

## JULY/AUGUST NEWS FROM SEI

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**General Synod 2019:** Lay Readers Patsy Thomson (left) and Caroline Longley gave splendid descriptions of their ministries in the Institute Council slot at General Synod. Caroline gave two examples of activities in which she is involved which fit with the description of ‘teaching the faith’: leadership of a monthly service in a local care home, and environmental activism, namely stewarding for Edinburgh school pupils staging a strike to raise awareness of the climate crisis. She continued: ‘The ‘story’ of what constitutes ‘success’ or ‘a life well lived’ needs to change and maybe we can contribute to this. As a preacher, I want to be speaking positively about what society could be aiming for. And pastorally I want to be offering a listening ear to those of any faith or none who are exploring different ways of being, nurturing whatever spiritual awareness is growing’.

Patsy, who is based in Cromarty, a Highland town of 700 people on the edge of the Black Isle, spoke of the work she does as a Lay Reader from her home base of St Regulus, ‘the spiritual hub of the town’, working as a community theologian in the fields of peace and justice, interfaith, food poverty and refugee welcoming. She went on: ‘I am so very grateful to the Scottish Episcopal Church for making tolerant space for my take on Lay Reader ministry as I seek to promote interfaith links by joining the sangha for meditation weekly, as I seek to dismantle prejudice about the church’s lack of relevance to the community, and as I seek to be a cross-cultural disciple.’

In his introduction to the two speakers, Bishop Kevin stressed the vital role Lay Readers have in today’s church, working as lay theologians, teachers and communicators of the faith, and also told Synod members about the Lay Readers’ conference due to take place in 2020.

**SEI Journal:** The Summer issue of the [Journal](#) honours the Reverend Canon Professor David Jasper’s *The Language of Liturgy: A Ritual Poetics* (London: SCM Press, 2018). Professor Jasper’s contributions to the wider church, to theology and to scholarship spanning more than four decades. *The Language of Liturgy* reflects a breadth of experience and expertise in language and literature, in theology, and in Christian ministry and worship. In the *Journal*, three Anglican liturgical scholars whose lives have intersected with Professor Jasper’s, offer essays. Dr Bridget Nichols, Lecturer in Anglicanism and Liturgy at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (Dublin), explores the potential in drawing together insights from the study of liturgy and of ritual. The Reverend Professor Bryan Spinks, Bishop F. Percy Goddard Professor of Liturgical Studies and Pastoral Theology at Yale Divinity School (New Haven, CT, USA), addresses issues raised by Professor Jasper, for example the nature of poetics, its relationship to doctrine, and its use in and with liturgical prose. The Reverend Dr Gordon Jeanes, Vicar of St Anne’s, Wandsworth explores how the Book of Common Prayer came to shape not only the worship of the Church of England, and of many Christians in other parts of the world, but to influence the English language itself. It is hoped that these essays, and Professor Jasper’s response, will assist us in thinking through issues relating to the language used in worship.

## Praying our farewells (i)



The photo, courtesy of Aidan Strange, shows the 2019 Leavers after the Valedictory Eucharist. They are listed here from back left, followed by the initial of the Diocese in which each will serve her/his Title. Mike Blake (A&O) and Russell Duncan (Ed) are missing from the photograph.

Don Grant (MR&C)

Jenny Holden (A&O)

Kathryn Sanderson (MR&C)

Jane Edwards (Ed)

Jean Souter (A&O)

Sue Ward (Ed)

Roxanne Campbell (Br)

Annie Hughes (StAD&D)

Peter Woodfield(Ed)

Susan Henderson (URC)

Katrina O'Neill (MR&C)

Harriet Oxley (G&G)

The service was a truly joyful act of worship, made all the more so by the wonderful playing and singing of first year ordinand, Dr Lesley Penny, and fellow musicians from St Mungo's Balerno. Afterwards students, their families and friends, staff, and the Convenor of the Institute Council, the Rt Revd Kevin Pearson, enjoyed lunch together at Mamma Roma's restaurant where they were joined by five of the SEI Ambassadors and two clergy who have supported SEI hugely through the past year by giving their deputising fees to the Training Fund.







**Praying our farewells (ii):** The 'College Annual Service' of the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College took place on 13 June at Saughtonhall United Reformed Church, Edinburgh. This marked the end of the academic year for the one student currently in its midst, Susan Henderson, seen left with the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland, the Revd Dr David Pickering. Susan has now completed her studies in SEI but has a further EM1 year to go during which she will be stationed in Morningside United Church Edinburgh.

At the service, the Principal of the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College, the Revd Dr John McNeil Scott, gave a thoughtful reflection upon journeying and 'ebenezers', and Emeritus Professor Jack Dyce preached on the theme of 'nobility'.

In the course of his reflections, John quoted from Pádraig Ó Tuama's poem 'Narrative Theology #2':

*God is the crack  
where the story begins.  
We are the crack  
where the story gets interesting.*

*We are the choice of  
where to begin;  
the person going out?  
the stranger coming in?*

These words were most apposite in the circumstances. Immediately prior to the College service during which SEI staff bade farewell to Susan - the person 'going out' - they had spent the afternoon meeting Louise Sanders and Roberta Ritson, two new URC students from the Northern Synod (England) who will be 'coming in' to study at SEI.

The photo shows (from left) Lesley Thomson, the third new URC student who will be studying at the University of Glasgow, Roberta Ritson, Susan Henderson and Louise Sanders.



*Photo courtesy of Linda Harrison*



**SEI Training Fund:** Thanks go this month to the **Berwickshire Team** (Diocese of Edinburgh) for its very generous donation of the offering uplifted at the Institution of the Revd Chris Jones as Priest-in-Charge in Christ Church Duns on 20 May; to the congregation of **St Oswald's Kings Park** (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) for yet another kind donation; and to the **Revd Sally Gorton** (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) for her continuing generosity. Our thanks go also to the **Revd Hilary Naish** (Diocese of Edinburgh) for the kind gift of books, the sale of which made a tidy sum for the Fund. Especial thanks go to the **Revd Moira Jamieson** (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) for donating the offering collected on Sunday 23 June at the Church of the Holy Name, Cumbernauld.

This truly was 'a retiring collection'; the service marked the end of Moira's six years of faithful service as Priest-in-Charge at Holy Name. Moira, shown here with Ray Gascoigne, also kindly donated theological books and clerical garments, the proceeds from the sale of which will go to the Fund.

**Institute Council round-up from the Revd Elaine Garman:** Even for the SEI Council, which is not involved in the day-to-day business of the students' year but that of overall direction, there was a sense of the end of an academic year as we went through the June agenda. That process had two directions, looking back and looking forward, brought into focus with the student reps – thanking and saying 'good-bye' to Harriet Oxley and welcoming and anticipating the input of Philip Schonken. Debates over the agenda items reinforced our desire as an Episcopal church to continue to develop relationships. For instance, we tussled how best to meet the needs of curates in IME 4-6 across the responsibilities of individual charges, the dioceses and the Province. We did not lose sight of the need for investment in developing a community of curates by paying attention to relationship-building between them which adds value and cares for them whilst meeting their formational and educational needs. We agreed what was important to offer those entering stipendiary curacies as well as articulating what is expected from them – such transparency helps everyone.

We reflected on the General Synod discussion about lay ministries and emphasised the need to have a 'mixed economy' of ministries, with oversight, across the Province. This starts with a desire to grow discipleship that may, but not necessarily, lead to more people coming forward to enter recognised lay ministries, authorised lay ministries as well as ordained ministries. These are exciting times for the church in general and the SEC in particular as we implement our new discernment processes; and indeed we welcomed the Revd Ian Barcroft, the new Provincial Director of Ordinands, who will lead that process.

The Very Revd Sarah Murray and the Revd Markus Dünzkofer, supervisors of the first of the Mixed Mode ordinands, gave thoughtful and thought-provoking insight into their experiences. We teased out issues that might feature in evaluation of the programme: sustainability of community development elements of work in the charges, the thorny issue of finance, and the culture change that these students typify but which does not reside with them alone, such as greater emphasis on mission and evangelism and how their learning impacts on others: the congregations, other students and future SEI curricula. We look forward again to hearing, discussing and discerning how best we might train our future leadership of the SEC at our next meeting in November.