

JUNE 2021 NEWS FROM SEI



On Sunday 9 May the gathered SEI community said 'farewell' to five students as they came to the end of the final Residential Weekend in their three years of Initial Ministerial formation. Sandra Wright (Diocese of Edinburgh) will be licensed as a Lay Reader around Michaelmas; at the same time Claire Nicholson, Lesley Penny, (Diocese of Edinburgh), Lisa Curtice (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) and Philip Schonken (Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness) will be ordained Deacon. Here each of them offers a parting word.

A recipe for creating Lay Readers and Deacons, the SEI way

Take some ordinary people called
 And let them settle.
 Then overrun them with residential weekends and module lectures.
 Remove these after approximately 3 years.
 Add lots of planned worship services.
 Mix in visiting Bishops from all the Dioceses
 Then take a blend of music, evangelism, witness
 And some Chaplaincy,
 Combine with some social interaction
 And turn up the heat.
 Sprinkle some fresh Diocesan Advisors,
 Placement Supervisors and Reflection Groups together with some
 External speakers, SEI staff and guests.
 Then add to the melting pot.
 Leave the ingredients to simmer.
 As they mix and blend, allow their faith to flourish
 Binding them together with love.
 Allow time to be cool.
 Add some unity, understanding, and respect for the future,
 Serve with justice
 And enjoy.



Philip Schonken, Deputy Head Pastoral, Gordonstoun School, who will serve his Title at Holy Trinity Elgin, Diocese of Moray Ross and Caithness, offers this lovely poem which he says is 'inspired by and borrowed from Benjamin Zephaniah's poem, 'The British'.

Note: All the ingredients are equally important. Treating one ingredient as better than another will leave a bitter unpleasant taste.



Dr Lesley Penny, Director, BioResearch and Veterinary Services University of Edinburgh, will become the Assistant Curate at St Cuthbert's Colinton (Diocese of Edinburgh) in the autumn. She served the SEI Community this past year as 'Chapter Chair', convening the meetings which are held at every residential event at which students raise and discuss any issues about their education and training within SEI.

Lesley writes: *'Three years, gone in a flash and so many memories .. blue book mysteries and thuribles, lots of lectures – and laughter, piano upgrades and singing, differences and common ground, hoomous and After Eights (together - don't ask), friendship and fellowship. For these things and more. Grateful.'*

SEI staff thank Lesley warmly for her hard and creative work as Chapter Chair through this past year, and especially that of helping to shape a Charter for Chapter which sets out the aims, values and behaviours of these student meetings. This will be included in the new IME 1-3 Handbook to be published on 1 July.

Dr Claire Nicholson, Consultant Adult and Paediatric Neurosurgeon, The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals, will become Assistant Curate at Holy Trinity Melrose (Diocese of Edinburgh) in the autumn, having served her Final Year placement there. Throughout her three years at SEI, Claire has repeatedly woven modern Scottish poetry into her theological reflections in a way that has inspired her fellow students and staff. She does so here again as she looks back over the past three years.

Claire writes: *'Nan Shepherd's poem, 'Summit of Corrie Etchachan', is for me a metaphor of the last three years of formation:*

*But in the climbing ecstasy of thought,
Ere consummation, ere the final peak ...*

The climb is long and demands great effort. At times one is daunted, even frightened, by the immensity of the task and the impossibility of attaining complete understanding. But the goal is not to reach the summit, for that will not happen in this life, but rather to be immersed in God. To explore the height and breadth and depth of His love, to glimpse His majesty and beauty as one glimpses the mountains through the mist, then to come down from the mountain and share what you have experienced with others, in the hope that they will listen, and that they too will go in search of God.'

The poem, from *In the Cairngorms* (The Moray Press, 1934) can be read at [The Scottish Poetry Library's site.](#)



The road from Emmaus

It was only
 when we got outside and turned,
 wrapping our cloaks round us against the chill night air,
 that it struck me -
 the place our steps would take us now
 was back to where we had been headed all along.
 Excited? Yes, we were, and fearful.
 'Don't stumble now', said the voice in my head.
 Who knew what we were going towards?
 Would the others still be waiting?
 Could we tell it right?
 Yet, somehow in my heart,
 a blessed peace.

When we burst in
 the news hot on our lips,
 there may have been a flicker of disappointment.
 that Simon Peter had already seen him.
 But then that now familiar feeling
 of being shown a different meaning
 inside the life we thought we knew.
 This breaking, this meeting, this sharing
 is not a once for all.
 It's what we will always do
 together.

And through this we are called
 to meet others on the journey,
 some torn with grief or grappling with what it all means,
 needing companions
 and longing to be brought home,

I'm not sure I believe enough.
 What if I don't recognise him
 those times when words are angry,
 no one can be bothered listening or
 things just feel flat and stuck?
 How glad I am to know
 that that's when he'll come near
 to burn the dullness from my heart.

For now, we wait.
 Pray for us that the Spirit comes.



[Dr Lisa Curtice](#), Director, The Craighead Institute, will serve as Curate in the Renfrewshire Region (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway). Lisa has a deep love of Ignatian spirituality and poetry, as this profound parting reflection demonstrates.

Sandra Wright: Sandra spent her Final Year placement at St Barnabas, Moredun (Diocese of Edinburgh), participating wholeheartedly in that charge's vibrant community engagement. She writes: 'One of the highlights in my training came from attending a multi-faith English speaking group led by Bethany Christian Trust in Moredun. The week's topic was the symbol of the Poppy, which led to discussions about war and Remembrance Sunday.'



'I was struck when a couple of the Muslim ladies shared their first-hand experiences of war in Syria and Sudan where they witnessed the loss of loved ones. It brought home the reality and heartache of war that we so often view from a place of safety. I was also unexpectedly asked to explain the word 'sacrifice' and felt prompted to share about Jesus' sacrifice for us. It was a humbling experience that still stays with me but was also a joy to be able to testify.'

Sandra will continue this ministry of teaching, testimony and preaching as a Lay Reader, beginning her ministry by serving in Holy Trinity Haddington (Diocese of Edinburgh) under the mentorship of the Revd Liz O'Ryan. We wish her and all the Leavers every joy in their ministries, and ask God's blessing on them as they continue their journeys of discipleship.



One of last year's Leavers: Last Michaelmas Dr Joshua Cockayne, Lecturer in Analytical and Exegetical Theology in St Mary's College, University of St Andrew's, was ordained Deacon by the Rt Revd Ian Paton, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane, and began serving his Title at St Andrew's, St Andrews. Over the course of the pandemic it became clear that the University would not be making new appointments in the near future and Josh's contract was due to expire early in 2022. Very excitingly, however, he was successful in his application for a post in the Diocese of Leeds as a city-centre Missioner. He writes: '*I will be responsible for starting a new ministry in the centre of Leeds to work with young professionals in the city. It combines aspects of chaplaincy, fresh-expressions and traditional ministry. My training and placements at SEI couldn't have equipped me better for the role!*'

Josh will continue his curacy in a full-time capacity alongside the role under the supervision of St George's Church in Leeds, starting in August. While this move back to the Church of England – he was originally sponsored by the Diocese of York - is a huge loss to the Scottish Episcopal Church and to the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane in particular, we wish Josh, Ellie and the children every joy and blessing in their new home and church context, and look forward to reading about the growth of the new Missioner's ministry in Leeds city centre. As Josh writes: '*It has certainly been an exciting and unexpected journey so far and I'm looking forward to seeing what God will do in the next period.*'

A day in the life of the SEI and PDO Administrator: 'Friday 7 May is hardly a typical day,' writes Linda Harrison, 'but draws together the diverse aspects that keep the Administrator to the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) and the Provincial Director of Ordinands (PDO) on her toes!

'The May Advisory Selection Panel, a part of the SEC Discernment process, is in full swing, having met online for two days already. No interviews today, but an early start to open Zoom for Morning Prayer, followed by the closing session with Candidates and the PDO explaining the process from here. In a short break, I send the Candidates' written reflections to the Advisors to read through later this morning. Our Final Eucharist with Bishop Anne and farewell to the Candidates follow. Though the Advisors continue to meet, for the Administrator technical support is complete.



'Coffee . . . before returning to Zoom for a worship rehearsal with the Principal. The rest of the morning is filled with email conversations with new Associate Tutors, sending forms off to Common Awards via their secure online portal (it can take a little while for the verification to arrive, but it is vital to keep the data we transfer to the University secure), further discussions about e-books as we prepare for the fast approaching new academic year, and setting up contacts for the Mixed Mode Review Team. A text message arrives: one of the student's internet is down, a fault on the line that may take a few days to repair, so back into Zoom to find the 'phone details for them. We are highly dependent on the internet, and experience relatively few problems, but at this moment, whilst not ideal, we are glad Zoom has a 'phone connection option too.



'The weather is forecast to be better than previous or coming days (snow two nights ago!), so time for a longer-than-usual-at-lunchtime walk with the Greyhounds, a welcome rest from the computer screen.'

'Final check that the online Appraisal Conferences are set up for Monday and Tuesday, when I will be enjoying two days' annual leave. The 'phone rings to announce another student has experienced a power cut, with supply estimated to return later in the evening. Back into Zoom to send the one tap mobile phone details by text so they can join by a mobile device, thankfully their backup batteries are fully charged! Our reliance on power supply dawns forcefully, amid plenty of sympathy for their wider family implications too.

'Final checks on the Residential Weekend links set up in Moodle, SEI's Virtual Learning Environment, to guide us through the weekend and that the worship being shared across the three days is ready to go, before a cup of tea and starting the Residential Weekend Zoom room at 4.45pm.

‘Staff and students soon begin to arrive for ‘Checking-in’, the opening session of the weekend, followed by Evening Prayer. I am glad to join the community as we greet each other and settle into the rhythm of prayer and worship that will flow among the study sessions and farewells to the Leavers that have been so carefully prepared.



‘For the Administrator, Evening Prayer is followed by a welcome offline break until Morning Prayer on Saturday, but for the staff and students the Mission and Evangelism session with the Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth follows their offline evening meal, before Compline in small groups.

‘Far from a typical day, but a glimpse into the inspiring mix the SEI and PDO Administrator is called to support.’

Linda Harrison



SEI Lecture 2021: With the Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson’s translation from Penrith to a new post as Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York - the role reimagines and replaces the existing position of Bishop at Lambeth - SEI found itself last month bereft of its advertised 2021 Lecturer. However the Revd Dr Michael Hull, SEI’s Director of Studies, has very nobly picked up the baton and will offer a lecture entitled ‘*To Filioque or Not to Filioque: The Warrant of Holy Scripture*’. This will be held on Thursday 28th October 2021 in the Glasgow University Memorial Chapel, Gilmorehill Campus, West Quadrangle, Glasgow G12 8QQ. The Lecture will commence at 17.00, and be followed by a reception 18.00—19.00. Registration details via Eventbrite to follow.

The Rt Revd Kevin Pearson writes that *‘it is a great privilege for the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway to host the 2021 SEI Lecture. The fact that Dr Michael Hull has so nobly stepped into the breach is, most certainly, in the spirit of dedication that characterises the staff of SEI. The fact that he is well known in the Province and the subject matter will ensure a great deal of interest and a large number of people.’*

The Lecture will be livestreamed as before, and published in the SEI [Journal](#)

SEI Training Fund: This month we thank the congregation of St Mary’s Dunblane (Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) for its kind donation to the Fund, and also the Revd Canon Ruth Innes (Diocese of Edinburgh) for her generous donation of a fine library of theological books. Warm thanks are also paid to Anne Macdonald DCS and Canon Robin Paisley for their very generous donations to the Fund.



New Deacon: The Revd Dr Jaime Wright was ordained Deacon by the Rt Revd Dr John Armes in Old St Paul's, Edinburgh, on Sunday 2 May 2021. The Revd David Paton-Williams, Rector of St Columba's by the Castle, Edinburgh, the congregation in which Jaime served her final Mixed Mode placement, preached a powerful homily about the diaconal calling of all the baptised.

Jaime, one of the first intake of Mixed Mode students at SEI in 2018, is shown here deaconing at a celebration of the Eucharist for Easter 6, this being broadcast as the provincial online service for 9 May. Jaime is serving her Title as Assistant Curate at Old St Paul's (Diocese of Edinburgh).

Five entrances and an exit:

When the new academic year begins in August, SEI's team of Associate Tutors will be substantially enlarged by the arrival of five new members of staff, whom we introduce here. **Dr Joel Pierce** is the Online Facilitator of the UK–Egypt Scriptural Reasoning Project. He recently earned his doctorate in Ethics and Political Philosophy from the University of Aberdeen. He will offer a module on themes in moral philosophy.

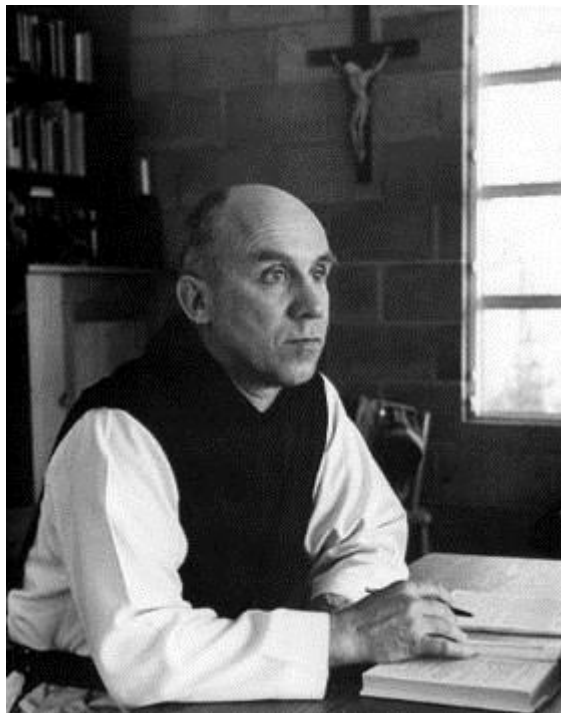


The Revd Dr John Carswell is the Minister of Cadzow Parish Church (Hamilton). He earned his doctorate in Practical Theology from the University of Glasgow. He will deliver a module in liturgy and mission. **Dr Amber Shadle** is a Reference Support Officer at the University of Aberdeen. She also earned a doctorate in Old Testament from Aberdeen. She will deliver modules in Old Testament Studies and Biblical Hebrew. The **Revd Christoph Wutscher** is Rector of Holy Trinity Church (Stirling) and a Member of the Liturgy Committee of the SEC's Faith and Order Board. He holds a Master's in Sacred Music Studies, and will deliver a module in liturgy. **Dr Patrick McMurray**, having formerly trained and practised as a human-rights lawyer, has recently earned his doctorate in Biblical Studies from the University of Edinburgh. He will deliver modules in New Testament Studies and Biblical Greek.

All these met on the afternoon of Wednesday 12 May for an induction session led by the Revd Dr Michael Hull, SEI's Director of Studies. They were then joined by the existing Tutors – the entire cohort is pictured above – for a further hour's session on 'On-line pedagogy'. This was ably facilitated by **Dr Elizabeth Corsar**, who currently tutors in Biblical Studies. Sadly it was also the occasion at which we bid farewell to Elizabeth who has just been appointed Tutor in Biblical Studies at St Padarn's Institute, the Church in Wales's formational agency. We wish Elizabeth every blessing as she joins the staff of this sister TEI.

Pastors at play: The speaker at May's meeting of Paul Watson's ecumenical support group for church leaders, *Pastors in a Secular Age*, was SEI's Principal. Anne Tomlinson built her talk upon an idea taken from the group's foundational text, Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, namely that 'play' is crucial for Christian 'flourishing'. Framing it as a form of 'PPE for pastors', Anne highlighted the value of play in today's overly instrumental and rational culture, and challenged participants to think about its place in their own lives.

*'Is it possible to countenance - let alone engage in - something that is not a means to an end?' she asked. 'And what happens to our souls if we don't?' Her talk reminded us of the fact that Religious are often people who understand best the need for play, citing that lovely scene in the film *Into Great Silence* when the monks of Grande Chartreuse slide shrieking with laughter down a snowy slope high in the French Alps on their Sunday walk outside the monastery's grounds. Or those lyrical words of Thomas Merton (above) at the close of *Seeds of Contemplation*: 'Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance.'* She commended us all to engage in godly play for our souls' well-being, and to read the classic text, *Jesus' Day Off*.



The final meeting before the summer of *Pastors in a Secular Age* takes place on Thursday 17 June at 3.30pm. The Revd Paul Watson, Rector of St James the Less, Bishopbriggs, (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) will be looking at what Charles Taylor means by 'secular 3' and exploring the challenges and opportunities of ministering in an age when everything is contestable.

He will also look at how we can sustain ourselves and even thrive in today's context as leaders of small congregations when so many people have the experience of being pressured; believers by doubts and non-believers by the haunting possibilities of faith. To join the meeting, see the details given below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83619851642?pwd=YkpDOTZuVnYxbTN2WVgraFhtdXlNdz09>

Meeting ID: 836 1985 1642

Passcode: 386139

Next month's SEI Newsletter will cover July/August; these months are effectively the summer vacation for SEI students and with less going on there is less to report. Staff however will be busy over this time preparing for the Orientation Week, 29 August – 4 September, which at the time of writing we very much hope will be held in St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull Hill, Perth.