

## MAY 2019 NEWS FROM SEI

**Holy Week at Mirfield:** Three of the SEI community, Lisa Curtice, Janet Spence and the Principal, spent time with the Community and College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, experiencing their Holy Week journey. And



*Janet, Fr Peter CR (Principal) and Lisa*

what a journey it was! Lisa writes: 'During Holy Week the first words of the morning were the morning office, and we fell asleep with the cadences of the plainchant in our ears. This rhythm quieted our minds in preparation for the journey ahead. And while we breathed in a warm spring, blossom and birdsong, that inner journey continued softly through sorrow and waiting until it burst into a crescendo of noise and light on Easter morning. This was the day.'

Janet writes: 'I am so grateful to have received support from the St James' Fund to enable me to spend the Easter Triduum at the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield. A time of silence, and modest fasting. And yet this time was a feast: the intense taste of a plain hot cross bun on Good Friday, having fasted since Thursday's high tea; the darkness at 4.30am making the Paschal Candle flame that we followed into the dark church shine SO brightly; the song of a single bird as we entered the lower church at 4.45am on Easter Sunday; and the exuberant joy and touch of blessed water from the font splashed with abandon as we felt the joy of Christ's resurrection. Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!'

**Institute Council News** The Revd Elaine Garman (right) writes: At the April meeting of the Council relationship matters were at the forefront of our discussions. There were all sorts of relationship matters and we did indeed reflect that relationships matter! We applauded the Student Chapter's decision for the SEI Community to become an Eco-Congregation and think about its relationship with God's creation even as its members change from year to year; we can see it as a useful part of the spiritual formation process. We heard, too, that some of the staff have been involved with the emerging relationships across Scottish Christian researchers with the development of an information portal to point to current research, help disseminate research into practice and seek wide involvement across all churches in Scotland.



We listened to the student feedback on the changes to the discernment and selection process for ordained ministry. There was a reflection on the important pastoral relationship between anyone discerning their call and the Rector of their church. We talked about the call of all who are baptised and how sensitive the process is in determining the subject of that call. When the perhaps hoped-for outcome of entry into training for authorised ministry is not the path discerned at that time, then people can and do feel bruised and indeed in need of good pastoral care from, amongst others, their Rector – relationships very much matter.

Families matter too, and we discussed how best to articulate the dynamic of responding to God's call, our obedience to that, and the potential impact on vital earthly relationships with family. This is all brought into sharp focus around decisions for curacies and future incumbencies. How the Scottish Episcopal Church responds as a faithful church both to God and to her clergy at these key points and beyond were debated fully. We will return to the topic – again, relationships matter.

**Revd Elaine Garman**



**The Director of Studies** is a key post in the Scottish Episcopal Institute, one which carries the responsibility for oversight of all elements of ministerial training that are assessed as part of formal programmes, especially the Common Awards Scheme, which SEI entered in 2015. The ethos for SEI's training is that it is formation-led and academically sound within a context of a pattern of formation for the discipleship of all the baptised.

The Director's main tasks include overseeing SEI's relationship with Common Awards. CA is a unique partnership with the Church of England's Ministry Division and Durham University to deliver a suite of qualifications for lay and ordained ministers – as well as all the baptised

– by pooling resources. Currently, nineteen theological education institutions in the UK participate in CA. From CA's rich palette of offerings, the Director attend to the development and delivery programmes of study, modules and pathways as required by the direction of the Institute Council. The Director also liaises with CA to improve programmes of study, for example the Diploma in Higher Education, the BA (Hons), and the Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission currently offered at SEI, as well as working to expand SEI's offerings in future, perhaps with a Postgraduate Diploma and an MA.

The Director also sees to quality assurance across all components of the programmes, assessed and otherwise, delivered in a variety of modes, pathways and locations. This includes assuring that all programmes of study and modules have a high level of integration of formation for ministry and theological education.

The Director takes direct responsibility for managing SEI's teaching staff of Associate Tutors to ensure that the staff is comprised of subject experts that is diverse and skilled in theological education for ministerial formation. This includes organising a teaching-staff residential each year, in conducting peer reviews of teaching and meeting individually with Associate Tutors to review students' feedback on modules and their delivery. The Director is also Tutor in Biblical Studies and personally delivers modules in that subject area.

The Director oversees SEI's blended learning. That is, the Director works to expand and improve upon SEI's multiple methods of delivering modules: face-to-face seminars in the General Synod Office, during annual orientation days and on residential weekends; Big Blue Button, an online service that provides the real-time sharing of audio, video, slides, chat and screen; assuring and arranging access to local theological libraries; the Moodle, or virtual learning environment, which affords a learning platform for tutors, administrators and students with a single robust, secure and integrated personal learning environments; and the marking and moderation of all summative assessment, through Moodle and Turnitin (an online assignment submission tool) in preparation for the annual Board of Examination do confirm mark and progression.

Since its debut in 2017, the Director has also been *ex officio* the Convener of the Editorial Board of the SEI Journal. In that capacity, the Director solicits articles and books, peer reviews them and edits the Journal.

**Revd Dr Michael Hull**

**SEI Training Fund:** Thanks are paid this month to Professor Gordon Graham for his generous donation to the SEI Library of three books in the Ashgate Studies series, '*Theology, Imagination and the Arts*'. SEI also kindly received a book-token from an anonymous donor which is likewise being converted into stock for the library. Thanks likewise go to the Centre of Mission (Diocese of Edinburgh) for the very generous donation of £497 following the Licensing of the Revd Simon Cake on Saturday 23 March.

