vulnerable refugees to stay in touch with their families (who may be at home or may also be travelling as refugees), and to keep abreast of what is happening in the world (which is very significant when your homeland is at war and when it is unclear where in the world you might be welcome to find safety). However the students noticed that there was a chronic lack of places to safely charge mobile phones and so they came up with the Elpis Project.

The students sourced sponsorship and built and installed solar-powered recharging units (Hubs) in the refugee camps. In just three months, Elpis installed six Solar Hubs in different locations around Greece - with high demand for more! Each Solar Hub charges up to 3,600 phones every month. There are plans for more Hubs,

but also to install Raspberry Pi devices into them, so that refugees can access educational material specifically tailored to their needs.

On the evening of Sunday 18th December Greyfriars Kirk are hosting a Carol Ceilidh from which all the proceeds are going to support the work of Elpis. Each Hub unit costs about £1000, so we hope that the proceeds from the Carol Ceilidh will go a long way towards covering the costs of another unit and significantly improving the lives of refugees in Greece.

**Fiona Bennett**

For more information about Elpis see [www.projectelpis.org](http://www.projectelpis.org)

Tickets for the Carol Ceilidh are £5 (Adult) and £10 (Family). Tickets can be bought or reserved from the Greyfriars Kirk office (0131 225 1900). Further details at [www.greyfriarskirk.com](http://www.greyfriarskirk.com).

## *Gift Service— 11th December*

Thank you to everyone for their generous donations for items to **Fresh Start's** Starter Packs during November.

At our Gift Service on 18th December there will be the opportunity to donate presents for those staying in the **Royal Edinburgh Hospital** over Christmas time. Popular gifts are toiletries, socks, sweets/chocolates, notebooks/diaries and pens. (No alcoholic content please). Gifts should be donated unwrapped, to help with appropriate distribution.

This year we will also be collecting items for Syrian refugees at a camp in Lebanon. These goods will be sent via **Edinburgh Direct Aid** (see October Seeds). Warm adult/children's clothing items and toys (not too bulky) can be donated. (A carload of your donations of warm adult clothing was sent there earlier this autumn—thank you for these).

*Please note that items donated to organisations within the UK are now restricted to coming from non-smoking homes.*

**Kathleen Ziffo**

## *The Church on the Bridge—Heritage Project Launch Advent Sunday, 27th November*

After four years of hard work and dedicated fundraising – from the ABC team and the wider community – the church, building users, those who’d undertaken the project work, and others gathered on Sunday 27th November for a service, lunch and launch of the revitalised building, marking the end of the roof project and the beginnings of a new chapter in sharing the church’s heritage with the city and its visitors. Appropriately, it was also Advent Sunday so the beginning of a new Church year too.



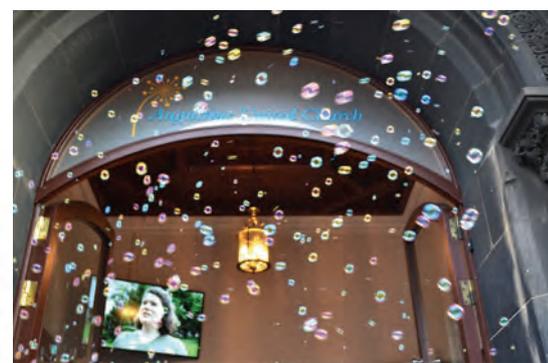
After tucking into the fantastic celebratory spread, the assembled guests were treated to speeches from our Minister and Ian Rathjen – as two of the minds behind the ABC group which steered the fundraising – and Councillor Karen Doran, one of the councillors for this ward.

We were reminded throughout of the importance not just of the richness of Augustine’s heritage\* – as deep and fruitful as that has been – but also of the importance of the community’s future. As Fiona said, God travels ahead of us and with each step on AUC’s journey we reach a brow of the hill and find ourselves already striving for the next stop.

All of those gathered for the thoroughly enjoyed the chance to stop, admire and appreciate all the work that had gone before, taking time to pause and reflect on the journey. But even as we paused discussions turned to the future and the community’s hopes and aspirations for the church. Knowing that there remains fundraising to be done to ensure we and building remain as ‘future-proof’ as possible, we look forward to the journey ahead!

**Eilidh Carmichael**

\*(see ‘Beautiful People’, Seeds Remembrance 2016 cover)



People arrived to find Augustine adorned with ribbons, and blowing bubbles out onto the street, and were serenaded by John Miller on the pipes



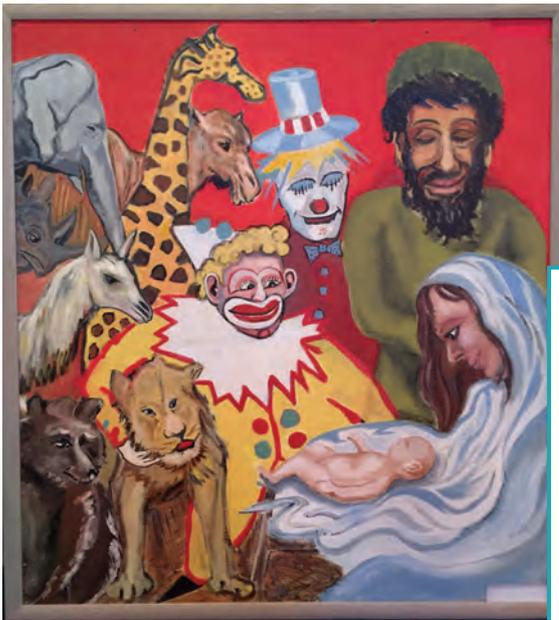
Recycling AUC-style? The slates may no longer have been able to keep our building dry, but that doesn't mean they're without their uses.

...and all the 'piece of history table decorations' were later snapped up to raise further funds to keep our refurbished building maintained.

Some of the new display boards in the vestibule, outlining both our history, who we are now, and our vision.



Our tower has been compared to a Bride's Cake so...



'The Circus came to Bethlehem'

Painted by Charles Somerville, one of our members, for his then 7-year old daughter who suggested that baby Jesus would like to see the clowns from the circus. This picture now hangs in the Sanctuary, and features on this year's AUC Christmas card.



We would like to thank everyone for who joined us and contributed to the atmosphere and togetherness. Although this project has involved much work on the material of our church building, it is not forgotten that:

"The Church is not a building, the Church is not a steeple. The Church is not a resting-place, the Church is a people."  
(CH4, 204. CCLI 1133487)



Through people's generous donations at the Advent cabaret and throughout the day, craft stall and Christmas cards sales...and of course the old roof slates, we raised just over £900 for our Augustine Building Challenge—Thank you!

## A Light for Aleppo

On Sunday 20th November Edinburgh Churches Together in partnership with Edinburgh Presbytery gathered at AUC to host a workshop to create an ecumenical response to the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision from the City of Edinburgh Council.

The end of the event coincided with 'A Light for Aleppo', an initiative from the Edinburgh University Chaplaincy calling for communities and individuals wherever they were to light beacons or candles at 5pm that day as signs of vigilance and hope. At Augustine in that morning's service, everyone was given a

candle and encouraged to take part. Several members did, joining people across Scotland, in at least 19 countries worldwide and in Aleppo itself.

"We want them to know that wherever they are they not forgotten, and the world is watching. When we are helpless to do much, we can answer the darkness by sending messages of light around the world." ([www.alightforaleppo.org](http://www.alightforaleppo.org) where there are also links for donations to charities working in Aleppo, such as Médecin Sans Frontières)

### Guiding Stars

Throughout the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany we are inviting people to write prayers or concerns onto stars, in the hope that God will use our prayers to guide us to new life. There will be stars which both passers-by and visitors to the building are invited to write on and hang on a tree in the foyer.

Please take time to write your prayers or concerns onto any of these stars, as we offer our prayers to God and ask that, like the star which guided to Bethlehem, so God will guide us to the new life which Christ brings.

Rev Fiona Bennett



'Guiding Stars' by Jan Richardson



### What's in a name?

The hawk-eyed amongst you will have noticed that we've renamed our meeting rooms, which each now being named after an Inner Hebridean island. (Although both the old and new names are shown on the doors just now as an aide mémoire).

In room (and island) size order:

The *Library* is now *Iona*

The *Junior Room* becomes *Mull*, and

The *Conference* Room becomes *Skye*.



**John Humphreys—  
'A man of great kindness and  
gentleness'**

It is with great sadness we let you know of the death of the Rev John LI. Humphreys, immediate past moderator of the URC Synod of Scotland. John, who retired in June 2016, died peacefully at his home on 17th November with his partner, John, and sister with him. His sudden passing followed a short illness.

John was the only person to have been moderator of two URC synods, having served in Wales from 1989 to 2001, as well as in Scotland.

The Rev John Proctor, the General Secretary of the URC said: "Few of our URC people can have been more widely liked and respected. He was a man of great kindness and gentleness – wise, purposeful, caring, and deeply committed to our Church and its people."

The Rev David Pickering, Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland, said: "Nothing was too much trouble for John. He was generous with his insights in preparing me for my ministry and I was privileged to receive from his fount of pastoral wisdom."

A private funeral was held at the end of November. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at St John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh on Tuesday 13th December 2016 at 2pm.

## *Service of the Longest Night*

*Sunday 18th December 2pm*

Amidst the parties and tinsel, Christmas can be a stark reminder of absent loved ones and a hard time of year. The Service of Longest Night offers gentle reflective space to acknowledge and honour those we miss at Christmas, and to seek God's light of comfort.

All are very welcome. Do come and join us for this short candlelit time together.

## *Pastoral Care*

If you have prayer requests or would like to contact a minister, please contact:

Rev Fiona Bennett (minister.auc@gmail.com)  
Rev Maxwell Reay  
(revmaxwell.auc@gmail.com)

Requests can also be made via the Prayer Requests box in the porch (kept locked, accessed by the ministers) or via the Church Office.

If you would like support due to a mental health issue, you would be welcome at the Mental Health Drop-in, held weekly on Tuesdays 10.30am-Noon in the Sanctuary (followed by a Time for Reflection). This is hosted by AUC and run by the NHS Lothian Spiritual Care team. Further details are available on the 'Tenants and Room Users' noticeboard, or speak to Maxwell.

(Full contact details for Fiona/Maxwell are on the cover of Seeds)

## *Pet Blessing*

In October, Greyfriars Kirk hosted a Pet Blessing service. I was delighted to attend with my Mum and cockapoo, Maisie, along about 50 other dogs and cats as well as two Shetland ponies. The service included the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful, All Creatures Great and Small' and a Bible reading from Genesis about the creation of the animals. It was lovely to see the incredible bond we can have with our pets and I was grateful for the opportunity to thank God for the wonderful gift of Maisie. The blessing was followed by a pet parade around the churchyard, then refreshments for humans and pets alike.

**Nicola Robinson**



## *'Epiphany'*

***Saturday 28th January 2017  
6.45 for 7pm at AUC***

Our Tribe in January will be led by Rev Fiona Bennett and focus on the theme of Epiphany. As at every Our Tribe gathering there will be an opportunity to share communion during the evening.

***All Welcome***

*Please note there is no Our Tribe gathering in December.*



## ***URC Past Case Review***

Along with most churches in the UK, the URC is offering an invitation to address historical experiences of abuse to ensure health and justice for all. Until March 2017, the URC has an open invitation for anyone to raise concerns about the behaviour or conduct of anyone affiliated with the URC since its formation in 1972. After March 2017 concerns will of course be addressed but through a different set of processes. If you have any concerns please find out about the process from:

[www.urchurch.org.uk/past-case-review](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/past-case-review)  
or phone 020 7916 8682



## ***Helplines:***

Trauma Counselling Line Scotland: 08088 02 04 06  
(M-W 5-8pm; Th-F 9am-2pm; 24/7 answerphone;  
[www.survivorscotland.org.uk](http://www.survivorscotland.org.uk))

LGBT Support: 0300 123 2523

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

Silver Line: 0800 4 70 80 90

Rape Crisis: 8088 010 302

Breathing Space: 0800 838587

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414

## Getting to Know You

**M**y name is... Linda Harrison

**I spend my time...** part-time in England, the other part in Scotland! I moved south of the border after attending teacher training college in Dundee. After a move from Leeds to Colchester, my father said if I moved any further south I'd be in France! (My brother had already moved to Germany). My elder daughter decided to follow the trend – a year in France whilst at university and now lives in Spain. My younger daughter is a 'home bird': although keen to keep her Scottish roots, she currently works as a nurse near Cambridge.

When I am not engrossed in the Virtual Learning Environment at a Sixth Form College, I enjoy attending conferences and events that help me to grow as a progressive Christian. I am a member of PCN (Progressive Christianity Network), and organise the conferences for Free to Believe, "an informal network of liberally minded Christians striving for an open, inclusive and thinking church, which is rooted in the URC".

And, if the past is a part of the mix, I have a reasonably good understanding of the URC, having served as the Eastern Synod Clerk ('the East Anglian bump' – Cambridge to Lowestoft; Holt to Southend) for six years, to the end of 2015, an experience I am happy to share.

Although I'd rather not talk about my carbon-footprint as I currently travel more than I ought to, values of ecology and striving for peace and justice for all are hugely important to me.

**My favourite place is...**Scotland, walking in the hills and being in Edinburgh (of course!). Born and brought up in the west, as I moved north of the border again my cousin said "you'll find them a much friendlier bunch". She had enjoyed living in London for a good number of years, moving back to the west of Scotland, so

she has some experience to comment on. I concur!

**My favourite hymn...**I have a problem with hymns. I love the music, but prefer that the words speak to my theology. I prefer words for corporate worship to recognise the 'we' of worship together. The hymns of Alan Gaunt, Brian Wren and Fred Kaan definitely feature; a range of traditional and some recent, such as Marty Haugen's 'All are welcome', too. I am enjoying the breadth CH4 offers over Rejoice & Sing, once a good range but dated now. I will always be moved by 'Put peace into each other's hands' (Fred Kaan, CH4 659), especially when the congregation "look people warmly in the eye".

### *Trio Écossaise Concert in aid of EMMS International*

**T**rio Écossaise, including our own Harriet Davidson on the cello, with Jennifer Brown (Clarinet) and Claire Haslin (Piano) are performing a concert on:

**Sunday 15th January  
at 2.30pm  
in Stockbridge Church.**

The programme includes music by Debussy, Finzi, Glinka, Ireland and Weber.

Entry is by donation, with tickets available on the door or in advance (speak to Harriet). All proceeds will go to support medical aid in Malawi via EMMS International (see *Remembrance 2016 Seeds cover*)

*'Health for Today, Hope for Tomorrow'*

## Reflections from Beirut

*Many AUC folk will remember Jad from the time he spent with us last year. Below we hear back from one of our 'Dandelion Seeds' (!)*

One of my earliest memories of expressing a conviction – of taking a stand that was my very own – involved my stomping on a Lebanese flag. I don't remember how it came about; all I know is that one day in 1990 or 1991, I threw a flag on the floor in the middle of our living room and proceeded to stamp and spit on it, screaming at the top of my voice. What details I miss about my motivations are compensated for by the vividness of my mother's response at the sight of me. "Bism-i-saleeb! In the name of the Cross! You've been entered by the Devil!" she exclaimed.

I remember how I stopped and stared at that red and white fabric beneath my feet, pausing to digest her serious accusation. "Is the Devil really inside me?" I asked myself. A few moments later I reached a firm conclusion: "No! I am actually angry! This is how I really feel." I'd lived through the tail-end of the Lebanese Civil War and, even as a wee bairn, I could sense what I would later learn more directly: flags, anthems and nation states are symbols that evoke contradictory emotions, to say the least.

I write these words on the day after Christ the King Sunday, and one day before Lebanon's Independence Day. Tomorrow, this young republic of ours turns 73. There are flags and political slogans throughout the capital, but not quite as many soldiers and military vehicles lining the streets as there had been on Sunday, when the armed forces seemed to be rehearsing for tomorrow's massive parade.

This will be our first proper celebration of Independence Day in two years, with all the pomp and circumstance one would expect from a national holiday. We've finally filled our vacant presidential seat after much horse-trading, bluff-calling and back-peddling among our various political factions. This is a big deal for investors, we are told, but also, for the Christians among us, in this mixed-faith society.

Ours is the only Christian head of state, we are often reminded, and the Christian presence in this embattled region – this place we call a "mosaic" on good days, and "fragmented" on the bad – has been made much more secure now with a strong, war-time figure on the seat of symbolic power. For many, this administration means we have finally put the Civil War behind us. For others, the wounds are rapidly being re-opened.

I'll admit that I'd never heard of the Feast of Christ the King before this year, but I looked forward to the sermon I'd hear on Sunday. It was to be at the only Anglican church in Beirut. The service was to be presided over by the Bishop of Jerusalem with several priests and canons from Jordan and the Holy Lands. I wondered what they would have to say about Christ's Kingship in this country, as servants of the very land in which He was enthroned -- this holy land scarred by the violence of Empires for millennia.

Alas, the sermon was forgettable, but I was not disappointed. I had already been given the opportunity, as I made my way to church, to reflect on what it actually meant to confess Christ as *King*. It was a hectic morning, and I was running late and growing increasingly grumpy as I walked past soldier after soldier, through street after street. One of them, slouched on a car, eventually called to me, saying: "Show me your ID, and unbutton your jacket." Annoyance fell off my tongue faster than my fingers could fiddle with my wallet, and my anger rose with every annoying comment he made:

"So you're stopping every guy you see?" I spat. "No, not everyone," he oozed.

"Oh, so just people who look like me," I barked.

Every single brush with authority in every single city I've ever lived in seemed to collide into one angry moment, and very quickly the soldier



## Enjoying TLS Lite— Getting to grips with the Bible

With the URC enthusiasm for acronyms we need to explain what TLS is about. Training for Learning and Serving is a programme of training courses some of which need several years of commitment and can be studied to diploma level. LITE, Local Introductory Training Experience, was designed to equip people for leading worship at a local level but is available to people who simply want to enhance their own understanding.

This autumn a small group of us from Augustine and other churches studied the 'Getting to grips with the Bible' course under the leadership and guidance of Trevor Jamison and Nicola Robinson. Our group fluctuated in number between 6 and 10 and met for five evenings and one Saturday session to follow a course designed to gain or refresh our basic knowledge of the Bible and how it came to be.

Necessarily, when there are only 6 sessions, we covered the structure of the Bible, history, language and literature, analysis and Authority at pace but it was a great overview.

Our group was extremely varied in age, knowledge and approach to Scripture; the combination was very successful in enabling people to learn, question and debate without inhibition but with much humour. We all laughed a lot and, we think, learned a lot!

Grateful thanks to Trevor and Nicola for their insightful and gracious leadership. We would certainly do another of these courses if it becomes available and would strongly recommend 'Getting to grips with the Bible' to anyone wishing to better know the Bible.

**Tom & Susan Murray**

**<10** lost his temper: "Respect my uniform," he yelled, and my mind was already preparing a retort when he went on to say: "I'm here for you, not me, and my father thinks the world of me, so I don't need to take your disrespect..."

I fell silent as he continued to vent his frustrations with me. I caught a northern Lebanese accent in his voice, and my mind flashed images of a Tripolitan father proudly sending his boy to serve this country that gave us so little. In my silence, I realised that my disappointment with the flag his son had pledged to serve was only half the story. I saw myself reflected quite starkly in this young man's eyes, standing there defiantly, in my smart blazer, with my smart ideas and smart Alec retorts, on my way to church.

When he was done, all I could muster up by way of reply was: "I've gone quiet."

I thought about telling the soldier how difficult it was for me to respect his uniform and his flag –

any uniform and any flag – but as I walked away and let his righteous indignation sink in and calm mine down, I began to see through the regalia and ostentation, and recognise the Image of God we both carried inside of ourselves.

God's love and mercy is imprinted in our hearts, and in our rage and frustration with injustices big and small, we express something of our deepest, God-given nature as human beings. And yet, it is only through Christ that we can learn what it means to be truly loving and merciful, to empty and give of ourselves to God and His creation. This is what Christ's Kingdom ultimately means to me: not political leaders with Christian names, nor armies and militias that "conquer in His sign," but a simple pledge of allegiance that confesses Christ as sovereign over my heart.

That's all: one broken heart in healing fellowship with many others, all of us together set equally free.

**Jad Baaklini**



## *Your Treasurer Needs You*

**Y**ou may remember that during and after the service on Covenant Sunday I talked about the need to get more people involved in the running of the congregation. There is general agreement that it is just not healthy to have so many day-to-day tasks reliant on just a few Office Bearers. This situation is not good for the congregation as knowledge and skills become confined to the few and, of course, it is not good for the Office Bearers.

As a hopeful start we have had two generous offers to help with the counting, recording and banking of the Sunday morning collections. This job requires some care, time and little more financial skill than the normal processes of living. This sort of job is made ever less onerous as more people are prepared to give some time to it.

We will be doing some training and practice sessions in December or January which are intended to be light-hearted and not at all difficult.

*Do you feel you could give some time on a number of Sundays a year?*

If you are, Tom Murray will be delighted to hear from you.

**Tom Murray**



## *Election of Elders to Church Council*

**E**lders elections will be being held at our Church Business Meeting on Sunday December 11th.

Two elders are due to step down this year by rotation – Stephen Hoare and Lorna Bowry. Stephen has served two terms but is willing to stand again if nominated. Lorna will not be standing again due to her forthcoming move to be with Becca in Maryland, USA.

Robert Somerville wishes to retire as a serving Elder at the end of this year. Robert has to be thanked for his many years of wonderful service to AUC as an Elder, Church Secretary, Church President, and even for a while Church Treasurer!

Thus three elders are required for the Church Council—2 to serve 3 years, and 1 to serve 1 year (the remainder of Robert's term).

Nominations should be submitted to the Church Secretary, Kathleen Ziffo, **at least 3** days prior to the meeting. The nominations must be on paper, including the nominator's and seconder's signatures, and be made with the nominee's permission.

The Minister, Elders and Office Bearers are now also Trustees of Augustine; and as AUC is a registered charity must be able to meet the Scottish Charity Regulators guidelines for Trustees. Further details are available from Kathleen.

**Kathleen Ziffo**

# AUGUSTINE ASSIGNMENTS

For those of you who don't know, Augustine Assignments is a youth group that takes place at AUC on the first and third Saturday of each month. Normally we either bake or do art assignments and then discuss the impact this can have upon the church and the relations between the church, culture and other things.

Some of the activities we've done have included making 'no knead bread' and vegan scones. When we do art assignments, it's a set of challenges to do with the work of an artist or artists. This has included looking at art that is based on a number which has a level of significance to the person. On this week, the final items included a measurement of height using Pepsi max bottles and a set of significant events at each age that was a prime number. We have also taken newspaper and magazine clippings and turned them into 'fake flyers'. The idea behind this was that we could express an idea for an event which, while fictitious, we felt would be interesting and worthwhile. This was a hugely fascinating week leading to flyers for events such as a popcorn eating competition, time machine building classes (yesterday) and the slogan "God is love: you are probably observing it". Overall that week led to interesting discussion as to how we view the world and what it is that leads us to take the actions we do.

The making of the 'no knead bread' was centred around discussion to do with salt – particularly its history and the way the salt trade has shaped the world and brought together people and cultures. We also discussed how as Christians we should be able to meet new people and, without judging them for their

choices and beliefs, be able to have a reasonable discussion – not to convince them they are wrong, merely to find common ground and to better understand others and to a lesser degree ourselves.

Augustine Assignments is a fascinating place where we feel able to express ourselves as who we are. It is hugely enjoyable and I am looking forward to the sessions and discussions that will happen in the coming weeks and months.

Joshua Undy-Jamison



# December/January—Advent and Christmas

In the Seasons of Advent and Christmas, things will be busy—but we can still make time for reflection and thinking too.

We will:

- Join in some Advent Making to decorate the church Christmas Tree
- Prepare our Nativity for the All-Age Worship Service on 11th December—All will be revealed soon!
- Hear a Godly Play story called 'The Holy Family' and share a Feast together afterwards



The present-making beginning. Sshh! Don't tell anyone what they are yet—they're being delivered to housebound members of Augustine with this copy of Seeds.



"In their language they were called the Magi, and that word is the word from which we get our word *magic*. They knew so much that people thought they were magic. And of all the things they knew, they knew most about the stars"

(Words from 'The Complete Guide to Godly Play Volume 3'. Image from [www.godlyplayresources.com](http://www.godlyplayresources.com)).

After some Christmas-themed activities during the holidays, in January we move on to a new theme "**The Beatitudes**". This name comes from the Latin word '*beatus*' meaning 'blessed'. Come and learn what Jesus was teaching in blessings he offered people.

*Junior Church welcomes families in all their wonderful diversity. We do our best to offer a safe and nurturing space for families and their friends. We have varied activities each week, from storytelling, to crafts, games and video making. We have a crèche for little ones and baby changing facilities are available. We use materials to appeal to children's different learning styles using the PowerXpress curriculum, and also use Godly Play ([www.godlyplay.org.uk](http://www.godlyplay.org.uk)).*

*Children at Augustine are welcome to receive communion and to fully participate in the life of the church. Children regularly help during services, and sometimes serve communion to the wider church community.*

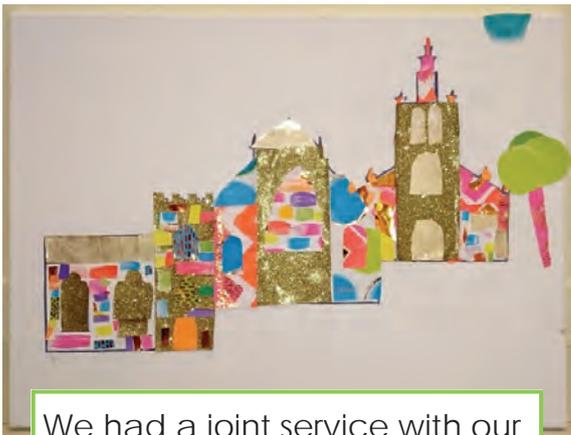
*Please feel free to contact us using the details on p.2 of Seeds if you have any questions.*



Saturday 28th	6.45pm for 7pm	Our Tribe (see p.8)
Sunday 29th	11am	Morning Worship for Poverty and Homelessness Sunday, with Cake Stall in aid of Scottish Churches Housing Action
	1-3pm	Communications Review
Monday 30th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Bring and Buy Sale
Tuesday 31st	7.30pm	Book Group: Inclusive Church – Ethnicity (2)
<b>February 2017</b>		<b>Season of Wellbeing</b>
Saturday 4th	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
Sunday 5th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
Monday 6th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Bertha Walker – Handbags
Tuesday 7th	7.30pm	Church Council Training
Sunday 12th	11am	Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Church Discussion Meeting: Introduction to Mindfulness
Monday 13th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Springwell House Choir
Tuesday 14th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: Titus 3 "Quarrels"
Saturday 18th	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
Sunday 19th	11am	TLC Service and Communion at St Columba's by the Castle

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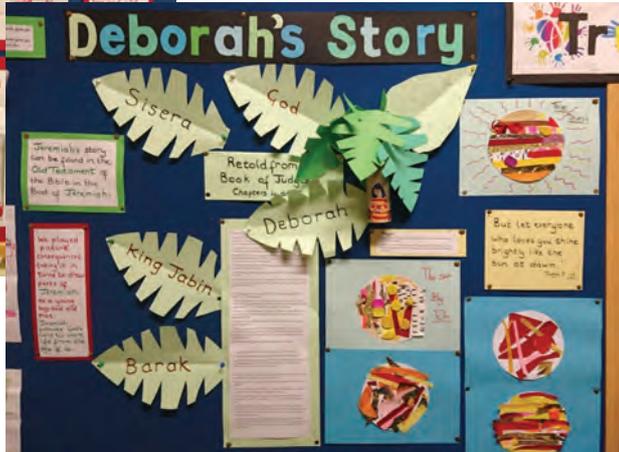
*Do you remember these activities from October and November?*



We had a joint service with our friends from Greyfriars Kirk and St Columba's by the Castle. We made a collage showing all three of our partner churches.



We learned about Jeremiah and Deborah, who were both chosen by God to pass on messages to God's people. Jeremiah was only a young boy, but he trusted God and persevered, keeping telling God's message until people listened and acted.



Please note that the deadline for material for the next issue is Friday 27th January 2017.

You can send your material to [newsletter.auc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.auc@gmail.com) or via the church office.

*DISCLAIMER: Although we check all information in the newsletter, as ever with these things we can give no warranties as to accuracy or relevance and encourage active checking before you make any decisions. The views expressed in our newsletter are those of the individual contributor, they are not necessarily those of AUC or the editor.*

# Calendar

AUC Worship Services at 11am on Sundays at AUC,  
George IV Bridge.

(All events at AUC, unless otherwise stated. Later  
updates on website/notice sheet)

December 2016		Season of Advent
Thursday 1st	10am-Noon	Walk and Talk leaving from AUC
	1.30-3pm	Coffee Cake and Conversation (Christmas Quiz and Board Games)
	4-6.30pm	Christian Aid Christmas Mince Pies and Chat. An informal evening to thank supporters, in Christian Aid office at AUC. RSVP to Mary Mulligan
Friday 2nd	7pm	Ceilidh and Bring & Share Supper for St Andrew's-tide at St Columba's by the Castle
Saturday 3rd	10am-3pm	Christmas Fair at the Grassmarket Community Project
	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group) (see p.13)
Sunday 4th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, led by Nicola Robinson with co-celebrant Rev Fiona Bennett
	12.30-1.30pm	Church Lunch, with Advent Making Activities and Amnesty International Letter Writing
Monday 5th	10-4pm	Advent Doors Open Day at AUC
	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 6th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: Matthew 1 "A Long Story"
Wednesday 7th	7pm	Charteris Centre Community Christmas Concert. At the centre (previously Kirk O'Field, 138/140 Pleasance)
Thursday 8th	10am-Noon	Walk and Talk, leaving from AUC
Sunday 11th	11am	All-Age Morning Worship with Junior Church Nativity. Gift Service (see p.3)
	12.30pm	Church Business Meeting, including Election of Elders (see p.12)
Tuesday 13th	2pm	Memorial Service for Revd. John Humphreys at St John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street (see p.7)
Thursday 15th	10am-Noon	Walk and Talk, leaving from AUC
Saturday 17th	9am-1pm	Christian Aid Carol Singing at Castle Terrace Farmers' Market with St Columba's by the Castle
	2pm-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
Sunday 18th	11am	Morning Worship
	2pm	Service of the Longest Night (see p.7)
	6-8.30pm	Greyfriars Kirk Christmas Ceilidh. Proceeds to Project Elpis (see p.3)
Thursday 22nd	10am-Noon	Walk and Talk, leaving from AUC
		<b>Season of Christmas</b>
Sunday 25th	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Worship, followed by refreshments
Thursday 29th	10am	Walk and Talk, leaving from AUC
	6pm onwards	Carol Singing at Anne Mackenzie's home
<b>January 2017</b>		
Sunday 1st	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
		Season of Epiphany
Sunday 8th	11am	Morning Worship
Monday 9th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: George Banks
Tuesday 10th	7.30pm	Church Council Meeting
Sunday 15th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, Ordination and Induction of New Elders
	12.30pm	Church Business Meeting
Monday 16th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Currie Singers
Tuesday 17th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: Matthew 5: "Values"
Sunday 22nd	11am	Morning Worship, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
	12.30pm	Burns Lunch and Entertainment
Monday 23rd	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Church of Scotland speaker
Tuesday 24th	7.30pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Thursday 26th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation