

## NOVEMBER 2020 NEWS FROM SEI

**Michaelmas ordinations:** Four 2020 leavers were ordained Deacon at Michaelmas in services across the Province. On Saturday 3 October, Rebekah Cansdale (right) was ordained by the Rt Revd Kevin Pearson in St John's Cathedral, Oban where she will serve her Title. Beki is the first Mixed Mode candidate to be ordained in the SEC, and so it was very fitting that the Revd Dr Richard Tiplady should be the preacher on that occasion. The next day two further services took place. Dr Josh Cockayne (below left with Richard) was ordained by the Rt Revd Ian Paton in St Andrews, St Andrews. Josh will serve as Assistant Curate in that congregation while also working as Lecturer in Analytic and Exegetical Theology in St Mary's College, the School of Divinity in St Andrews University.



That same afternoon in St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, David Todd and Russell Duncan were ordained by the Rt Revd Dr John Armes. David (below left) will serve as Assistant Curate in St Mark's Portobello and Russell (below right) in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Murrayfield. While only 50 guests were allowed in the Cathedral, nevertheless the service had a majestic feel. Members of St Mary's Music School offered instrumental music during Communion, and the newly overhauled Henry Willis organ thundered in the voluntaries. Those attending these services will have heard these words that the College of Bishops have permitted for use:

*In a distinctive way deacons are a sign of the proclamation and humility which mark all service offered in the name of Christ, bearing witness to the Lord who laid aside all claims of dignity, assumed the nature of a slave and accepted death on a cross. In the name of the Church, deacons are sent to declare the kingdom of God and to care for those in need, serving God and the world after the pattern of Christ. They have a commitment to outreach and witness, advocacy and prophecy, flowing from their historic ministry for the poor, needy and sick, and seeking out the careless and indifferent. They are called to build bridges between the Church and the world, and to be an expression of the unconditional love of God.*



**New University Liaison Officer:** Every TEI has a designated University Liaison Officer who attends one meeting of the TEI's Management Committee each year, and selected Board of Examiners meetings. Such personnel also contribute to the annual and periodic review processes. Common Awards notified us that from October 2020 onwards our ULO is Professor Mike Higton (*right*) from the Department of Theology and Religion, University of Durham. That post is part of the University's Common Awards partnership, Professor Higton being responsible for academic input into the University's validation of the Awards, and for developing collaborative research projects that bring together people from the church and university sectors to discuss the future of theological education.

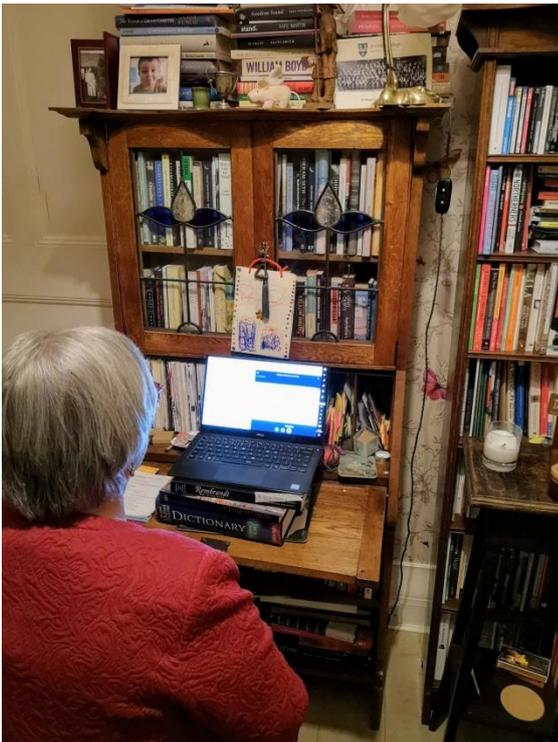


We enjoyed welcoming Professor Higton to his first SEI Management Committee meeting in October. He is well acquainted with SEI already, having delivered the first Annual SEI Lecture in 2016 at New College, Edinburgh on 'Teaching and witness in the life of the Church', and was also part of the Periodic External Review team that visited last February. We take this opportunity likewise to thank Dr Frances Clemson (*left*) for her service as ULO since SEI joined the Common Awards family; for accompanying us so helpfully on those 'toddler years' as we learned and grew in CA's ways.

**Congratulations** to Pauline Jones, ordinand in the Diocese of Edinburgh, who writes: 'The words on the email, which I had just read at least twice, said: "I am pleased to tell you that you have been awarded a Master's degree in Theology, Ministry and Mission with distinction". Yet, I am so aware that without the gracious co-operation between All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry and the SEI, supported by Bishop John and the Diocese of Edinburgh, I would have been unable to complete my studies.



'I had moved to Scotland in May 2019 with my husband Rev Chris Jones to allow him to take up a post within the Scottish Episcopal Church. Consequently, I needed to transfer my Common Award studies from Liverpool Diocese and All Saints, Chester to Edinburgh Diocese and SEI. Though the latter institution was not validated to award postgraduate degrees at that time, both TEIs worked hard to find a solution. As a result, I remained a student of All Saints for completion of my MA studies, yet was able to audit relevant study modules with SEI along with fully participating in and enjoying student life through (pre-Covid!) residentials and Big Blue Button. So as I read that email I was grateful for the hard work that both colleges had put into supporting and enabling me to successfully complete my studies. Thank you.'



**Home, but not alone:** What do you call a Residential Weekend when all the students and staff are joining in online from home, as seen by these photos of Lisa and Philip? We haven't come up with an alternative name so far, but the event itself went smoothly, with students experiencing fewer connection issues than previously and commenting on there being a better sense of pace and space. Highlights were the input on 'growing church' offered by the Revd Canon Malcolm Round, Senior Pastor of St Mungo's, Balerno (Diocese of Edinburgh) and that on 'liturgy and art' by Dr Carol Marples of the Soul Marks Trust. Dr Daphne Audsley, the SEC's Assistant Safeguarding Officer, spoke to the Final Year students about 'Safe Church'. Daphne is a Member of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission and so spoke authoritatively about the Commission's recently published Guidelines.

On Saturday the community gathered to watch Beki Cansdale's ordination to the diaconate, livestreamed from St John's Cathedral, Oban, while on Sunday the Revd Grace Sironomy (Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness) presided at a beautiful pre-recorded service. The daily rhythm of Morning/Evening Prayer and Compline was maintained, with students offering these Offices in imaginative ways.



Feedback assures us that we are all learning from each iteration how to run and participate in these 'non-residential residential events' better. But if this mode of delivery is to remain the state of affairs for some time yet, what else do we need to be doing? The next challenge for the staff is to devise criteria for the assessment of online worship-leading and preaching; simply matching the students' performance against the old criteria is not adequate, as online skills in delivery differ so markedly.

And as for the students? A clearly identified challenge for them is how to prevent pets obscuring the screen when trying to study. Answers to Dominic, please, before the next so-called 'residential weekend' in early December!

**SEI Lecture 2020:** When leading missiologist Dr Cathy Ross submitted her Lecture title back in the spring - *'Mission and Formation in a Time of Lament and Hope: Reflections after Covid-19'* - little did any of us think we would still be living in Covid conditions. Her paper, however, showed us ways to transform Covid-gloom into hope and missional enterprise, framing the pandemic as a time of transformative disruption which should catalyse the Church in the West to scrutinise its baggage and its inhibitions and 'leap over the walls' to greater engagement with the rest of God's world.



Dr Ross's scintillating presentation, inspired by her own experience of the World Church and by the prescient writings of John V. Taylor (General Secretary of the Church Mission Society (CMS) from 1963-74), was further enhanced by hugely creative contributions from two entrepreneurial colleagues from the Pioneer Mission Leadership Training Centre for CMS in Oxford, Rachel Sayers and Adam Gompertz, who described their own hope-filled pioneering practices. Rachel has helped people 'to notice' the trees in their neighbourhood during lockdown by chalking the names and characteristics of local trees on the pavement under or beside them. Adam set up REVS (tagline: Cars. Life. Restoration.), conducting his ministry of 'taking God's love to people who love their cars but aren't sure about church, faith, or God stuff' amidst the classic car scene.

This was the first time the Lecture has been advertised through Eventbrite and conducted purely virtually. It attracted 125 viewers on the night, the highest attendance in the five years this event has been running. The video recording of the Lecture is available [here](#).



**Next year's Lecture** will be given by the Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Penrith, on 28 October 2021, hosted by the University of Glasgow. Dr Ineson is well qualified to speak about formation having served as Principal of Trinity College, Bristol from 2014 to 2019. Her second book, *Ambition: What Jesus Said About Power, Success and Counting Stuff* considers leadership in the image of the Trinity and the key spiritual dispositions for ambitious people. As she said when that book was launched: *'Being around church leaders I have seen the effect that the constant pressure to grow the Church can have on people. I would be delighted if this book were particularly helpful for younger Christians who are leading in whatever sector, not only in churches.'*

**Warmest thanks to those congregations** who gave the offerings uplifted at ordination services to the SEI Training Fund: St Ninian's (Diocese of Brechin) from the Revd Roxanne Campbell's priesting; St John's Cathedral, Oban (Diocese of Argyll and The Isles) from the ordination of Beki Cansdale; St Mary's Cathedral (Diocese of Edinburgh) from those of Peter Woodfield, Russell Duncan and David Todd. We are most grateful for these generous gifts which support those training full-time whether at New College or on the Mixed Mode pathway.



### **How To Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going:**

The Revd Paul Watson, Rector of St James the Less Bishopbriggs (*left*), recently took the initiative to set up an online meeting space for anyone involved in Christian leadership in Scotland. Participants in *'Pastors in a secular age'* come together for an hour once a month, listen to a presenter offering 25 minutes input on a relevant topic, and spend the rest of the time in discussions in breakout rooms.

These sessions aim to give those at the sharp end of ministry - which can sometimes be a lonely place - an opportunity for fellowship and shared wisdom. So far those attending, from a variety of denominational backgrounds, have benefitted hugely from the richness of experience and relationships shared during these gatherings, finding themselves to be on a common journey through the opportunities and challenges of Covid 19-times and the 'Secular Age'. Paul writes that *'our prayer is that we will be resourced both personally but also in our ministries to find a way forward and what God could be saying to each of us in our settings.'*

The Revd Dr Richard Tiplady will lead the next session on Thursday 19 November 2020, 15:30 – 17:00 on a topic close to all our hearts. Contrary to early hopes, the UK seems to be entering into its own experience of 'long Covid'. Infection rates are rising again, restrictions are tightening, and it looks like it will all end in tiers. In a time of ongoing uncertainty, with little light at the end of the tunnel and even less hope of change for the foreseeable future, how then do we lead? Is it possible to set a direction, to make decisions, and to take God's people forward, when we don't know where we're going or even what might be possible? The seminar will draw on Karl Weick's concept of 'sensemaking' to provide a framework for leadership in times of uncertainty. When the future is unclear, what can we do? How do we deal with our own fears and uncertainties? And if we can't do much, can we at least do something? After Richard's presentation, participants will go into breakout groups and return for a plenary at the end. Please register with Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/127429078805>

**Christian Theology Book Discussions:** The aim of this new initiative by SEI is to gather a handful of folk online occasionally to discuss theological texts in common. The idea arises from an aspiration to read and then discuss theology in Christian community. The Revd Dr Michael Hull will select books relevant to our lives as Christians. An announcement will be made on SEC and SEI social media to advertise each discussion with a link to Eventbrite. The group will gather on Zoom from 7pm until 8pm, with a break mid-way. If there is sufficient interest among the participants, a Google group will be formed for further discussion. Ten working days prior to the gathering, an email will be sent to participants with a number of talking points and questions to facilitate discussion.

The first gathering is planned for Wednesday 20 January 2021 when Justin Whitmel Earley's book, *The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction* (InterVarsity Press, 2019) will be discussed.