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## *Ecumenism - Dead or Prophetic? By Rev Fiona Bennett*

As far as I understand, back in 1972 when the URC was born there were both visionary and pragmatic forces at work.

The pragmatic forces were that in England and Wales the theology and nature of the Congregational & Presbyterian Churches could be seen to be very close and at the same time the numbers and organisational life of the denominations were time limited. The visionary force was an understanding that Christ calls the Church to be One, and that the holding of our diverse body together is in itself a light or hope/a revelation of the Realm of God to the whole world.

The Vision of 1972 was that in 40 years (a good Biblical number!) all the Reformed Churches in the UK would be part of one organisation, which held diversity within it. In 1986 the Churches of Christ joined in with this vision

and in 2000 the Scottish Congregational Church.

2012 (40 years) came and went. Now in 2019 it can seem that in this age with institutional decline (for the Church and other institutions) many denominations are not moving toward greater organic unity, but retreating into our corners to map out our own plans for survival. So is the whole notion of Ecumenism dead?

The Living the Questions Discussion group in March listened to Bishop Yvette Flunder of the UCC speaking about a new Pentecost which she believes is on its way. Like the first Pentecost, which drew together people from every race and background and birthed them into one Church, Bishop Flunder is convinced that a time is coming when Churches will be forced to set aside what divides us, to seek and work for the common

## Getting Involved

Within AUC there are 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.

### Centre, Property & Finance

**Tom Murray**

[treasurer@augustine.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@augustine.org.uk)

### Children

**Kirsty Murray**

[juniorchurch@augustine.org.uk](mailto:juniorchurch@augustine.org.uk)

### Communication

**Eilidh Carmichael**

[eilidh.carmichael@augustine.org.uk](mailto:eilidh.carmichael@augustine.org.uk)

### Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

**Rev Maxwell Reay**

[associateminister@augustine.org.uk](mailto:associateminister@augustine.org.uk)

### Peace & Justice

**Harriet Davidson**

[harriet.davidson@augustine.org.uk](mailto:harriet.davidson@augustine.org.uk)

### Pastoral & Mental Health

**Anne MacKenzie**

[anne.mackenzie@augustine.org.uk](mailto:anne.mackenzie@augustine.org.uk)

### Worship

**Rev Fiona Bennett**

[minister@augustine.org.uk](mailto:minister@augustine.org.uk)

### Young People

**Matt Baines**

[matt.baines@augustine.org.uk](mailto:matt.baines@augustine.org.uk)

To get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

### AUC Volunteering

**Fiona Somerville**

[rota@augustine.org.uk](mailto:rota@augustine.org.uk)

### Local Community Volunteering

**Della Morris**

[della.morris@augustine.org.uk](mailto:della.morris@augustine.org.uk)

<1 denominators.

Bishop Flunder spoke about visiting people in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and commented that disaster often focuses the mind to set aside what used to matter in order to focus on what really matters. She said: "When your house is under water, it really does not matter if your handbag matches your shoes, what matters is your children are missing."

What are the common denominators revealed just this past month in Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Christ Church New Zealand?

Is there a new Pentecost coming which drives a different type of ecumenism? An ecumenism which is driven not by denominational competitiveness but by the survival of human life on our planet? Is the new Pentecost a movement of the Spirit to burn away the deeply held identities and beliefs which divide us from other Christians and peoples of other faiths, and refine us down to focus on what really matters?

If as people of faith we can lose our grip on the fight for our denominational survivals, then perhaps we can begin to live Christ's vision of God's Children (of all faiths) held together in one diverse and messy (but healthy) body, and live out an ecumenism which truly will be to the whole world a prophetic (and pragmatic) vision of hope.

To mark International Women's Day last month, the University of Edinburgh chose to rename the boardroom of Argyle House after a much loved and active elder in AUC, Brenda Moon.

Brenda was the first woman to head up a research university library when she was librarian at the University in the 1980s and 90s. She played a major role in bringing the University into the digital age, as Edinburgh became the first major university library in the UK to tackle and deliver a computer-based service.



### Easter Egg collection for Streetwork

We are gathering chocolate Easter eggs for Streetwork to hand out on Easter Sunday to folk who find themselves rough sleeping at the time. If you would like to donate an egg or two please bring them to AUC for collection on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> April.

## *Cyclone Idai Appeal*

**A**n estimated 3 million people have been affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

At least 750 people have been killed and some 400,000 have lost their homes, with this devastating toll expected to rise in the coming days.

Those affected – especially those in remote areas – are in desperate need of food, water, clothing, shelter and medicine.

Christian Aid is acting as part of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) to raise urgent funds. If you are able please consider a donation to the Cyclone Idai Appeal. You can find out more: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/cyclone-idai-appeal>



### *A prayer for those affected*

**S**helter in the storm,  
light in the darkness,  
hope even in a living hell,  
God be with our sisters and brothers  
in Mozambique,  
in Malawi,  
in Zimbabwe.  
Behind the numbing numbers are the names  
of loved ones.  
Behind the staggering statistics are life stories  
still to be told.  
God, help us be with our sisters and brothers –  
gather us close so we open our spirits and  
share.  
Your world is our global neighbourhood.  
Help us forge the rain-driven path together,  
for only together can we weather the storms.

## *Safeguarding Training 2019*

**Please note the change of date!**

**Thurs 6<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30-9.30pm**

**Sun 9<sup>th</sup> June: 1.30-3.00pm**

**I**f you had previously booked to attend the session on Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> June, please contact Ivy ([ivg.ng@augustine.org.uk](mailto:ivg.ng@augustine.org.uk)) and let her know your preference now.

As a reminder, this training is for all Junior Church leaders, creche helpers, TLC Youth Group leaders and helpers, Home and Hospital Team members, Elders and volunteers who obtained PVG membership through AUC.

Refreshments to be provided before the training.

## *Pastoral Care*

*“...bearing with one another in love...”*

*(Ephesians 4:2)*

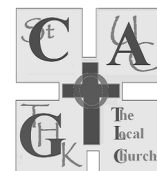
**A**t AUC, we aim to provide a web of care which promotes growth in relationships and good spiritual/mental health, through both informal and formal contacts. If you are looking for individual support please contact a minister: **Rev Fiona Bennett** ([minister@augustine.org.uk](mailto:minister@augustine.org.uk)) or **Rev Maxwell Reay** ([associateminister@augustine.org.uk](mailto:associateminister@augustine.org.uk)). 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 directly 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-12pm in the Sanctuary. This is hosted by AUC and run by the NHS Lothian Spiritual Care team. Further details available through Maxwell.





## The Local Church (TLC)



**T**LC refers to three churches in our neighbourhood who have similar, relatively progressive stands on theology and are inclusive of people of many different 'varieties'. The three are: **Augustine** (United Reformed Church), **Greyfriars Kirk** (Church of Scotland) and **St Columba's by the Castle** (Scottish Episcopal Church). We covenanted together in 1998 to try to do as much as possible together by way of Christian action in the community, even though we enjoy our own individual styles of worship.

At recent meetings of the TLC Steering Group (which meets three times a year and has two or three representatives from each of the churches as well as their Ministers) there was discussion about whether we are doing as much working together as we should; and it became apparent that people are really not aware of what the other churches are already doing. In an effort to keep everyone better informed, we thought that we might submit articles about some of the other church community outreach activities. These will be appearing from time-to-time in Seeds.

The Grassmarket Community Project (now a charity in its own right - and winner of the award for Social Enterprise of the Year!) started existence many years ago in what was Greyfriars' Kirkhouse. Feeding of homeless people was run on different evenings by Greyfriars Guild Members, other helpers (which included some of us from AUC and St Columba's), by theology students living at the Grassmarket Mission and by some veterinary students as well. Over time and through various incarnations, a new multi-purpose building was produced and funding sought for a variety of activities; it became a separate charity in 2010. The activity our church folk have been most involved with is the Monday Open Meal. Nowadays, cooking the two course meals is done by the GCP chefs and we serve the food, chat to clients and clear up afterwards. There are regular haircutting and hairdressing opportunities; vets come from time-to-time to care for the animals (mainly dogs) that some clients have as companions. At 7pm nearly every Monday of the year there is now a free film show too. (Open to all!)

What else happens at this project though? There is a full programme of daytime activities, designed to help those marginalised from society. Often folk have had experience of homelessness, though extremely few are actually homeless now. The activities over six, or occasionally seven, days a week range from woodwork classes to improving basic literacy, development of IT skills, drama groups, cooking training, and sewing and tailoring skills.

Some will have seen clothes and items made in Greyfriars own tartan. In the past at AUC we have seen, or even bought, samples of some of the beautifully crafted woodwork done by Tommy Steel's recruits. Some people have gone on to employment in woodworking, or in the hospitality and catering sectors. Currently Tommy is very successfully fundraising to take a team of clients to help build a school in a remote area of Zambia this summer!

There are walking groups, some go swimming together, gardening is still continued, music and photography can be taught...and so on.

Anyone can go for help - or can volunteer, as volunteers are always needed to assist. Sometimes those seeking help in one way can be the volunteer helper in another scenario. If you'd like to know more ask Kathleen or go on-line at: [www.grassmarketcommunityproject.org](http://www.grassmarketcommunityproject.org)



## Getting to Grips with the Kitchen



In our AUC Pantry, we have green bins on the counter-top for composting used tea bags, ground coffee residue, fruit cores and peel, uncooked vegetable peelings and dead flowers. **No cooked food** should go into these bins, please. This means things like bread, biscuits, cakes, pieces of cheese and leftover sandwiches should not go in. There are now biodegradable, disposable lining bags in the bins, to allow the contents to be tied up daily pending removal for recycling. Thank you for co-operating with this.

Last September our Synod Church & Society Committee asked all local churches to ensure (as far as is possible) that we do not use **single-use plastic** drinking straws, cups, spoons, etc. This is something we were already doing. However, there were some single use plastic straws and cups in our cupboards – these have been removed and have been replaced by vegetable-ware biodegradable cups and straws and wooden spoons – all of which should be used only if we do not have china crockery and cutlery available. Afterwards these should be washed (in the dishwasher please, if possible).

I have been recently been researching a **replacement product for Cling Film!** At home and often in the church, we can cover leftover food in sealed containers, on plates covered with upturned plates or with the tops of containers which have lids. Many people are re-using ice-cream and take-away containers and margarine tubs for leftovers and we can use food containers (plastic perhaps, but not single-use) like Tupperware. However, for large trays of sandwiches it can be convenient to use cling-film (in AUC we often use clean tea towels for this) but is there another option? Please let us know if there is! (There are bees-waxed paper solutions – which are expensive to buy but which can be washed and reused. Has anyone ever done this?)

What other ways have you found to avoid using plastic, particularly single-use plastic?

Kathleen Ziffo

If you're looking for a place to explore the issues Kathleen's wrestling with above or interested in learning more about what you can do to treat our earth more kindly, we highly recommend you check out the Living Lent campaign: <https://livinglent.org/>



### Helplines:

Stand Alone: [www.standalone.org.uk](http://www.standalone.org.uk) (for those experiencing family estrangement)

LGBT Support: 0300 123 2523

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

Rape Crisis: 08088 010 302

Breathing Space: 0800 838587

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414

# TLC Youth April Outing

## 1 pm ~ Sun 14.04.19

Meet Outside Sainsburys on Middle Meadow Walk for a walk around the Meadows and into Morningside. Pick up outside The Ballroom Pool House @ 3 pm

We recommend bringing some money for a snack and drink

Any questions? Email [youth@augustine.org.uk](mailto:youth@augustine.org.uk) | Follow us on Facebook @TLCYouthandStuff

## From Good Friday to Easter Sunday with the TLC

### Good Friday | Fri 19th April 2019

**12pm-3pm Waiting at the Cross** JOINT SERVICE @ St Columba's by the Castle

A quiet and reflective service waiting with the watchers at the Cross.

Anyone is welcome to drop in for 10 minutes or stay for 3 hrs.

Everyone welcome

**9pm Tennebrae** JOINT SERVICE @ Greyfriars Kirk

Moving from light to the darkness of the tomb – reflective sung service.

Everyone welcome

### Easter Sunday

**10am**

**Celebration Service**  
with Communion



14 Johnston Terrace  
Edinburgh EH1 2PW

**11am**

**Celebration Service**  
with Communion



GREYFRIARS

*life in all its fullness / beatha na lìnachd*

Greyfriars Place  
Edinburgh EH1 2QQ

**11am**

**Celebration Service**  
with Communion &  
Junior Church



41-43 George IV Bridge  
Edinburgh EH1 1EL

## Heading into Easter

In March Junior Church were thinking about 'The Four Friends', learning about the value of friendship and exploring it over three weeks using art activities, games and cooking.



As we head into April we now move to a new module, turning our attention to the season of Easter. We will share a Godly Play story taking us through key events in the Easter story - it's called 'Faces of Easter' and afterwards we will share a Feast together.

**"God chose Mary to be the Mother of God, and the Word was born, a wordless child."**

Quote from 'The Faces of Easter' in Volume 4 of The Complete Guide to Godly Play by Jerome Berryman.

Image from [www.godlyplayresources.com](http://www.godlyplayresources.com).



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Ellie is 9 on 15<sup>th</sup> April

Rowan is 11 on 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Euan and Ozzie share a birthday. They are 11 and 4 on the 1st May!



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.



# Calendar

Worship Services at 11am on Sundays at AUC, George IV Bridge. All events at AUC, unless otherwise stated. Later updates on website/notice sheet

April		Season of Lent
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Morning Worship and Communion, led by Linda Harrison, with preacher Leslie Morrison
	12.15-1.15pm	Church Discussion Meeting – ‘Pilgrimage’ with Rev Richard Frazer
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study – Revelation 21:10 & 21: 22 – 22: 5 ‘Vision’
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	2.15-4pm	Walk & Talk
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Contextual Bible Study – Revelation 21:10 & 21: 22 – 22: 5 ‘Vision’
	11am	All Age Morning Worship for Passion Sunday, led by Fiona Bennett and others
	1-3pm	TLC Youth (see p.6)
	3-5pm	Our Tribe – The Way of Light
		Holy Week
Daily	8am	Communion Service at St Columba’s by the Castle
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	‘Living the Questions’ Session on Social Justice – Realising God’s Vision
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup>	7pm	Maundy Thursday Foot Washing Service
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup>	12-3pm	Good Friday ‘Waiting by the Cross’ at St Columba’s by the Castle
	9pm	Tennebrae at Greyfriars Kirk (with rehearsals on 14 <sup>th</sup> at 12.15pm in St C’s and on the day at 7.30pm. See Tamsin for more info)
		Season of Easter
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	11am	Easter Day Family Worship and Communion, led by Fiona Bennett and followed by coffee and cake, and an Egg Hunt for children.
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Living the Questions Session on Restoring Relationships
	11am	Eastertide Worship, led by Alex Peden and Fiona Bennett and an interview with Caitlin Wakefield of Student Christian Movement
	1-3pm	TLC Youth
May		
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Holy Habits: What is Discipleship? Reading & Discussion
	11am	Eastertide Worship and Communion led by Alex Peden and Fiona Bennett
	2-5pm	Belonging – Exploring Church Membership

Please note the deadline for material for the May issue is Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April.

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