

FEBRUARY 2021 NEWS FROM SEI

Puppets and play: Mid-January saw the third Residential Weekend of the academic year, 'residential' yet once more meaning 'each attending from his or her own home'. However being 'at home' had a real benefit, for it enabled students' families to be present in the community's midst at various points across the weekend: at the Saturday and Sunday lunchtime Eucharists and for the Saturday evening social time.



The Small Group known as 'Points Ablaze' skilfully led our weekend's worship, which included a New Zealand Morning Prayer and a 'Children's Eucharist' on Saturday. For the latter, second year URC ordinand Louise Sanders and her youngest son Noah enacted the Gospel in puppet form and recorded it on video. This imaginative rendering of the calling of Levi spoke to both children and adults alike, a master-class in how to do this kind of ministry well. The Eucharist ended with the words: 'The service has ended, but it has made us strong for our work and play during the week'. We thank 'Points Ablaze' for reminding us, to paraphrase Thomas Merton, that what is serious to humanity is often very trivial in the sight of God; if we could be more playful, we might be better able to hear and follow God's call.

Chapter Chair and chocolate: Student feedback after Residential Weekends - keeping the name gives us hope - is a routine part of SEI life. This includes a chance to suggest how future weekends might be improved; an opportunity for students to demonstrate spiritual maturity and theological gravitas in their response. Well, that was the case until December 2020 when, in response to this question, one student wrote 'provide chocolate'. This student, who shall remain unnamed, is currently being re-assessed for suitability for training and their Diocesan Advisor has been informed. However, lo and behold - what came through our doors but some lovely bars of chocolate in time for the next RWE! There was great rejoicing (*see photograph*). It turns out that SEI students may well enjoy a bit of theology, ethics, worship and reflective practice, but chocolate really makes us smile. A big 'thank-you' to the chocolate fairy for making this happen and cheering everyone up in these challenging times.

Dr Lesley Penny





Revd Moira Grigor – a tribute: While it is with great sadness that we join with Moira’s family and friends in mourning her death, that is not what she would have wished. For no-one who met Moira would ever leave her presence sad, but rather enriched by her joie de vivre and loving outlook. As Patsy Thomson said at her funeral on 8th January: *‘Priest, relative, neighbour, friend - in every role Moira was a true force of nature. Everyone who knew her emphasises her powerful energy and stamina, her courage, her generosity, her skill as a cook, her love of fine art and music, and her sense of style’.*

Killen born and bred, Moira served as a charismatic primary school teacher in England until feeling called to explore her Christian faith. She spent time as a postulant with the Community of the Church of the Holy Name near Malvern, but being a nun was not her vocation; instead she trained for the priesthood. She became an amazingly hardworking, creative, available and enabling parish priest. In her last charge before retirement she was responsible for six churches which flourished under her leadership in Welford in the Cotswolds.

Moira returned to her native land upon retirement, serving as a self-supporting priest in the diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness, much loved by the congregation of St Regulus Cromarty. As Jill Stoner writes: *‘Moira led services on a regular basis and helped with the children’s group. She would get stuck in with projects where others might think ‘we can’t do that or it would be too much bother.’ She took on much of the organisation of a Flower Festival held at St Regulus during one of Cromarty’s Gala weeks, letting her imagination run wild with ideas, and inspiring others to take on elaborate flower arrangements. She also helped with the Cromarty Youth Opera and served as a Trustee with the Cromarty Care Project. As Patsy commented: ‘Moira had enough energy to power the national grid. I miss a strong, vital theologian friend, someone to cross swords with about church and mission; someone who introduced me to Wentworth’s jigsaws and taught me how to do lockdown with a much better grace. Moira’s total confidence that she was a beloved and lovely child of God remains her inspirational legacy to me and many.’*

In recent years Moira became involved with SEI, serving as Diocesan Advisor to the Revd Don Grant, (now Assistant Curate at St Andrew’s Cathedral, Inverness) while he was training, a task which she carried out with efficiency, wisdom and the generous sharing of her experience, but above all with that immense love of people which characterised her entire ministry and her life. Don writes: *‘Moira was more than just an advisor; she was my special friend, my rock when essays and study seemed overwhelming, putting things into perspective. Her stories and examples of parish situations were a delight as well as being informative. She could talk for Britain, meaning that our meetings were never less than two hours and often more, though they were always too short. Though the course ended, our friendship and concern for each other did not. I was honoured to be invited to attend her funeral in person during lockdown to say farewell properly.’*

Moira was a hugely generous person, reaching out to newcomers and welcoming them into the community with acts of kindness; collecting a stranger from hospital in Aberdeen; or helping out with dog walking and sitting. Above all she *nourished* people; her parish buffets and socials down south were legendary, and she continued this ministry once back in Cromarty. Early arrivals on a Sunday at St Regulus would be greeted with the delicious aroma of brownies, freshly baked for coffee time.

From the moment of her cancer diagnosis onwards, Moira's staunch faith and inner peace were to the fore. Near the end of her life, as she talked with a friend about the duration of her life being limited, she said: *'I am OK with that. I am content. It's all good.'* We rejoice that she who spent her life serving others with energy and flair is now seated at the banquet of her Lord and hearing these words: *'You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat'*.

Revd Canon Anne Tomlinson

SEI's Management Committee welcomed two new student representatives into its midst at its January meeting. The Revd Peter Woodfield is the new Initial Ministerial Education (IME) 4-6 representative. Peter is currently taking modules at SEI as part of his IME 4-6 studies while serving his Title as Assistant Curate at St Peter's Linlithgow and St Columba's Bathgate, with a view to completing a Master's degree. Peter is well acquainted with the workings of the Management Committee having served as the IME 1-3 student representative in years past. Rachael Wright, a second year Mixed Mode ordinand based in the Highland Perthshire linked charge, was elected by her peers at December's student Chapter meeting to serve as the IME 1-3 rep during this current year.



Judging by their contributions at January's meeting, both new members will bring much to the working of the Committee, which functions as a Board of Studies overseeing academic and curricular matters. The full complement of members is pictured above. Dr Eric Stoddart (University of St Andrews) serves as the Internal Quality Nominee and Mr Martine Somerville (Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership) as the External Quality Adviser. Professor Mike Higon (Common Awards, Durham University) is the University Liaison Officer (ULO). Revd Dr John McNeil Scott (Principal of the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College) represents our partner institution. Dr Elizabeth Corsar and Dr John Davies are SEI Associate Tutors for Biblical Studies and Liturgical Theology respectively.

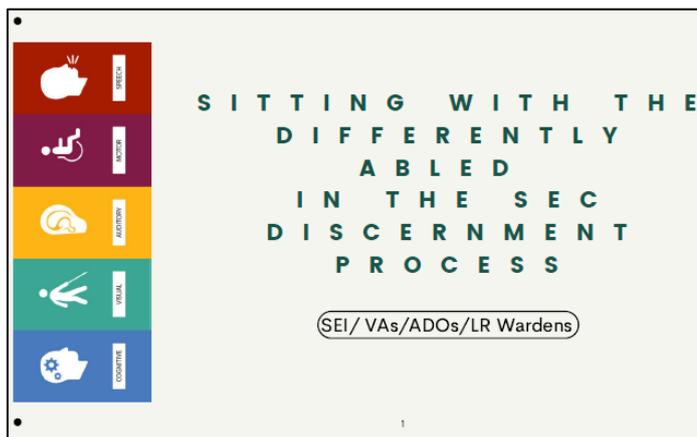
The Provincial Director of Ordinands, the Revd Ian Barcroft, brings us up to date with the progress of the SEC Discernment Process through the COVID experience and introduces Vocations Sunday.

Since last March, the SEC Discernment Team has continued the work of encouraging and supporting both Enquirers and Candidates to discern their sense of vocation, affirming both lay and ordained ministry in the SEC. Much of the work can be done online, although personal meetings are occasioned when regulations allow. The College of Bishops agreed for an online Advisory Selection Panel (ASP) using the SEI Moodle and Big Blue Button platforms, as well as Zoom. The first ASP, in July 2020, and the second, in November 2020, were successful; and this mode of delivery continues for the April and May 2021 panels.



The social elements of the residential aspect are greatly missed, but all the necessary components for assessment transfer have gone well, including worship. There is still a sense of a small prayerful, supportive, and joyful Spirit-filled community trying to achieve the very best with the help of God's good grace. My thanks to everyone involved, as the strong sense of affirming ministry and mission, lay and ordained, is at the forefront of everyone's attention.

In December the Vocational Advisors (VAs), Assistant Directors of Ordinands (ADOs), Discernment Meeting Members and ASP advisors, both lay and ordained, together with Wardens of Lay Readers



and our guests this year - Professor Brian Brock of Aberdeen University, the staff of SEI, and SEI Diocesan Advisors - took part in two days of learning and reflection. This included input on neuro-diversity, policies for inclusion and participation for those with special learning needs, material on the permanent (vocational) diaconate, mixed mode training and SEI pathways for learning. (The image on the left shows the first slide in the Revd Canon Lysay Downs's presentation.)

As the Spring beckons may I encourage [Vocations Sunday](#) (4th Sunday of Easter - 25th April). It is a day when I hope all in the SEC will focus attention on the discernment of our vocations, individual and corporate. In complete relationship, as Jesus is at one in relationship with his Father, we will truly understand the call, the vocation to love and serve. There is no other meaning to *vocare* – the call – than responding to meet Jesus and be in him. Tell the Good News, for such a life as this is not only of great value to the Church and the world but, in times like these, to all those burdened with great challenge and suffering. Once we sense our vocation, then we begin the journey of discernment together.

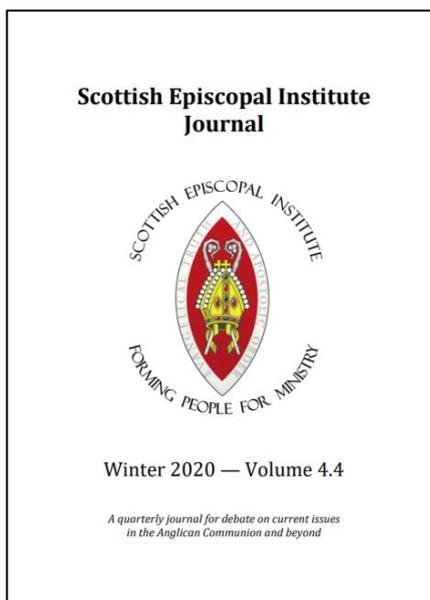
Revd Ian Barcroft

Acting like a Christian: What does it mean to act like a Christian? Or, to put it another way, what is characteristic of Christian behaviour? How is acting like a Christian different from acting like everyone else? Jesus says that everyone will know his disciples by their love. How are his disciples known in the twenty-first century by that criterion?

For five Monday evenings in Lent, we will consider these questions. We will look to the sources of Christian ethics: to God's revelation in the Bible and in the world. We will look to constructively critical voices from scientists, philosophers and theologians. We will try to articulate principles to guide Christian behaviour as individuals and communities, to identify what place such principles have in the public square as opposed to private lives, and to develop some facility to apply such principles to contemporary ethical questions.

7pm to 8pm on five Monday evenings in Lent via Zoom, presented by the Revd Dr Michael Hull. The discussion will be delivered via Zoom. Register [here](#).

22 February:	What does it mean to love like a Christian (John 13.34–35)?
1 March:	How is the Christian understanding of love critiqued today (John 8.3–11)?
8 March:	How is love to guide Christian behaviour (Titus 2.11–15)?
15 March:	Does 'Christian ethics' have a place in the public square (I Peter 2.11–15)?
22 March:	How may Christian principles be applied today (James 1.22–25)?



SEI Journal enters its fifth year: 'The Winter 2020 issue of the Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal is rich and varied', writes the Revd Dr Michael Hull. 'In addition to an article by John N. Collins, an international scholar of the diaconate, there are six articles on the vocational diaconate by authors linked to the Scottish Episcopal Church: John Reuben Davies, Norma Higgott, Stephen Mark Holmes, Harriet Johnston, Richard Tiplady and Anne Tomlinson; the Scottish Episcopal Institute Annual Lecture 2020 by the missiologist Cathy Ross entitled 'Mission and Formation in a Time of Lament and Hope: Reflections after COVID-19'; a response to the Doctrine Committee's 'Theology of Authority in the Ministry of the Church' (Grosvenor Essay no. 13) by John Hind; an article about pilgrimage and running by Mark Calder; an informal reflection on ministerial practice by Gregor Duncan; and, finally, five book reviews.'

'This Winter issue marks four years for the Journal, with sixteen issues having come online since Spring 2017. Thanks are due to those whose contributions over these last four years have made the Journal a significant source of theological reflection in Scotland and the Anglican Communion, especially Nicholas Taylor and Alistair Mason, who stood down from membership of the Editorial Board at the end of 2020. The Board members are now the Revd Dr Michael Hull (Convener), Director of Studies at SEI; Dr Elizabeth Corsar, Associate Tutor at SEI; Dr John Reuben Davies, Research Fellow (History), School of Humanities, University of Glasgow; the Revd Canon Dr David Jasper, Convener of the Doctrine Committee of the SEC's Faith and Order Board, formerly Professor of Literature and Theology, University of Glasgow (ex officio); the Revd Dr Oliver O'Donovan, formerly Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, School of Divinity, New College, University of Edinburgh; the Revd Canon Dr Alison Peden, Rector, St Modoc's Church (Doune); and the Revd Dr Jenny Anne Wright, Associate Priest, Christ Church (Morningside). Dr Heather Barcroft is the Journal's copy-editor.'

Revd Dr Michael Hull



Institute Council looks forward: ‘Some of the joys in being part of the SEI Council’, writes the Revd Elaine Garman, ‘is involvement in its hope for the future, and dedication to improving things in the present. At the January meeting of the SEI Council we looked forward to a time when we might consider how all that we do now impacts on lay ministries in the life of our Church. In the here and now we agreed the review of the Mixed Mode training which is to report later in 2021. Our ‘reformed’ discernment process continues to develop through experience and ongoing training of all those involved. It was noted that through such training we can improve access for a range of people with neuro-diverse characteristics, ultimately providing the SEC with leaders with a greater number of neuro-diverse gifts.’

‘We also recognised that having our own discrete discernment process increases the cohesion with the programme of training and formation for all authorised and licenced ministries. Likewise, the advantage of the integrated nature of the relationship between the SEC and SEI offers flexibility and response to the changing needs of the Church. We welcomed early discussion of extending the principles of Mixed Mode training to Assistant Priests and Vocational Deacons. The possibility is also being discussed of the development of a specific Provincial post for IME 4-6 (Phase 2 of initial training for Ordinands and Lay Readers). These are both exciting possibilities which continue to respond to need and our ability to act in response to God at work in the world.’

Revd Elaine Garman

The 2021 SEI Staff Conference attended by core SEI staff and Associate Tutors will take place on 2-3 March, being held, as last year, online. The keynote speaker is Dr Katrin Bosse, Associate Lecturer in Theology in the School of Divinity, St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, who will offer a paper entitled ‘*Being Some-Body in the Body of Christ. Dimensions of Embodiment in a Christian Perspective*’, embodiment being a crucial subject in our lives and that of the Church at the present time.



Dr Bosse will explore the theological relevance of embodiment with regard to human dependence and freedom, finitude and mortality, and to individuality and sociality. She will explore ‘the theological value that is displayed in the Incarnation, and consider the implications of this theological exploration for being somebody in the body of Christ in the contemporary world’.

Core SEI staff will lead a session on ‘Formation-driven ministerial training’, outlining the ethos underlying the curriculum; namely one which strives to address the development of character and the nurturing of virtues and spirituality alongside the acquisition of knowledge/understanding and the development of cognitive and practical skills. The programme aims to enable students to engage deeply with themselves, others, the Church, the world and God by offering learning that forms them in various disciplines, is constantly oriented towards the ministry and mission for which they are being prepared, and enables their development as lifelong reflective learners. **Revd Canon Anne Tomlinson**