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The Dynamic Dance of God, By Rev Fiona Bennett

The Fringe Festival is over and once again we head into September and the season of Creationtide. This is a season initiated by the Orthodox Church and now marked by denominations across the world, where our worship heightens our awareness of the wonder of the planet and humanity's relationship with it.

Creationtide was set at this time of year because it leads into St Francis Day on the 4th October, and Francis has a popular reputation for being a great friend of animals.

Francis and his sister Clare both lived in Assisi, Italy at the turn of the 13th century. Both were mystic in their faith and both founded religious orders which were rooted in a lifestyle of poverty.

To say Francis "loved animals" may have been true but this was part of a much bigger love for all of life. Francis had a strong sense of God being in Trinity, which implied that

relationships were not just something God did or had, but were part of who God is. God is not a static being but God's very being and nature is like a dance of partners.

The whole of Creation (from deep space to the core of earth) reflected the interactive image of God – the image of the dynamic, in relationship God. It was not just humanity who was made in the image of God, but the whole of Creation.

I find this a profoundly helpful model for today. It implies that the calling on humanity to live out the image of God within us does not just mean we need to look after the planet. It implies that we need to awaken to the reality that living out God's image is seeing ourselves as only one part of Creation in dynamic relationship with everything else. Just as relationships are part of who God is, so relationships are who/what Creation is. To live out God's image, and find the fulfilment

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

Peace & Justice

(Commitment for Life)

Harriet Davidson

harrietdavidson@hotmail.com

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

Fiona Somerville

rota.auc@gmail.com

Local Community

Volunteering

Della Morris

dellagreenlanes@gmail.com

< 1 this brings, means forming and sustain good active relationships (dance techniques!) with the earth, air, water, plants, stars, animals and even, dare I suggest, other humans!

So the questions to ask ourselves this Creationtide are:

- What make good, healthy, respectful, dynamic relationships?
- How can I /we improve my/our relationships with the sea, soil, air, energy?
- How can I improve my relationships with other people?
- How can I be a kinder partner, friend and participant in the dynamic dance of life?

Wedding Bells!



Catherine Somerville was married to Neil Henry at Heriot Kirk in the Scottish Borders on Saturday 19th August in a beautiful service conducted by Fiona. The service was followed by two days of festivities at Carcant. Catherine was baptised in Augustine, was an active member of the junior church along with her sister Anne and brother Ian. Aside from being our younger daughter, some members of the congregation will remember her growing up in the church. More recently, others will know her through her work at Stonewall and being a passionate advocate for inclusivity. After she returns from her honeymoon, she will be starting a new job with the Scottish Government.

Fiona Somerville

Inclusive Christian Theology

Drawing on writing by Marcus Borg, these 3 sessions will explore some key topics in Christian Theology offering us fresh ways to understand their gifts for our lives and world.

Sunday 17th Sep 5-6.30pm: What is faith? Who was Jesus?

Sunday 24th Sep 5-6.30pm: What can theologies of the Cross & Atonement offer us today?

Sunday 1st Oct 5-6.30pm: What can theologies of Sin & Salvation offer us today?

The purpose of this series is not to offer definitive answers, but to work with each other to come to a clearer understanding of these theologies and the insight they offer. There is preparatory reading for each week and pre-course registration is essential.

To register, please email Fiona Bennett (minister.auc@gmail.com) by Sunday 10th Sep.

You are cordially invited to a
Fundraising Afternoon Tea for AUC and MacMillan Cancer Support:

Conversation and Tasty Treats

On

Sunday 24th September

2.30pm onwards

At 27 Fountain Place,
Loanhead

Donations welcome

Hope to see you there,

Sheila Storrier



**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

our tribe

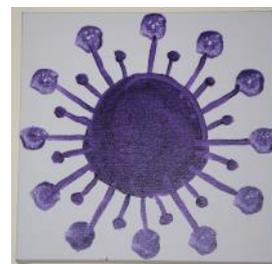


From Saturday Nights to Sunday Afternoons

Our Tribe are shaking things up in the coming months, moving from their usual last Saturday of the month slot to hosting Sunday Afternoon Socials.

The next few are scheduled for the 1st October, 5th November and 3rd December.

Augustine Assignments



Matt Baines is joining the small but perfectly formed team leading Augustine Assignments, the youth group here at AUC.

Next Meeting

Saturday 28th October

Alexander (Simon) Peterson

02/06/1979 – 22/07/2017



Alexander (Simon) Peterson died on Saturday 22nd July – aged 38. Alexander's life journey was one of adventure. He experienced the ups and downs of life. He went through some really tough and challenging times. He had some amazingly wonderful and joyful times.

Alexander's mental health was not always as he would have like it and he often struggled with accepting he was OK. He encountered prejudice and stigma in many places relating to his mental health and to his gender journey. And this had a significant impact on his wellbeing.

I first met Alexander in 2012 when he wanted to explore his faith in relation to his gender transition and ultimately find a new spiritual home; a place where his transition would be accepted and affirmed, having experienced hostility in the church he came out in earlier in the year. Being accepted as a gay trans man was not always easy from Alexander. He had so often experienced rejection and in some ways rejection was easier for him to deal with.

Through reading, study and discussion, Alexander genuinely understood the theology and theory about being truly affirmed and accepted by God – just for being himself –

but found the practice of acceptance trickier. He did sometimes struggle just to let himself be.

However, he realised that to be baptised with friends present was a way he could publicly share his joy in having discovered his own true self. He was so proud to publicly witness that being transgendered was indeed a gift from God. On Sunday 27th January 2013, Jo Clifford and I had the privilege of baptising Alexander (pictured).

Alexander later became a member of Augustine United, he served on The Our Tribe team, he regularly attended mid-week bible studies and book groups. He also regularly led the spiritual discussions after the NHS mental health Tuesday drop in and volunteered at LGBT Health in their gardening team.

In many ways, he had found his place in a community of likeminded folks and this was his home.

Throughout all of this Alexander continued to be challenged by his mental health struggles and his relationships with folks were sometimes affected by his experience. But no matter how long or how short a time we knew him, he made an impact on our lives that will not be forgotten. I ask you to remember him as he would have wanted – true to the different ways we knew him.

Rev Maxwell Reay



Walking on Water(y sand) to Lindisfarne



JG offers a reflection following the Local Church Together Annual Pilgrimage.



The 13th of August was a beautiful day for a trip to Lindisfarne, though a little cooler than before. The main difference from our last trip to the Holy Isle (other than it being with a slightly different set of church family & friends) was the opportunity to walk the Pilgrim's way, across the sand at low tide.

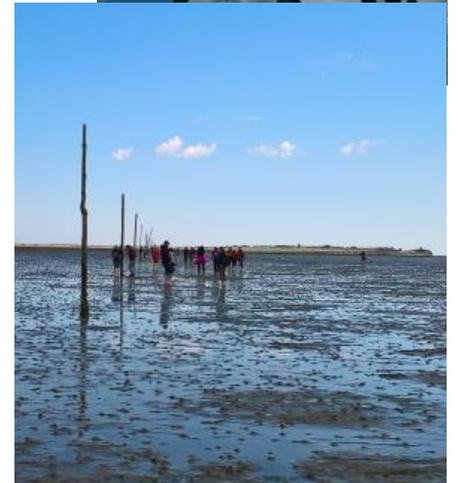
"You're going to get your feet wet", we were told. It was lovely to walk across the wet sand barefoot, and gaze at the vast open expanse of sea and sky around us. I enjoyed all the wet, squelchy, muddy, indeterminate-piece-of-seaweed aspects, though the idea of sinking sand and mud that sucks you down is something I would never want to risk. Luckily there were marker posts to guide our way.

This got me thinking: if you started on one shore and fixed your eyes at the exact correct point on the far shore, and walked straight without taking your eyes off the destination, maybe you would get there safely, though you would not enjoy the view. It was quickly clear that if you want to avoid puddles, or enjoy jumping in them, or avoid calf-deep mud, or seek it out, or climb the refuges, or look at your companions on the way, or help others who want help not to slip on the boggy sections... then for all these

reasons – distractions, enjoyment, just being – your eyes would be off the destination...

It made me think therefore how much the markers matter; how much they help us to enjoy the journey, even when our eyes are not on the destination. But it is the view, and the being, the people and the earth which were really special...that the markers free us to enjoy.

I didn't think this through a lot at the time, mainly now for something to write. At the time I enjoyed all the sensory aspects of the trip. It was lovely to be.



Pictures from top to bottom: we gather for our afternoon service; one of the refuges on the walk for those stranded by tides; our walkers setting out for Lindisfarne

LGBT Space at Royal Edinburgh Hospital

A space for LGBT+ people accessing mental health services

Drop by for tea & coffee, chat with other lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Delivered by Maxwell Reay, NHS Mental Health Community Chaplain & Alison Wren, LGBT Health and Wellbeing.



Third Friday of the month, 1-3pm

2017: Friday 21st April, 19th May, 16th June, 21st July, 18th August, 15th September, 20th October, 17th November, 15th December
2018: 19th January, 16th February, 16th March

Library, Mackinnon House, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Terrace, EH10 5HF

✉ alison@lgbthealth.org.uk ☎ 0131 652 3283

☎ Maxwell: 0131 537 6734



Helplines:

Trauma Counselling Line Scotland:
08088 02 04 06

(M-W 5-8pm; Th-F 9am-2pm; or answer-phone; 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

Pastoral Care

"...bearing with one another in love..."
(Ephesians 4:2)

At AUC, we aim to provide a web of care which promotes growth in relationships and good spiritual/mental health, through both informal and formal contacts.

If you are looking for individual support please contact a minister:

Rev Fiona Bennett (minister.auc@gmail.com)

Rev Maxwell Reay (revmaxwell.auc@gmail.com)

As well as offering 1:1 support in the setting which is most appropriate for you, they can link you with the pastoral visiting team which offers regular support to the housebound.

Prayer requests are welcomed. They can be shared with the ministers either directly or via Rachel in 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-12pm 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 and the office are on the cover of Seeds)

Beginning and Belonging

Welcome to the start of the Junior Church year and our new annual theme – “Beginning and Belonging – Stories of Faith and Life”. We will work through this theme from various angles (craft, food, games, science, Godly Play...) each week. There should be something for everyone!

Our first module for September is Creation and this fits with the focus of Augustine on the season of ‘Creationtide’.

We will begin with a Godly Play story called the Creation and share a Feast together afterwards;

We’ll be sharing in some music, so wait for Noisy Church to happen – you will ‘hear all about it’!

We’ll be enjoying some active games to following week; and the month ends with an All Age Harvest worship.



*****Up next month... “Noah the Rainbow Promise” – see October Seedlings for more info! *****

“On the seventh day God rested and gave us the gift of a day to rest – and to remember the great gifts of the other days...people go to different places to remember the great gifts....I don’t know where your place is. Only you know.”

Words from Volume 2 of The Complete Guide to Godly Play by Jerome Berryman. Image from www.godlyplayresources.com

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).

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.



Happy Birthday

Miriam who will be 3 on the 14th
& **Joseph** who will be 5 on the 26th

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)

September		Season of Creationtide
Sunday 3 rd	11am	Morning Worship and Communion
	12.45pm	Church Business Meeting
Tuesday 5 th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: Psalm 103 'Bless the Lord'
Sunday 10 th	11am	Morning Worship, with Rev David Pickering, Moderator of the Synod of Scotland and including Noisy Church
	3-5pm	Service for those affected by suicide
Tuesday 12 th	1-3pm	Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival (SMHAFF) Workshop 1
Thursday 14 th	1-3pm	SMHAFF Workshop 2
Saturday 16 th	10am-4pm	Synod of Scotland in Paisley Oakshaw Church
Sunday 17 th	11am	Morning Worship, including welcoming new members
	5-6.30pm	An Exploration of Christian Theology for Today Session 1 see p.3
Tuesday 19 th	12.15-4.15pm	SMHAFF Workshop 3
	7.30pm	Spirituality Book Group: 'Living the Question'
Thursday 21 st	12.15-4.15pm	SMHAFF Workshop 4
Friday 22 nd	10am-3pm	SMHAFF Workshop 5
Sunday 24 th	11am	Morning Worship
	2.30-4.30	Fundraising Afternoon Tea, see p.3
	5-6.30pm	An Exploration of Christian Theology for Today Session 2
Tuesday 26 th	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Wednesday 27 th	6.15pm	Edinburgh Eco-Congregation Good Food and Meal at Craigsbank Parish Church, Corstorphine. (RSVP to Church Secretary)
Thursday 28 th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
October		
Sunday 1 st	11am	All-Age Harvest Worship and Communion, with donations for Christian Aid
	12.45pm	Harvest Lunch
	2.30pm	Our Tribe Afternoon Social
	5.30-6pm	An Exploration of Christian Theology for Today Session 3

Please note the deadline for material for the October issue is Friday 22nd September.

You can send your material to 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.