

JULY-AUGUST 2020 NEWS FROM SEI

2020 SEI Lecture: this year's Lecture, the fifth in the annual series, will be given by Dr Cathy Ross, Director, Pioneer Mission Leadership Training Centre for CMS (Church Mission Society) and Canon Theologian, Leicester Cathedral. Dr Ross, one of the world's leading missiologists, is a prolific writer; her published works include *Women with a Mission*, *Mission in the 21st Century*, and *Pioneering Spirituality*. Her topic is 'Mission and Formation in a Time of Lament and Hope: Reflections after Covid-19'. This is to be given on Thursday 29th October 17.00 – 18.00. This was to have been held in New College, University of Edinburgh, but will now be delivered via Zoom, with live Q and A. Further details to follow.



Institute Council: As we met for the first time as the Institute Council by videoconference, *writes the Revd Elaine Garman*, we responded to the needs and restrictions of lockdown. Responding to need continued as a theme throughout the meeting. We reflected on the previous establishment of online learning to meet our needs of dispersed geography that had better prepared SEI to move to total online learning than perhaps some other theological education providers. That said, we acknowledged the difficulties and stresses that students and staff have experienced in such a shift.



Evaluation of the online learning in the Argyll & The Isles pilot was considered. This predated any thoughts of lockdown and had been trialled to respond to the learning needs of laity in remote and rural locations. It was agreed to continue to develop such resources. With an eye to our present and future needs it was also agreed that Bishop Anne would lead a small group to scope out the evaluation of the Mixed Mode work for the consideration of the November Institute Council meeting.

The needs of students with specific learning differences, and how we ensure that we are harnessing the gifts of all, were discussed. It was agreed that the specialist assessments required will be supported by monies at Provincial level. An Access and Participation Plan is in the process of being prepared to support those with disabilities.

New Diocesan Advisers meet for training: Every student at SEI is accompanied throughout the three years of their formation by a Diocesan Advisor, someone who acts as a personal mentor and 'critical friend'. Students and DAs meet monthly throughout the three terms to reflect together upon the students' development and chart progress.

Although this year's new intake of students will not be fully known until after the church's Advisory Selection Panel meets in mid-July, Diocesan Advisers have been discerned in readiness so that they can greet any new candidates immediately upon their recommendation for training. Five new DAs – the Revds Sylvia Spencer, Maggie McTernan, Rosemary Bungard and Julia Boothby, and Mrs Megan Cambridge (*pictured below*) and one returning DA, the Revd Dr Ruth Green (*missing from photograph*) thus met for a day's training on 19 June. Together they worked through the responsibilities of the role, the paperwork involved, and the skills required: the art of pastoral supervision, the giving of feedback and the writing of evidence-based reports.



Diocesan Advisers were also introduced to the mysteries of Moodle and Big Blue Button by Mrs Linda Harrison, SEI Administrator (*shown top left*). By sharing the screen, Linda was able to walk participants through the processes students experience when they submit assignments, have them scrutinised by Turnitin, the plagiarism tool, and receive them back after marking. She also introduced the new Advisors to the one-to-one 'meeting rooms' that she has set up, enabling them to meet on-line with their assigned student as and when they wish in the coming year. A most helpful practical session and one which was deeply appreciated by the new recruits!



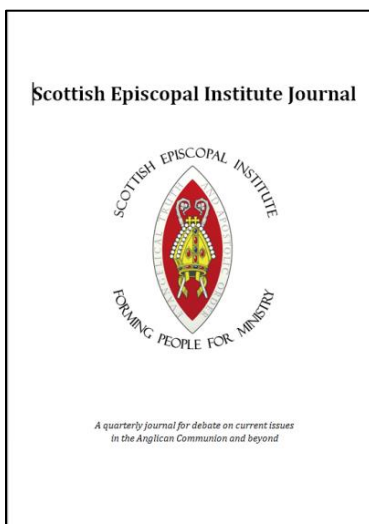
Others do likewise: A similar training session took place on 1 June for those clergy who are to serve as Training Incumbents for the next three years. This was led by the Revd David-Paton Williams (*left*), IME 4-6 Co-ordinator for the Central Belt, and the Principal. **Mixed Mode Training Supervisors** had a training session of their own that day led by the Revd Dr Richard Tiplady, Director of Mixed Mode Training, joining in with the Training Incumbents for two of the Zoom sessions. A further training session will take place in September for those who will serve as **Placement Supervisors** 2020-21. This event, led by the Revd Dr John Scott, Principal of the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College and SEI's Principal, will include supervisors from the URC and SEC.

SEI Journal: The Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal is an outreach of SEI and an important voice in our Church. It was conceived as a vehicle for debate on current issues in the Anglican Communion and beyond in 2016, *writes the Revd Dr Michael Hull (right)*. The idea was to invite dialogue on what it means to think as an Episcopalian in the twenty-first century, that is to provide a catalyst for prayer and theological reflection at the heart of the SEC.



In order to reach out to as many persons as possible, the Journal is electronic and free-of-cost. In order to stay current, it comes online four times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter – with topical articles and book reviews about the life of the Christian Church on any level, but especially on contemporary theological, liturgical, pastoral and ministerial subjects. The Journal's first issue was in Spring 2017. Its inaugural issue noted that it is an attempt on the part of the people of God to write about God and the things of God, with the aim of enriching the intellectual life of the Church with cogent theological reflection.

The Journal's Editorial Board is drawn from a rich variety of SEC members, particularly from higher education and pastoral ministry. Two members serve *ex officio*: the Revd Dr Michael Hull, SEI's Director of Studies, who convenes the Board, and the Revd Canon Dr David Jasper, Convener of the Doctrine Committee. Other members of the Board serve on a rotating basis of three-year terms. Currently, they are Dr Alistair Mason, Chair of the SEI Exam Board; 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); the Revd Canon Dr Nicholas Taylor, Rector, St Aidan's Church (Clarkston); and the Revd Dr Jenny Wright, Associate Priest, Christ Church (Morningside).



The Journal's Summer issue online [here](#) is entitled 'Church, Ministry and Coronavirus'. It was conceived as the nation entered 'lockdown' and the churches with it. The impact on our lives is unprecedented. Significant theological concerns have come to the fore in the worldwide crises of the COVID-19 pandemic. This issue reflects not only on the life of the Church, but on society, community and the value of human life. Responses to the pandemic by governments around the world have curtailed freedom of movement and worship, social interaction, and economic activity. The virus' devastation of death and illness dominates our news feeds. And in its wake, there are increasing levels of mental illness, child abuse and domestic violence; there is confinement of vulnerable people to homes where they are unsafe; and there is concern that the pandemic is being exploited to corrode civil liberties and to subvert democracy.

'Church, Ministry and Coronavirus' draws together contributions from a variety of disciplines to resource the people of God in their exploration of the issues and discernment of the theological truths to be applied now and in the coming years. The present crises demand our theologically informed vigilance. In the bedrock of our Christian faith is the belief that every human being is created in the image of God and that the glory of God is each one of us fully alive and flourishing in a community of persons. In a time when a cacophony of voices shout for our attention, the prophetic voice of the Church is urgently needed.

Church and Ministry in a Secular Age: a monthly forum for church leaders.

This venture, the brainchild of a member of Institute Council, the Revd Paul Watson, Rector of St James the Less, Bishopbriggs, with support from the Revd Dr Richard Tiplady, Director of Mixed Mode Training at SEI, is intended to give those at the sharp end of ministry in our secular age an opportunity for sharing fellowship and wisdom through which to discern God's presence. It is open to anyone involved in Christian leadership in Scotland. Participants will come together for an hour once a month, have an introductory session with fifteen minutes input on a relevant topic, and spend the rest of the time in discussions in breakout rooms.



The organisers, who themselves come from a variety of denominational backgrounds, hope that all who participate will benefit from the richness of experience and relationships as they travel together in facing common opportunities and challenges. 'This is not just about Covid 19', the organisers say, 'but also the larger context of a secular age. Our prayer is that we will be resourced both personally but also in our ministries to find a way forward and about what God could be saying to each of us in our settings.'

The series started with a session on 18 June led by the Revd Paul Watson which looked at the current context; subsequent meetings will move towards looking to the future. All sessions are held on the third Thursday of each month from 3.30 to 4.30pm, although the Zoom room will be open for 15 minutes before and afterwards. Eventbrite notices will be sent out monthly for each event.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/church-and-ministry-in-a-secular-age-a-monthly-forum-for-church-leaders-tickets-108763905770>

- 16 July: *The Medium and the Message: the Paradox of Online Ministry.* Rev Dr John Carswell, Minister of Cadzow Church of Scotland, Hamilton.
- 20 Aug: *Buffered selves? What impact might lockdown and the resulting self-isolation have on people's sense of themselves as 'buffered' (to use Charles Taylor's concept) from spiritual realities?* Rev Dr David Miller, Millerston United Free Church, Glasgow
- 17 Sept: *Missional Spirituality.* Rev Liz Crumlish. Renewal and Pioneer Coordinator, Church of Scotland.
- 15 Oct: *Growing small missional communities of disciples* Rev Andrew Baker, Superintendent Methodist Minister, Strathclyde.
- 19 Nov: *Developing a pioneer culture in the local church.* Rev Dr Richard Tiplady, Director of Mixed Mode Training, Scottish Episcopal Church.

Pioneer Ministry Course: The course, a joint enterprise between the Faith Nurture Forum of the Church of Scotland, the Presbytery of Edinburgh and the Scottish Episcopal Institute, is run by the Revd Dr Sandy Forsyth. It aims to equip participants with a grounding in the theological understanding and practical knowledge needed to begin new worshipping communities through pioneer ministry and church planting. Open to lay or ordained members of any Christian denomination, it is especially relevant to those bringing to birth a 'fresh expression of church'. Classes will take place at New College, Edinburgh and online, January-April 2021. The practicalities will be confirmed nearer the time (subject to Covid-19 requirements) but the schedule is likely to involve six two-hour evening classes and two Saturday gatherings. The course costs £200, whether or not done for credit (10 credits at SQA Level 7). To register interest, please email NewCollege@ed.ac.uk