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The Challenge to Love, By Rev Fiona Bennett

There is a whisper (perhaps even the odd Bible verse?) which suggests followers of Jesus should be loving people: loving towards God, self, others and this earth. If the greatest love is to lay down one's life for another, then love is about an intense valuing and delighting of another which leads us to seek their good even at high cost to ourselves.

Being loving is not the same as being nice; loving involves honesty, truth and humility. Loving changes us as much as it may change those we reach out to in love.

What could it mean for Brexiteers to love Remainers and vice versa? What could it mean for lesbians to love homophobes and vice versa?

The challenges found in loving are not new. The Bible is full of stories about humans wrestling to be loving individuals, communities and nations. The New Testament letters are obvious examples

of how hard the early followers of Jesus found it to be loving. Some of this was because they came from different faiths, cultures and status, and they found it hard to rewrite how they should interact with each other. But part of it was simply the challenges of getting on and loving folk who annoyed each other in different ways.

Why does God call us to love? I am convinced it is a key wisdom and power through which God shapes us and our world to the best it can be - God's Realm on earth. For a human to act and live in the tough power of love is like an athlete eating the correct diet; love is the fuel, the energy and the discipline, which enables us to be who we were created to be.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor who was imprisoned and died in a concentration camp during WWII for getting involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

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

Children

Kirsty Murray

juniorchurch@augustine.org.uk

Communication

Eilidh Carmichael

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Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

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harriet.davidson@augustine.org.uk

Pastoral & Mental Health

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Rev Fiona Bennett

minister@augustine.org.uk

Young People

Matt Baines

matt.baines@augustine.org.uk

To get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

AUC Volunteering

Fiona Somerville

rota@augustine.org.uk

Local Community Volunteering

Della Morris

della.morris@augustine.org.uk

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Whilst in the camp he wrestled with what it was to love and he wrote: *"The will of God, to which the law gives expression, is that people should defeat their enemies by loving them."*
"Christian love draws no distinction between one enemy and another, except that the more bitter our enemy's hatred, the greater their need of love; be this enemy political or religious, they have nothing to expect from a follower of Jesus but unqualified love. In such love there is not inner discord between the private person and official capacity. In both we are disciples of Christ, or we are not Christians at all."

The depth of challenge in these words Bonhoeffer directed towards himself and his attitude to his Nazi captors, as much as towards anyone else. How did he do it? How did he look beyond his own pain, abuse and torture to look at his enemies as people rather than objects of hate? How did he rise above his own anger, fear, despair and sense of injustice to care for his prison wardens' need for love?

He certainly did not do so silently and passively, but holding doubt and acting in faith, he found a value and delight in his enemies which moved him to seek their good even at cost to himself.

Today, set against the back drop of environmental crisis, instant global communication and political instability, it is attractive to look for enemies to blame. This is not the way that Jesus shows us will bring about abundant life for any of us, far less all of us. Jesus showed us what Bonhoeffer wrestled with, a way of thinking, feeling and acting which seeks to look beyond labels and base feelings to see the divine image living within all life, to respond with love and allow ourselves to be transformed.

In Other Words...

At the end of October I will be making a "Baggie Lantern" using the traditional swede which was a "Baggie" in East Lothian, at least when my mother was young.

Another word which used to be common was "Flype". We never folded socks, we always flyped them. Potatoes were bought by the forpit (three and a half pounds) in Edinburgh, and elsewhere by the lippy. Syboes are spring onions. These were all part of the messages we went for. I can't be sure of the spelling, when I was growing up we didn't waste paper on shopping lists and took a dish towel to the baker's to wrap the bread, square pan, plain or high pan - that made very fancy sandwiches to serve to your visitors before the "tea bread" which was a variety of scones, buns and cakes.

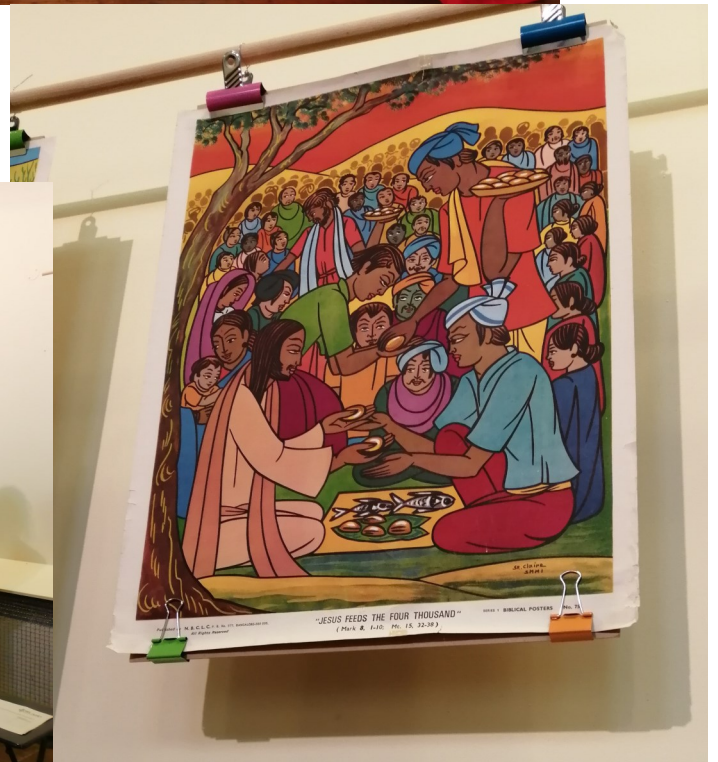
Perhaps there are words you remember, do let Eilidh know if you'd like to share some with us in Seeds!

Doris Caldwell

A Month in Pictures

On the 20th September we joined around 20,000 people of all ages at the Edinburgh 'branch' of the Friday school strikes for climate justice.

AUC also welcomed almost 300 visitors during Doors Open weekend at the end of September. Along with representatives from Christian Aid and Jubilee Scotland, our volunteers shared stories of our history and global connections with a wide range of curious visitors – from those who pass by frequently and just “wondered what was inside” to one German couple who had deliberately planned their holiday to Edinburgh to coincide with Doors Open weekend. More details to follow in next month's edition of Seeds...



One More Step Along the World I Go!

I have worked as a community mental health chaplain for NHS Lothian based in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for the last 12 and half years and during this time much of my work has been based in Augustine United Church.

Long before I was connected to AUC the NHS spiritual care team had an office (in the tower) and benefited from the support of AUC.

When MCC Edinburgh joined with AUC I then had a personal involvement with church, and this created a closer link between the NHS spiritual care team and church. We have worked together on many areas including Coffee, Cake and Conversation, Walk and Talk, the Tuesday Drop In, the Hospital Fete, the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, mental health training events, First Wednesday, LGBT events and 1 to 1 pastoral support.

My NHS work is about to change, and as of 11th November I will no longer be based in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital but will be moving to be the chaplain at the Sick Kids Hospital and at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

This will mean changes to my NHS work with AUC but my work as associate minister will

remain the same. I will still be around on Sundays, coordinating Our Tribe, offering pastoral support and be part of Church Council.

The good news is the NHS community mental health chaplain's post will be filled in a few months time.

In all of this change I am reminded of the words we have sung at the Tuesday drop in reflection more times than I could count.

"One more step along the world I go; from the old things to the new, keep me traveling along with you"

I look forward to all things new!



Maxwell Reay

First Wednesdays

Do you identify as **LGBTQI+** and have questions about **spirituality and faith**?

First Wednesday of **every month**
4.30–6pm

You are welcome for all of the time,
or just a slice of it!

Confidential drop-in space
to meet people, eat cake, and
explore questions – big or small

St Mary's Cathedral
Palmerston Place
(Enter via Manor Place door)



THE BIG QUEER DANCE PARTY

Saturday 19th October
7.30–10.30pm

A night of disco at AUC, featuring everything from classic disco, 80s pop, Hi-NRG to the present day, giving all people within the mental health community a safe place to dance and have a fun night out.

Free Tea, Coffee and juice.
Open to all and LGBTQI inclusive
Changing Space Available
Wheelchair Accessible
FREE ENTRY

MCC General Conference

We (Maxwell, Lewis, Lorraine and I) arrived in Orlando a few days before the start of the conference. We attended a workshop on the Saturday afternoon and on the Sunday after the worship service, in the afternoon there was a pre-conference spiritual retreat which was excellent.

The Conference officially started on Monday with registration and various workshops during the day, also a daily worship service. There were several workshops to choose from every day.

The business meeting on Tuesday spilled into Wednesday; there were elections for a new Board and also a new Moderator and—joy of joys—Cecilia Eggleston, who many of us know, was elected by a big majority.



On Wednesday evening we had the Ordination of Mario Bonfanti from Italy. Quite a few were invited and the room was full, another really special occasion.

On Friday we had the Instillation of the new Moderator with the opportunity to have

our photograph taken the her.

There was also a pilgrimage to Pulse the LGBTQ! nightclub where 49 people were killed by a gunman 3 years ago.

The Conference finished on Friday and I thought it was a really special time. Maxwell, Lewis and I stayed on a bit longer for a bit of a holiday.

Stephen Hoare

Kiltwalk Update

Anne, Lewis, Lorraine and I took part in the "Wee Wander" Kiltwalk on Sunday 15th September. After our warm-up exercises and a bit of singing we set off from a very cold and windy Gypsy Brae with all the other wee wanderers.

We headed along the sea front, wandered through Davidson Mains, Blackhall and arrived at Murrayfield Stadium in glorious sunshine. It was a great experience to walk and chat with friends.

We raised about £1250 in sponsorship and the Hunter Foundation tops up our total by 40%. This will be the total raised for AUC about £1750.

A very BIG thank you to all who supported us.
Maxwell Reay





Shaping a Healthy Future: Update



I'd like to share a brief update on our progress and what we discussed in the September Church Meeting. If you were at the meeting, I hope you find this helpful rather than repetitious! Because we covered some ground in the meeting this is the first of two articles. The second will appear next month.

The project is in full swing with three active streams, each assisted by a focus group from the congregation. '**Accommodation, Staff & Finance**' is the most advanced, with a number of investigations underway or complete, some options refined or discarded, and some requiring further information and analysis. The current Centre, Property & Finance team plus Steven Smillie and Fiona Somerville are helping me with this stream. Rachel and Tom have done a wonderful job turning raw financial and building data into useful information. The scope of this stream includes finding a way to relieve Tom of some of the weight he carries across the three roles of Church Treasurer, Building Manager and Centre Manager.

The second stream is looking at '**Lay Leadership**' and Church Life Ministry Teams (CLMTs). We've interviewed leaders of CLMTs and are considering how best to provide information and support to anyone considering a volunteer role, those currently in a lay leadership role, and those who feel it's time to handover to someone else.

Recently we started a third group to consider opportunities to better sustain the **Congregation**. That discussion has started well but has a way to go.

I chose to focus the church meeting on

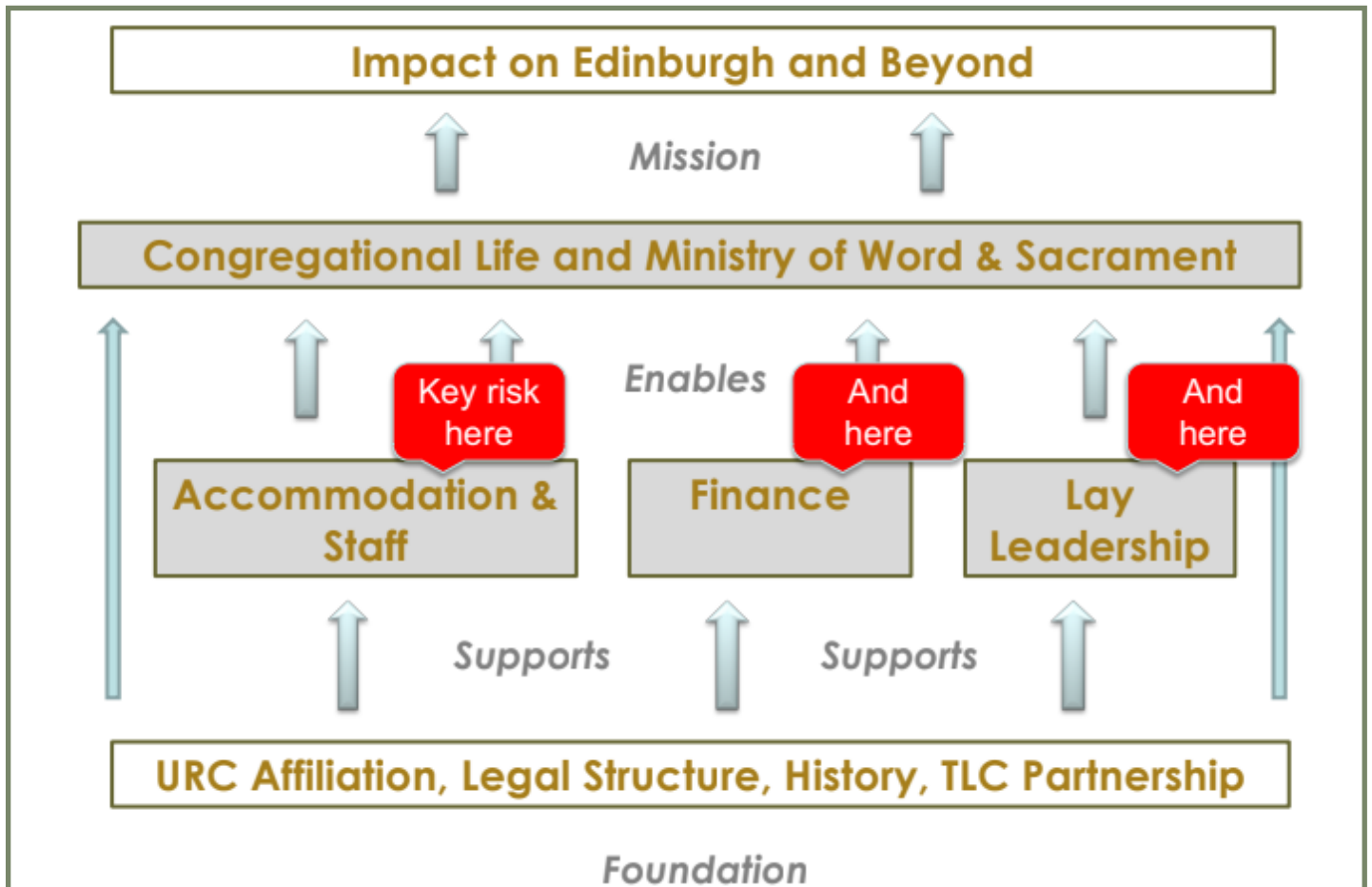
Accommodation, Staff & Finance because that's where the greatest challenges to your healthy future lie, and I think it's important we spend time together understanding the challenges and hearing from each other as we consider how to address them.

The best decisions are informed by our values, our hopes and our dreams as well as raw facts and rational thinking, so we began the discussion by considering two questions in four breakout groups: *Why do you choose Augustine? What should Augustine be and do into the future?*

I then shared a very simple diagram of the church (which is reproduced on the next page), as a means of illustrating my observations about both the risks you carry and who you are as a congregation.

At your foundation you're a United Reformed Church, a legal entity, a registered charity. You have an extensive history through a number of denominations and you share in an ecumenical partnership. The next layer is supported by your foundation and includes your accommodation and centre staff, your finances, and your lay leadership. This enabling layer in turn supports your shared congregational life and the ministry of word and sacrament practiced amongst you. In this third layer you care for each other, grow in faith, pray together and worship God. It's also through this layer that your mission to Edinburgh and beyond is encouraged and supported. You actively care about the earth, marginalised people locally and globally and you seek to help other people know how deeply God loves them.

The answers people gave to the earlier



“Why?” and “What?” questions sit in the two top layers. These are Augustine’s reasons for being.

It’s clear to me that you function very well in the top two layers. These are strengths for you - your welcome and inclusivity, your approach to worship, your compassion and passion for justice. They are strengths because many of you as individuals care deeply about these things, are good at these things, and choose Augustine as a match for who you are. You also have people with both interest and skill at the enabling layer but compared to many congregations they are a small proportion of your community.

We all play to our strengths, as individuals and communities, so it’s not surprising that the key risks you carry sit in the enabling layer. Of course, no person or group is strong at everything. What’s important is to be aware of what your area of weakness is and not assign it to the “too hard to deal with basket” or worse still devalue what happens

there as somehow “less Christian” because it’s not the coalface of your ministry and mission. To achieve your purpose, you must instead support and strengthen this layer.

The three significant risks on the diagram need to be addressed to strengthen the enabling layer, because they threaten the “Why?” and “What?” of Augustine - they put your healthy future at risk. I’ll detail these risks next month and the further questions we sought to answer in groups.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the focus, sincerity and openness of all who attended the meeting. We learnt together, new ideas surfaced, core values were shared and the nature of your participation left me looking forward to further discussions.

Deborah Pike

If you weren’t able to make the meeting and have any thoughts or suggestions you’d like to share you can contact Deborah on deborah.pike@augustine.org.uk

Remembering Mrs Hetty McKay

I met Hetty when I was 8 years old and we shared many things together. We went occasionally to each other's Church's evening services. When our Church joined with Augustine Hetty became a Youth Club member when she was 15 (the age of membership). I was already a member as I was older. I then introduced our friend Ina (Mrs I McGillivray) to our club. We remained friends through all our ups and downs.

Hetty would have her grandson over from Portugal and when she brought him to Church he always wanted to go to 'the Church with the Chicken on the top' (St Giles!) for tea after.

Adam and Hetty never kept good health, which was a pity because after losing their only child, Paul, they were never able to go and visit his resting place.

Through the past years Hetty has had many broken bones (collar, wrist, ankle etc) and her general health was not good so she was unable to be at Church but always liked to know how members were.

Adam and Hetty were married 64 years ago this September in this Church.

Isa

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@augustine.org.uk) or **Rev Maxwell Reay** (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.

Selling out to Slavery

Saturday 2nd November 9.30am – 4.30 pm at the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

Exploring ethical and faith-based responses to modern slavery for consumers & suppliers, organised by Scottish Churches Anti Human Trafficking Group.

Tickets £16.76 via eventbrite



Helplines:

Stand Alone: 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

National Interfaith Youth Conference, St Andrew's

In April Ian Leung and I attended the Interfaith Youth Conference. Organised by Interfaith Scotland and the Coexistence Initiative, its theme asked “*What is Justice?*”, a topic that was both substantial and a valuable one to consider. The event consisted of talks from four speakers representing Christian, Islamic and Sikh perspectives. Of the four speakers, three gave very accessible and relevant presentations that covered both the place of justice in their tradition and it's contemporary practice. There was just one speaker who I felt went into an unnecessarily cerebral philosophical consideration of the notion of justice, that while interesting in its own right, did not feel relevant to the context of interfaith dialogue at this level.

Although the event was pitched as a youth conference, it was not clear beforehand that it was more specifically aimed at young adults in the 18+ bracket. Ian, who was 16 years old at the time, was attentive but didn't find it as engaging as the other delegates may have.

Having said this, I was greatly encouraged by what I saw there in the eagerness of young people to relate together across differences of religion, ethnicity, culture and faith. I did, however, have the impression that both the

speakers and hosts were somewhat overeager to emphasise the similarities between the faiths represented at the expense of considering the differences in their approaches to justice. While I appreciate the desire to develop a positive and congenial rapport, I feel this approach demonstrated a lack of confidence in the desire of both speakers and audience to truly establish a common ground with deep foundations. There had been a question and answer time planned with all the speakers which might have been a good opportunity to take the discussion to a deeper level, but this had to be cut short.

In conclusion, my impression of the conference was overall very positive and I am considering how our own URC youth groups might partner with other faith groups in similar acts of dialogue, both at a national level and locally through TLC Youth. I will definitely recommend that when planning such an event, groups allow plenty of time to go 'off-script' and really find out what they have in common and what is unique to their different traditions. Ultimately our world will be a far better place when young people of different faiths and cultures really get to know each other and develop lasting friendships.

Matt Baines

The LGBT Community Groups Meet Up Fair

LGBT Health and Wellbeing held a community fair at our very own Augustine United Church on Saturday 14th September. Over 15 organisations supporting the LGBT+ community came together to showcase their services and spend time together. Thomas, Lorraine, Neil and I staffed an AUC/Our Tribe stall.

It was a fun afternoon with poetry, music and readings from Our Story Scotland. Check them out at <https://www.ourstoryscotland.org.uk>

We all enjoyed refreshments while chatting with other LGBT+ staff, volunteers and visitors. The afternoon was well attended and we had several folks come to our church stall and ask about what we offered at AUC. I think we will see some new faces at Church.



Maxwell Reay

Reading the Bible with Confidence

Sundays 5.30-7pm @ AUC

Oct 20, 27 & Nov 3 2019

Led by Rev Dr Martin Scott

Reading the Bible is an importance practise for Christians yet most of us find it very difficult to do. Whether you have some Biblical background or none, these sessions (which use discussion & input) offer us the opportunity to gain more confidence in reading the Bible.

This is a 3 week course but sessions are also designed to stand alone if you can only attend some. If you would like to participate please register with Fiona (minister@augustine.org.uk)



Talking Texts – The good, the bad and the ugly.

Session 1 (20 Oct)

How do we experience the Bible? What issues does it raise for you? What do you really think about it?

Whose book is it Anyway? - Exploring the status and use of the bible today.

Session 2 (Oct 27)

What makes up the bible? How did it come into being? What are the challenges of translation and meaning? Who wrote it? What kinds of literature make it up? How do I decide how to read it?

Connecting to the Contemporary World - are today's issues addressed in the bible?

Session 3 (3 Nov)

Do we read contemporary questions back into the bible? What can the theme of gender reveal to us in our Bible reading? How can we connect with the story of Jesus today?

Led by Rev Dr Martin Scott

Martin trained as a musician, taught music, was ordained as a Baptist minister, studied theology in Zurich, gained a PhD in New Testament theology from Durham University, spent ten years at Northern Baptist College (Manchester) where he greatly enjoyed teaching New Testament and Greek and was a research fellow at the University of Manchester. On returning to Scotland, he became a Church of Scotland minister and worked for 20 years at denominational level for the Church of Scotland, whilst still maintaining a keen interest in Biblical studies and teaching. Through his life Martin has been an unwavering Motherwell Football club supporter and is very familiar with AUC having led our worship and through singing with the Edinburgh Choral Union. He now sings with the Edinburgh Festival Chorus.

Welcome to a whole new season and the beginning of a new 'church year' with Seedlings!

We have a new annual theme for Junior Church to think about over the coming months - **Journeys in Faith**. We have also planned some modules to focus our activities around.



This month we will be exploring 'Joseph and Pharaoh'. We'll begin with a Godly Play story about Joseph followed by our sharing our Feast, and then we will explore the story further from the angle of science, and games. At the end of the month, Augustine will be holding the joint service with our partner churches of St Columba's and Greyfriars, visiting us.



"Jacob's favourite son was Joseph. To show his love, Jacob gave Joseph a long-sleeved coat with many colours. This made Joseph's brothers hate him...."

Image from www.godlyplayresources.com; Words from The Complete Guide to Godly Play by Jerome Berryman, Volume 6.



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.

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

October		Season of Wholeness & Reconciliation
Wednesday 2 nd	4.30-6pm	1st Wednesdays at St Mary's Cathedral, Palmerston Place. Use Manor Place side door (see p.4)
Sunday 6 th	9.15am	Contextual Bible Study – John 17:20-26 'One'
	11am	Morning Worship and Communion, led by Fiona Bennett
	12.30-1.30pm	Education Forum Church Meeting
	2-5pm	Belonging & Being Church – Exploring Church Membership
	3pm	Pet Blessing Service at Greyfriars Kirk
Monday 7 th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – Bring and Buy
Tuesday 8 th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study – John 17:20-26 'One'
Sunday 13 th	9.15-10.15am	Living the Questions Video and Discussion on 'The Myth of Redemptive Violence'
	11am	Morning Worship for Covenant Sunday led by Caro Penney and Fiona Bennett
	12.15-1.30pm	Church Lunch
	1-3pm	TLC Youth Group
	3-5pm	Our Tribe, led by Mike Holroyd, exploring diversity and faith
Monday 14 th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – 'Live Music Now'
Saturday 19 th	7.30-10.30pm	The Big Queer Dance Party – Inclusive Disco (see p.4)
Sunday 20 th	11am	Morning Worship and Communion, led by Caro Penney and Leslie Morrison
	5.30-7pm	'Reading the Bible with Confidence' - led by Rev Dr Martin Scott (see p.10)
Monday 21 st	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – 'Wojtek the Polish War Hero Bear'
Tuesday 22 nd	7.30pm	Living the Questions Video and Discussion on 'Creative Transformation'
Sunday 27 th	11am	TLC Morning Worship and Communion
	12.15-1.30pm	Refreshments
	1-3pm	TLC Youth Group
	5.30-7pm	'Reading the Bible with Confidence' – led by Rev Dr Martin Scott (see p.10)
Monday 28 th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – 'Residences of Mary Queen of Scots'
Tuesday 29 th	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Thursday 31 st	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
November		Season of Remembrance
Saturday 2 nd	9.30am-4.30pm	'Selling Out to Slavery' (see p.8)
Sunday 3 rd	9.15-10.15am	Animate Series: Sparking Discussion about the Cross
	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, led by Karl Macrae and Fiona Bennett
	5.30-7pm	'Reading the Bible with Confidence' – led by Rev Dr Martin Scott (see p.10)

There will be no walk and talk in October. The next one is on Friday 8th November.

Please note the deadline for material for the November issue is Sunday 27th October.

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.