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George IV Bridge, Edinburgh  
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www.augustine.org.uk  
Scottish Charity no. SC000385

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## Transforming Change, By Rev Fiona Bennett

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus was the son of Timaeus. He was born blind and found himself begging by the side of the road in Jericho on a day Jesus came to town. As the disciples watched the story unfold, they must have wondered "What did Jesus mean by asking Bartimaeus what he could do for him? Surely it was obvious; the culture and thinking of the time meant that Bartimaeus was excluded from mainstream life and custom. What did he want from Jesus? He wanted to be included, he wanted to see!"

But Jesus did not assume that was what Bartimaeus wanted and his question prompted a deeper reflection: did Bartimaeus really want the change?

Even if it is the change we seek and long for, change involves cost: letting go of what is familiar and stepping into the unknown.

The Junior Church have been exploring the story of Moses leading the people out of slavery in Egypt into the wilderness on the journey to the promised land.

Once in the wilderness faced with no immediate promised land and great uncertainty, some of the Hebrew people declared that they would be better off back in slavery, at least there they knew from where they were getting fed! Did they really want the change of leaving Egypt?

At the end of Oct I spent several days at a conference exploring conflict transformation. It drew together people and organisations from across the world involved with reconciliation and mediation. There were many stories shared about the transformation which can occur when people in conflict find the space to listen deeply to each other's stories. Even in situations where a resolution is not possible the

## 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**

eilidh.carmichael@augustine.org.uk

### Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

**Rev Maxwell Reay**

associateminister@augustine.org.uk

### Peace & Justice

**Harriet Davidson**

harriet.davidson@augustine.org.uk

### Pastoral & Mental Health

**Anne MacKenzie**

anne.mackenzie@augustine.org.uk

### Worship

**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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respect and mutuality generated by deep and respectful listening changes people. A challenging question when we find ourselves in entrenched conflict can be 'do we really want to change?'

We think we want the conflict to be resolved, but what if that means we are changed in the process. Do we really want the resolution? And how does it affect our response if we face conflict and uncertainty knowing that we will be changed in ways we cannot imagine, but trusting that God's creative spirit is always birth and leading us into new life.

"What do you want me to do for you?", asks Jesus. Are you willing to be transformed and find new life?



## Controlled Parking Zones



A consultation (details below) is now **open until 26<sup>th</sup> November**. The town centre churches would appreciate as many **individual letters** as possible being sent in – details below.

*Would the 12.30pm restriction mean you could not attend?  
Would you need to rush off before the end of the service?  
Or would it disrupt vital community life for you, for example?*

Please chat to/email Linda Harrison or Kathleen Ziffo for more information. Letters may be handed to Linda or Kathleen by Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, for sending on.

### TRO/19/29 Waiting restriction on Sundays from 12.30pm to 6.30pm

This proposal recognises that the city centre is now much busier than it was when parking controls were first introduced. With more people visiting the city centre, and many shops and other businesses open to customers, the existing uncontrolled situation not only creates difficulties for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users, but also creates challenging operating conditions for public transport. In order to address these difficulties, it is proposed to extend controls to operate on Sunday afternoons.

**More information can be found here: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/2998/controlled\\_parking\\_zones\\_-\\_edinburgh\\_tro1929](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/2998/controlled_parking_zones_-_edinburgh_tro1929)**

Please pick up on aspects that you feel will affect your attendance and church life as a whole. Your letters, which must quote TRO/19/29 should be sent to: City of Edinburgh Council, Traffic Orders, 3.3 Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG or emailed to: [trafficorders@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:trafficorders@edinburgh.gov.uk) or hand to Linda/Kathleen for sending on.

## The Gospel—10 Years On!

I wrote "The Gospel According To Jesus Queen Of Heaven" with a strong sense of reverence to the Jesus I'd met in the Gospels.

He seemed to me to be an amazing human being, full of wisdom and humanity, who was constantly resisting people's prejudices and who would never have been prejudiced against someone like me.

So I couldn't quite believe it on the first night of the show ten years ago when I found the street outside the theatre filled with Christian protesters. They were angry and distressed in a way I never intended them to be.

I got so upset when the Archbishop of Glasgow put out a public statement to say that "there could be no greater affront to the Christian faith" than my play.

It all hurt me deeply. How could he say that when he hadn't read the play? How could all the demonstrators be so angry about something they knew nothing about?

One said they didn't need to read the play because "there's no need to go near a sewer

to know that it stinks."

The poor suffering people, to be filled with such hatred.

Poor suffering me, to be hated so deeply.



It took me about 5 years to get over that trauma and put the play back on the Fringe.

One of the reasons I did was because of the support I received from all of you when I performed the play in the Sanctuary the following year.

And all the support I received then, and continue to receive now, as a member of this amazing congregation.

So I want to say thank you for that.

And also to say that the fact that somehow the play has kept going, and made such a difference in Brazil,

and that we're able to celebrate its tenth anniversary this November...that all this happens because at the end of the day love is stronger than hate.

**Jo Clifford**

*Image: Aly Wright*

**TRANSGENDER DAY  
OF REMEMBRANCE  
NOV 20**



**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November**

Following the service for Transgender Remembrance there will be a retiring offering for the work of the Global Justice Institute. This is the outreach organisation with which MCC churches are associated worldwide.

## Telling Our Stories—An Open Opportunity



It does often occur to me that Augustine is quite good at telling its stories. I mean our stories, as individuals. My experience has been that this is a congregation that invites/welcomes/fosters honesty about who we are and is a safe space for warm sharing.

But still, it amazes me how frequently I am privileged to learn something new about what someone has done, what their great passion is, where they volunteer, or what made them step off George IV Bridge and through our doors.

Doors Open weekend extends the storytelling in so many different ways. We get to tell our own – about the building but about what is really important to us too – and we get to hear the stories of visitors who enter the building for all sorts of reasons. This year we welcomed nearly 300 of them!

They came from Wales, India, Germany, the USSR, the States – and a great many from our own city: recently arrived students; those who often pass our doors and wondered who lived inside; and individuals who have been at AUC for other meetings or events and wanted to know a bit more about the community that hosts them.

Our wonderful team of 16 volunteers

welcomed, explained, and listened with great warmth and generosity.

The theme for Doors Open this year was “Global Connections”. If that wasn’t up our street, I can’t think what would be! We didn’t follow up all the ideas we’d thought of, but the stories of global connection that we did share were rich and worth getting to know better. They ranged

from Augustine’s Jubilee Celebrations in 1901 to September’s Global Climate Strike and our support for MCC’s Global Justice Institute.

There was the story of Anne and Murdoch MacKenzie, mission partners in South India for 12 years, developing innovative projects amongst the poor and marginalised of Madras. On their return to Scotland they brought with them a set of Bible story “teaching posters” – some 140 of them! A tiny selection of these bold images provided a colourful and proudly Indian take on familiar



tales: David and Goliath (see *image*) might have stepped straight out of the Mahābhārata; Pharaoh’s daughter smiled from the banks of the Nile in a seated yoga position.

Below the posters we spoke of Augustine’s global connections – both through our wider United Reformed and Congregational traditions (think the London Missionary Society, CWM,

David Livingstone and Eric Liddell just for starters) and also more locally.

Robert and Fiona Somerville had shared Meredyth Somerville's unpublished biography of Robert's great grandmother, Jane Anderson. Her life (1847—1935) touches on a number of significant developments around opportunities for women, not least on the mission field. We need to know her better. And, having already let me know about collections on behalf of the John Williams "Bible Boats", during the weekend Doris Caldwell also produced from some hidden cupboard a fascinating framed poster/certificate dated 1930, thanking Dalry Congregational Church for its support of the John Williams V ship.

Other stories kept emerging that weekend too. I learned that one volunteer runs a weekly upcycling class. Another is a Crufts judge. And another makes spectacular desserts – though this was only confirmation of what I already knew! We got to know each other a little better, as well as our visitors. It was a great opportunity – and there will be more!



**Laurence Wareing**



## *Shaping a Healthy Future: Update*



Last month I shared some of the discussion that occurred in the Church Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September. This month I want to cover the remainder of what we talked about that day. After considering the "Why?" and "What?" of Augustine we moved onto the key risks threatening your healthy future. The three risks are intertwined and, while I believe the first is the most urgent, none of the three can be addressed without some impact on the other two.

Let's start with the "**Key person dependency risk**". The key person is Tom, who is currently your Church Treasurer, the maintenance manager of your listed and challenging building, and the manager of your lettings business.

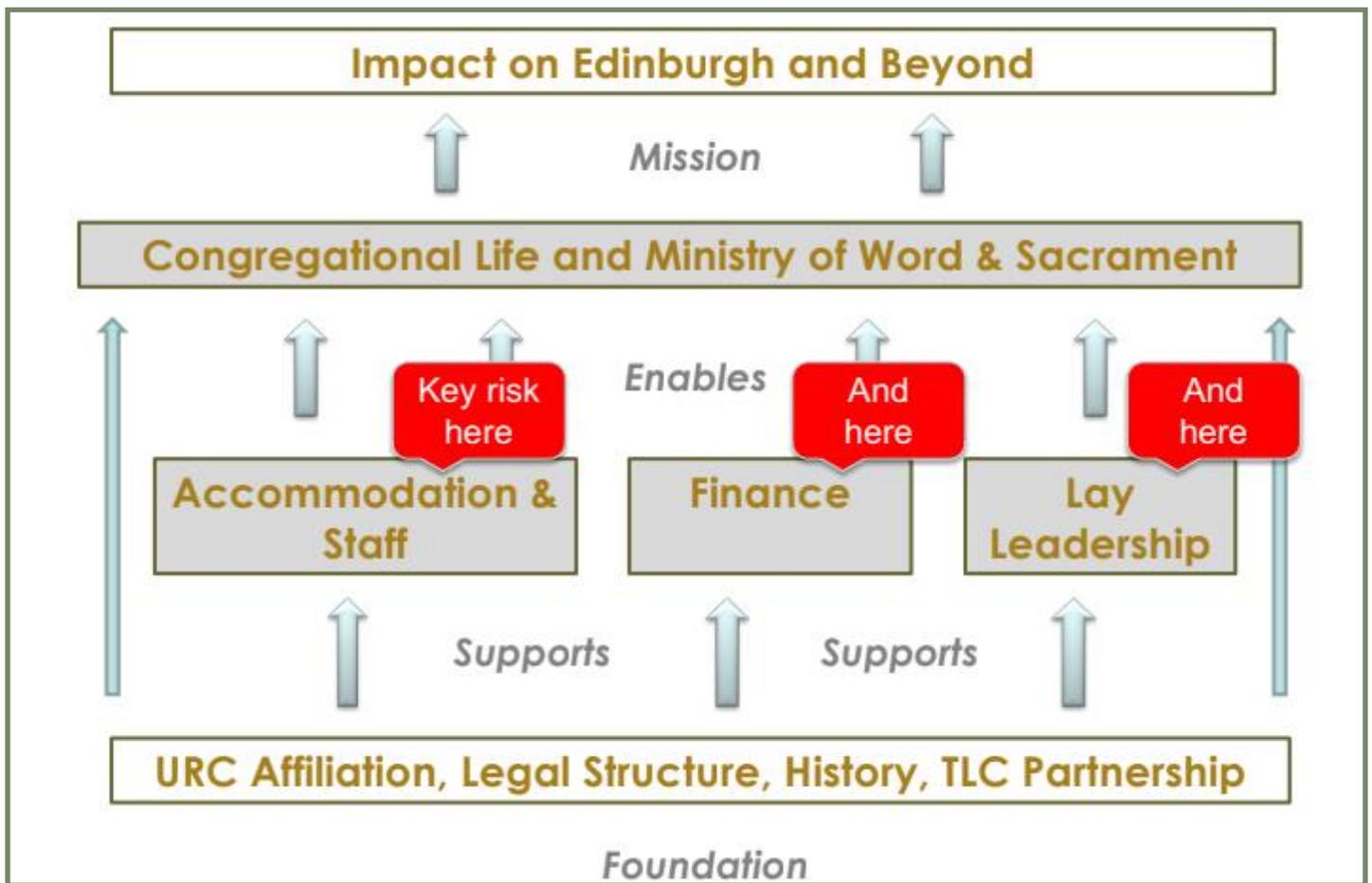
As I type, no one within Augustine is ready and able to step in and completely fill any of these

roles if Tom were to fall ill or need time away.

This is a significant risk to the running of Augustine as an organisation and if Tom were suddenly unavailable it could mean disruption to Augustine's life as a church (the top half of my little diagram which is shared again for clarity on the next page).

Of course, it's also an unfair weight for Tom to shoulder and he's been doing it for a long time. He can't carry all three roles for much longer. The Centre, Property & Finance team are considering the appointment of a paid Centre Manager, but we will still need a volunteer to manage the building and an assistant/successor to Tom in the Treasurer role.

I would say this is currently your greatest threat to a healthy future for Augustine.



<5 The second risk is a “**Financial viability risk**”. As a congregation with a complex, older and listed building to care for within your modest income, there is a risk that your expenses will exceed your income for a few years in a row and then the need to secure your financial position will become critical and overwhelm your broader objectives.

Your financial reserves have been depleted by a series of essential building works. This is completely normal for a building like yours and the need for this sort of work and expenditure will continue. Your auditors expressed concern at last year's accounts because they recognised your reserves weren't sufficient for custodianship of a building like this.

With the help of a number of people in the congregation, I've been looking at options to increase income and decrease costs. We haven't completed our calculations yet, but it seems all the feasible and obvious changes are not going to be enough to fully address this risk. You can grow your letting income a little, but that won't be enough on its own. To be financially viable into the future you will need to increase other sources of income, including

congregational giving.

If you can't grow your reserves again you will run into the third risk to a healthy future for Augustine: the “**Building availability risk**”. Unless you can afford to undertake regular “preventative maintenance” and keep funds on hand to quickly address any unexpected failure in the building, you may find you can't enter the building due to safety issues. Your lettings income could immediately cease and, even for a short period, this would exasperate your financial situation further.

If this sounds extreme remember that last year you not only had to pay for ceiling repairs to the Studio and Mull, but you also lost income while those rooms were unavailable to let and you had to cover the cost of hiring alternative venues for your existing letting customers. A triple impact to your finances.

Nobody wants this to happen again, and certainly not at scale where the Sanctuary is affected. To be responsible stewards of the building handed down to you by earlier congregations you need to be as proactive as you can be with maintenance and you need to

have reserves for the unexpected. Your building enables Augustine to have a city centre presence as a Christian community, to offer hospitality to many worthy groups, and to earn an income from the space you don't use yourselves. It's worth looking after well.

I'll be working closely with the CP&F team to find the best options available to you to minimise these three risks, and I'll bring these refined options to the Church Council and congregation

for your consideration and input. These are uncomfortable conversations to have but you've demonstrated historically and as recently as the September church meeting a great capacity to face into challenges and a willingness to enact change.

We'll figure out the most beneficial changes together. There will be an opportunity to discuss this further at the December Church Meeting.

**Deborah Pike**

## *Synod Church & Society Committee*

**D**o not forget that our church is part of the United Reformed Church (URC) and that the Scottish Synod of the URC has a Church & Society Committee with a remit to "*advise...in all matters concerning the church's relations to society*".

I currently convene this committee. We are always trying to discern what issues the Synod, and the URC, should care about and act on. We are also trying to align ourselves with the work of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), a combined organisation of the Baptist Union, Church of Scotland, Methodists and the URC.

### **Disinvestment**

We care deeply about the climate crisis. A resolution from the Synod's meeting of March this year called on the URC's central investments to divest from fossil fuel producing companies. This was approved unanimously by the URC's Mission Council meeting in May.

As a result the CCLA investment company (which specialises in supporting charities and churches, including the URC) have committed to move out of investments in fossil fuel by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019, significantly ahead of the Scottish resolution's target date of General Assembly 2020.

Furthermore, whilst the URC has £100 million invested through CCLA (roughly 50% URC pension fund, 50% denominational investments/reserves) the same fund has a further £½ billion

from other investors. Hence the consequence of our Synod's decision and the subsequent decision of Mission Council is that a total of £600 million of investments will transition to be free from fossil fuel producing companies within a few months. This is a very significant shift and will, we trust, nudge other investors to do likewise, thus aiding the transition to a net zero carbon economy.

### **Give Me Five Campaign**



Back in June, our committee finally decided to support the Give Me Five Campaign (GMFC), to increase child benefit in Scotland by £5 per week

per child. Although some people had concerns about the cost of this and felt it should be claimed rather than universal, we agreed that it would be an effective way of tackling child poverty, which currently affects one in four Scottish children.

However, later in the same month, the Scottish Government announced a new benefit, called the Scottish Child Payment. This would be a payment of £10 per week per child, but only for the poorest children. Therefore, just at the point we had decided to lend our support for GMFC, it had partly succeeded!

However, GMFC continues and is refocusing on making the case to the UK Government that

child benefit must be restored, by increasing it by £5 per week per child. Because it has not risen with inflation, child benefit is worth £210 a year less than in 2011-12. The URC Synod of Scotland has resolved to support the Give Me Five Campaign in its current form.

### Closer working with JPIT

Andrew Tomlinson from the Joint Public Issues Team joined our meeting in June and we are pleased that Andrew has agreed to participate (when possible) in our future meetings. He set out some of the hopes of JPIT for a post-Brexit Britain:

- A society that welcomes the stranger
- A society where the poorest are at the centre
- A society that values every generation
- A world that shares one planet fairly
- A society where there is greater democratic engagement
- The promotion of peace and justice

### Changes at Christian Aid

Eilidh Carmichael (*yes, that's right, your editor crops up everywhere :) ~ed.*) responded on our behalf to the proposals set out by Christian Aid for their new global strategic plan. In our response, we asked Christian Aid to focus more on climate change and the environment in their strategy.

On 31<sup>st</sup> July Christian Aid announced its new strategy called Standing Together (see <https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/>) and the climate crisis was mentioned.

### COP

The next United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) is crucial for the future of the planet. The most recent meeting was COP24 in Katowice. COP25 was due to take place in Chile but will now take place very soon in Madrid and (significantly for us) COP26 will be in Glasgow in November 2020.

This is a significant meeting at which decisions will be made that will hopefully reduce climate chaos. Many Christian groups are involved in preparing for this and there will be more people attending than there are hotel rooms in

Glasgow. There will also be an ecumenical service in Glasgow Cathedral. There is a need for all churches to be involved as decisions at this meeting will affect the future of our planet. We will be considering how we best support this joint action over the coming months.

### Priorities going forward

The other areas that we will be focussing on are: Matthew's Rule (working to combat homelessness), a just transition to a low carbon economy, reducing the use of plastics, combating human trafficking. All these were endorsed by the Synod Meeting in Nairn in September.

**Alex Peden**  
**Committee Convener and AUC member**

## 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.

## LUV+ (*Leprosy at Utale Village PLUS*)



A chance encounter with Doris in Tesco resulted in this lovely update from Nigel Harper...

Over the past 3 years LUV+ has provided income generating projects like chicken farms and maize mills to eight leprosy communities in east Zambia and south Tanzania, with money from the Scottish Government and the Souter Charitable Trust.

In April LUV+ was awarded £60,000 from the Scottish Government to provide nine new projects to leprosy communities in west Zambia and in Malawi, including one at the original community we started to assist nine years ago in Utale. They will have a chicken farm producing 100 chickens every 3 months and a new poly tunnel for growing tomatoes throughout the year. We will also be starting a project at a leprosy community near Chikwawa in the far south, an area devastated by the floods at the end of last year.

John Burton and I will soon be conducting a Needs Assessment visit in the west of Zambia and will also meet with the Tanzania Leprosy Association in Dar Es Salaam to plan 2 new projects in central Tanzania. These are the first projects independently financed by LUV+, following fundraising by Dr Rose Mary Harley who organised a Fashion Show in Glasgow and by Rev William Young who ran the London Marathon for LUV+.

LUV+ will always be grateful to Augustine United Church for enabling Fr Francis Kachere to visit Edinburgh in 2009, the result of which led to the founding of LUV+ and the start of our work to help people disabled by leprosy in sub-Saharan Africa. We also remain grateful to Doris Caldwell who served as Trustee for seven years and helped LUV+ gradually expand its work.

**FreshStart**

helping people make a home for themselves

We are collecting for Fresh Start throughout November.

Various ways to contribute!

At the moment their starter packs are in particular need of toiletries, cleaning materials, dinner plates and side plates, single bedding and a range of food items: rice, instant coffee, UHT milk, tinned new potatoes, tinned meat and fish.

Fresh Start are also currently collecting for their Festive Food Hampers. As ever, they are unable to take products with alcohol or perishables.

For more details see a copy of our weekly notice sheets.



### *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

Our theme in November is Wandering in the Wilderness. We will hear about the story of Moses and his wilderness time, and will explore this through cooking, music and then art.

Our final week on this theme will be a Godly Play story called The Ten Best Ways, followed by our customary Feast!



*"I know. They are all hard. God did not say these are the 'ten easy things to do.' They are the Ten Best Ways to Live, the Ten Commandments. They are hard, perhaps even impossible, but we are supposed to try."*

Image from [www.godlyplayresources.com](http://www.godlyplayresources.com); Words from The Complete Guide to Godly Play by Jerome Berryman,



At the end of the month we will be involved in some secret gift making for a certain season that is not quite here yet but will be soon!

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

November		Season of Remembrance
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Contextual Bible Study – Colossians 3: 1-4: 6 'Walking the Way'
	10.45am	Remembrance Sunday Morning Worship, led by Alex Peden and Fiona Bennett
	12.15-1.30pm	Church Business Meeting
	1-3pm	TLC Youth Group
	3-5pm	Our Tribe – Body Confidence
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup>	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – Liz O'Malley: Children's Experiences of Western Front Battlefields
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study – Colossians 3: 1-4: 6 'Walking the Way'
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Living the Questions – Video and Discussion on Practising Resurrection
	11am	Transgender Remembrance Morning Worship with Communion, led by Fiona Bennett and Lorraine Miller
	12.15-1.30pm	Church Lunch
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup>	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – George Banks
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Living the Questions – Video and Discussion on Embracing Mystery
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	7pm	Partners with God's Damaged Earth multifaith event
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Animate Series: Sparking Discussion about the Bible
	11am	Morning Worship, led by Karl Macrae and Caro Penney
	1-3pm	TLC Youth Group
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC – Music with Iris Hewitt
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
December		Season of Advent
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	9.15-10.15am	Exploring the Parables of Christmas
	11am	Morning Worship and Communion, led by Fiona Bennett and David Coleman
	12.15-2pm	Festive Advent Lunch, followed by decorating the church and letter writing for Amnesty International

**See p.11 for our monthly calendar.**

**Please note the deadline for material for the December/January issue is Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>  
November.**

*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.*