

Scottish Episcopal Church  
Church in Society Committee Partners





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Our Church interacts with society in so many ways. With our size and limited resources, the number of things that we can deal with directly is limited. This has led to a model of focusing our resources on a small number of areas where we lead partnerships and where we feel we can make a real difference, but most of our aspirations seek to have effect through working with others. This community model seems appropriate and widens the impact of our church in its mission to be a Christian voice in current society.

The projects we have supported are of two kinds. We have longer term strategic partnerships with organisations such as Scottish Faith's Action for Refugees, Faith in Older People and Eco-Congregation Scotland where the aim is through that organisation and in partnership with other sponsors to develop an ecumenical approach to some of the significant issues in current society. Here we are clear that our funding, which is commonly modest, may help the organisation in attracting other funding or allow them to fund other projects as is the case with Faith in Community Scotland.

However, in addition we fund specific projects, most commonly because we see them as examples of approaches, which might be followed more widely. This includes projects such as the Mum's Plus activity in Edinburgh, the Cycling without Age activity in Prestwick and The Family Support activities in Hamilton. Funding for projects of this type can be short-term pilot, activity related funding or on a more long-term basis, as is our funding for Marion Chatterley's HIV Support Chaplaincy. This area will be expanded in 2018 with the introduction of funding for SEC-led projects specifically related to the amelioration of the impact of Child Poverty. Here we hope to work in partnership with the Cinnamon Network.

The range of work we assist in these ways is also varied with support for environmentally related organisations such as Eco-Congregation Scotland, Stop Climate Chaos, for unequivocally people based projects such as Refugee Health Advocacy and Scottish Churches Housing Action and activities with a political link such as the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and Just Festivals. Working together in this way makes our church's mission that much more effective. We hope that you will enjoy the progress and successes detailed in these reports.

**David Atkinson**

**Convener Church in Society**

# Healthy Lunches

## St. Ninian's Stay and Play Family Support Group, Dundee

Our church identified a need in the community to support parents and their children living in the bottom 5% of the most deprived areas in Scotland in a non-statutory, non-threatening, non-judgmental way. Many of these parents are young and isolated. We wanted to provide a safe place where they could experience friendship and support for themselves and for their children. Here they can build relationships and find encouragement to develop themselves and their children. Additionally, we offer advocacy and access to other agencies to help with wider issues.



At 8.00am Monday morning our church metamorphs into a nursery



Parents attending the Group can be stressed, angry and withdrawn. Inadequate living conditions and poorly heated homes make it difficult to provide regular full meals for their children. Often a chaotic lifestyle leads to eating unhealthily.

We aim to give parents the opportunity to learn how to cook foods for themselves and foods appropriate to the ages of their children. Our experience has shown that if an interest is encouraged in making simple meals; allowing parents to make pureed food for first stage baby food as well as offering simple foods for children at the weaning stage, the parents begin to report that they are not only making foods at home, but are also saving money. This improves their self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities to feed their family.



Experimenting with food



It's a sprout tree!

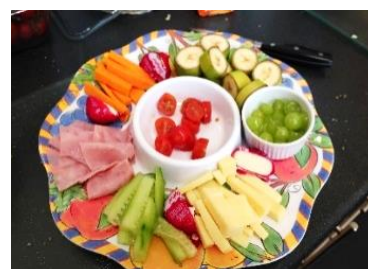


Mums try cooking

Our aim is to give families a free healthy lunch at least twice weekly which will help their physical and mental health.



Thanks to the grant from the Scottish Episcopal Church in Society Committee we can give parents and children this along with the opportunity to sit down at table and eat together.



We evaluate the effect of this by noting all numbers involved in all cookery sessions, note comments about healthy cooking and eating, take lots of photos and observe parents and children interacting as they eat together with staff and volunteers at snack time and lunchtime.

[www.stayandplaydundee24.wixsite.com/stninians](http://www.stayandplaydundee24.wixsite.com/stninians)  
[stniniansstayandplay@gmail.com](mailto:stniniansstayandplay@gmail.com)

## Faith In Older People

'Spiritual care matters' is fundamental to the work of Faith in Older People. During the year we have developed and promoted two courses aimed at health and social care staff to better understand the needs of residents but also to reflect on their own spiritual needs to increase empathy and a sense of reciprocity.

Two major research programmes, one covering care homes in Scotland and the other long stay units in one health board area provided evidence that more needs to be done to provide education on the importance of spiritual care in ensuring the well-being of those for whom they care. It is intrinsic to good person-centred care and encompasses what gives meaning and purpose to someone's life including music, faith, relationships and the outside world. As we opened up discussions it was evident that staff were enabling spiritual care but being unaware of what was meant by it.

Dementia and its impact on carers and congregations has been a major part of our work over the past two years as we developed and consulted upon a guide for use by congregations. This has culminated in a learning resource which we will be promoting in February 2019.

The Malcolm Goldsmith Lecture was given by Canon Dr Joe Morrow on the theme of *Ancient but ever growing – a 40-year pilgrimage in the mental health fields of Scotland*. It was both informative and challenging.

Our identity and sense of belonging is a vital part of our sense of well-being and the theme has formed part of several events, one with Interfaith Scotland and the other in collaboration with Bethany Christian Trust during the JUST Festival. We encourage people to think about and wherever possible share and record their stories so that these aspects can be reinforced if capacity diminishes.



*These photographs demonstrate how complex we are as individuals and the things that make up our identity and give us a sense of belonging*

We continue to take on the challenges of developing a stronger response to end of life matters, dementia and awareness of the spiritual dimension in our lives.



## Scottish Churches Housing Action

Scottish Churches  
Housing Action



**Scottish Churches Housing Action** brings the main Christian bodies in Scotland together. We believe in a Scotland free of Homelessness.

Scottish Churches Housing Action:

no room for homelessness!

- ♦ Develops local volunteering projects to help homeless people
- ♦ Encourages the development of affordable housing on land or buildings the church no longer needs
- ♦ Makes sure the churches know the problems of homelessness in our land.



**Starter Packs** can make a huge difference to individuals and families who have experienced homelessness making a new home. When they get a house from the council or housing association it's empty. They don't get furniture, bedding, cooking essentials or cleaning equipment. Last year over 3000 starter packs were distributed across Scotland. Our new East Lothian partnership with Fresh Start & Recycling First provided over 500 packs alone.

We have continued to work with **Women's Aid** groups across Scotland, creating links with local churches who support the projects. Leaving a refuge and re-establishing a home for the first time after trauma can be a challenge. We help churches play a part by providing household essentials and other necessities. We have had positive feedback from the Women's Aid groups, one recipient saying, *"I would just like to thank the churches for donating to me. I could never afford these things on my own....when I came to Women's Aid I couldn't see light at the end of the tunnel, but now....I have the opportunity to start a new life with my children"*.

We are working in partnership with **Crossreach** to establish and sustain a befriending/peer mentoring programme for vulnerable people in Inverness. We are in the process of recruiting a Volunteer Coordinator to oversee delivery of the service. This new role will involve working with organisations and the wider community.

**House to Home befriending** project in Renfrewshire continues to be a great success. We have 4 volunteers providing support to 5 vulnerable people. All befriender's reported an increase in confidence and a feeling of belonging in their community, one saying *"My befriender points me in the right direction and made me more confident in myself"*.

**Volunteers** - we have over 11 volunteers working within our office and befriending programme. We were astonished to see that collectively these volunteers have provided over 1,300 hours equating to £11,557 donated to SCHA last year. Thank you all.

The Scottish Episcopal Church was a founding member of Scottish Churches Housing Action in 1995. It has had continuing involvement by appointing a representative to the SCHA Board and through volunteers and supporters throughout Scotland.

Scottish Churches Housing Action mobilises Scotland's churches  
We provide speakers for Guilds, Sunday worship or other events

Contact [info@churches-housing.org](mailto:info@churches-housing.org)

[www.churches-housing.org](http://www.churches-housing.org)

## Faith in Community Scotland – Grants Programme

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty organisation supporting faith-based organisations to tackle poverty within a local context. Our grants programme is one way of doing this; working with local faith groups, building hope by providing grants and support in Scotland's most deprived communities. Over the last year we have awarded grants to many varied and diverse groups and seen themes emerge such as food poverty, isolation and debt. By supporting faith-based groups through this, they can help communities flourish and see a real difference in individuals, families and communities.

2018 was the *Year of the Young Person in Scotland* and provided us with an opportunity to tackle issues of poverty and mental health in our young people. Young people growing up in poverty have poorer mental and physical health on average and it is also the case that mental health problems in childhood are linked with poorer outcomes in later life. A new programme entitled *Embrace* was developed to challenge this and is centred on the 4Ps model that seeks to protect and promote young people's resilience through:

- Parents (Carers) – a nurturing caring, rule-enforcing relationship with a parent, carer or adult figure
- Peers – social connectedness with a supportive peer group
- Problem solving – ability to problem solve and communicate can moderate risk factors
- Passion – an interest, hobby or skill that the young person highly values in themselves

Working in partnership with local community anchor projects providing local budgets for social and relational activities for young people has tackled issues of poor mental health, stigma, lack of opportunity, and social isolation through activities such as arts and drama, dance, music, cycling, amongst many others.

Our regular grants programme continues to support new and exciting initiatives across Scotland. As this continues, as does the wider programmes within Faith in Community Scotland, including our Community Development Team: working in our most marginalised communities supporting faith groups to tackle poverty locally; The Poverty Truth Commission: bringing together people with lived experience of poverty and people in powerful positions to help shape policy and decision making; and Faith in Throughcare: working with people on release from short term jail sentences to support them and to reduce re-offending.



If you would like to find out more about the programmes of faith in Community Scotland please get in touch on 0141 221 4576.



## Cycling Without Age Prestwick

Many people living with limited mobility struggle with isolation, limited social interaction and the lack of freedom to get exercise in the fresh air.

A solution to this was to come from Denmark. A young man, noticing an elderly man sitting outside his nursing home in Copenhagen and stopped to chat while he was out cycling. The elderly man commented, "I used to do that a lot".

The young man replied, "If I found a suitable bike, would you like to come with me?"

The trishaw was located, one of many Danish designs, and the elderly man relived some of the thrills of his cycling days. He revisited old haunts and caught up with old friends. They arranged a regular day to meet up. What a gift! The whole movement spread under the banner *Cycling without Age*. It now operates in 40 countries around the globe. It began in Scotland at Callander Park in Falkirk, followed shortly after, here in Prestwick. 15 other groups currently operate in Scotland; more are planned.



The trishaw is a three-wheeled rickshaw, engineered to accommodate two passengers in the front and driven by a pilot in the rear, using *electrical pedal assist - pilot* as a reminder that it is not the same as riding a bike - requiring training and practice. The trishaw is accompanied by a *pathfinder* or *co-pilot* on an ordinary pushbike (this requires no training). A 2-hour session is offered to two passengers;

it's an opportunity to go for a drink, stop to chat, to pet dogs or just enjoy the view. Time is a wonderful gift to give anyone.

The **Prestwick Peoples' Project** is a community project who actively look for folk in the area with limited mobility – young and old alike; those who may also struggle with loneliness and isolation, who cannot get out and would therefore benefit from the freedom of feeling *the wind in their hair*. While the biggest source of users will be found by word-of-mouth, days allocated to groups are envisaged, including care homes, those recommended by Dementia Friendly Prestwick, retirement housing and local churches. It is hoped that this project will grow organically. It is aimed that being seen out and about having fun in the fresh air will generate interest. In excess of 20 teams of volunteer pilots and co-pilots are also required per trishaw.

Trishaws cost about £7,500 each. Grants have been received from a number of sources including the Scottish Episcopal Church, along with donations. Local groups have organised fundraising events. A second trishaw has been purchased. Ongoing help is required to keep all this on the road; training pilots and co-pilots along with continued fundraising to cover servicing, spare parts and replacement.

The next time you see us out and about on the trishaw, stop us for a chat, say hello or give us a wave. We look forward to another sunny summer to share the chance to be out and about, enjoying the view from Prestwick promenade!

## Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR)

### SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

We are a partnership between Scotland's main Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations which seeks to co-ordinate and promote action by faith communities in Scotland to support asylum seekers and refugees.



For many years Glasgow has been an important centre for people seeking asylum, and in recent years the Syrian resettlement programme has seen refugees rehomed in every local authority area in Scotland. The work of faith-based aid agencies including Christian Aid in supporting refugees and Internally Displaced Persons internationally continues to be well supported by Scottish churches.

The prayers, time, money and goods offered by members of the Scottish Episcopal Church are important symbols, and practical means, which say that refugees are welcome here and we care for the well-being of those in other parts of the world. The compassionate and loving response of Christians can be a counter to rising levels of racism and xenophobia.

### New Scots Integration Programme

We are working with the Scottish Refugee Council to deliver a new project to ensure that refugees are effectively integrated into Scottish society and that communities are supported and prepared to welcome refugees and involve them in community life.



As part of this we are offering a series of events, practical workshops or information sessions on topics of refugee integration – all we need is to hear from church groups that there is an interest and a willingness to help arrange an event. If you would like to find out more please get in touch with the National Faith Groups Refugee Integration Coordinator, Sabine Chalmers ([schalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:schalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk) tel 07388 376 784)

### With Refugees Scotland

With Refugees Scotland is a network of local faith-based projects and congregations in Scotland that are committed to working for a culture of dignity for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants locally, nationally and globally. It is often the empty-handed stranger who turns out to be the bearer of the most priceless gifts. We want to be known as people who stand in solidarity with refugees and migrants. The network is open to any group, big or small, that is supportive of our aims.

For more information see [www.sfar.org.uk/with-refugees-scotland](http://www.sfar.org.uk/with-refugees-scotland)

On Twitter @WithRefugees

On Facebook @Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

## Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

It's been another busy year for the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition, of which the Scottish Episcopal Church is a member.

In October 2018, the UN's scientific body on climate change published an important report which warned there is only a dozen years left to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Delaying action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. The authors of the report highlighted that the urgent action needed is both affordable and feasible.

There is a particular opportunity right now to influence how Scotland addresses this crisis as the Scottish Parliament is considering new legislation on this issue. MSPs are under increasing pressure to ensure that Scotland's action is in line with the scale of the challenge outlined by climate scientists and illustrated by the stories of those affected by climate impacts. Below is one of the stories featured in our '100 Voices' project, which you can read more about on our website.



Falesi Saplayi, Malawi:

*"Climate change is killing us here".*

*"Poor rains have led to poor regeneration of vegetation around this area. This forces us women to walk long distances to fetch firewood and sometimes families go to bed without food because they don't have firewood to cook."*

People across the country have been engaging with our campaign to improve how Scotland addresses climate chaos. In September 2018, we organised a mass lobby of the Scottish Parliament (below right) where people from all across Scotland came together to talk with their MSPs to express their concerns.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is a diverse coalition of over 40 civil society organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and international development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.





## St. Mary the Virgin, Hamilton Family Support Project

St. Mary the Virgin, Hamilton began a Family Support Project in 2002 after researching the parental problems affecting children's behaviours at a local primary school. It was evident that if parents could be supported well, then chaotic and problematic home life should be avoided, and their children attain better results at school.

The Scottish and Edinburgh based charity, Circle Scotland began family support work at St. Mary's, with their professional team of social workers. Since 2004, they have established excellent services in North and South Lanarkshire to help parents and children in a range of environments, especially those affected by parental imprisonment at Corntonvale and Addiewell.

During the same period, with the help of a part-time administrator, volunteers from St. Mary's, other churches and the wider community developed a child contact centre, meeting weekly on a Saturday from 10am until 4pm. An affiliated membership with *Relationships Scotland* helped develop good policies and practice with solicitors and family courts. Supported and Supervised Contact is provided and the grants received from the Church in Society have enabled development and training.

Both aspects of work have produced times of celebration for families, as well as frustration and set-backs. For volunteers and workers there can be moments of real satisfaction and also disappointment and occasional sadness. When children find parental support and love renewed, and parents gain confidence in their own abilities then volunteers and workers gain real satisfaction providing an environment, often over many months, which produces vastly improved outcomes for all concerned.

Such work has enabled St. Mary's to develop its vision as a church "for all" no matter what circumstances people find themselves enduring. Offering support to the wider community has produced a church with a better understanding of its faith and worship. The Vestry and congregation began another consultation in 2009 and developed a feasibility study with an architect for the provision of new premises within its 19<sup>th</sup> century environs. The congregation began a major fundraising scheme for its ambitious plans in 2012 and completed their fabulous new facilities in 2015. The new *Beech Tree Cafe* facility completed in 2017 has further enhanced community development at St. Mary's.



© St. Mary the Virgin, Hamilton

## The Refugee Health Advocacy & Policy Project

The Refugee Health Advocacy & Policy Project is a response to the increasing geographic spread of the refugee population in Scotland and aims to engage local refugee populations on taking a greater role in advocating on issues of mental health and wellbeing both locally and nationally.

Our primary focus is to increase awareness and subsequent engagement of refugees with the wider health and social care policy landscape. Through a programme of training we have engaging volunteers from refugee backgrounds to enable them to consider their own lived experience and place it in a wider policy context where their personal experience can be harnessed to advocate for informed policies reflecting the lived experience of refugees. Specifically, the focus is influencing how refugee mental health and wellbeing are understood and provided for. Evolving from this are opportunities for volunteers to engage with national health and social policy forums as well as refugee specific groups within statutory agencies. Central to all of this is the need to increase participation of people from refugee backgrounds in mental health and wellbeing work.



The Church in Society Committee contribution has allowed the volunteers to connect with the wider community and equipping them to do more public engagement activities that will inform the wider public on how mental health and wellbeing are experienced by refugees and what challenges this group of people in Scotland are facing.



Volunteers from Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire team building activities  
© Mohamed Omar



## Mums Plus Toddler Groups

If you come along to St Peter's morning Toddler Groups, you will see many of the same elements of any other Toddler Group in Edinburgh – colourful toys, healthy snacks and happy families socialising with each other. So, what makes Mums Plus Toddler Groups a little unique in its approach to supporting families with young children in our community?

We are not only committed to providing a supportive community for local families, we are also passionate about creating a space for women *returners* to complete online work that may seem impossible during their long, busy days! After taking a career break to care for young children, many mums face enormous difficulty in returning to adequately paid work; work that is commensurate with their skills, education and previous experience. This is due to a number of reasons, including the fact that, due to care-giving responsibilities, the hours they can commit to paid work are limited, disadvantaging them among their competitors. Disappointingly, many potential employers also view an employment *gap* – or a period of economic inactivity during which time a woman cares for her babies/young children- correlates to a deterioration in her skills, further impacting on a mother's ability to secure work in her field.

While we realise at St Peter's that we're not quite equipped to fix the bigger societal issue in terms of the obstacles mothers face when attempting to re-enter the workforce, we realise that there are some small things we can do! Due to a generous Church in Society grant, we were able to purchase four laptops and a barista coffee machine, to make sure that our mums feel respected and valued in our groups. We called this addition *Mums Plus* – Toddler groups plus a little extra! The laptops are there for mums to complete job applications, university assignments, research and so forth. And, well, a decent cup of coffee just makes everyone's day a little nicer!

Our groups run Mondays and Thursday, during term time, 9:30 – 11:30am.



© St Peters' Mums Plus

## Eco-Congregation Scotland

Supported by the Church in Society Committee with funding for the post of Environmental Chaplain and by publicising the charity's events and materials, Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS) is a growing ecumenical movement with a vision for a Scotland that cares for God's creation, now and forever.



67 Scottish Episcopal Churches are now among 448 registered eco-congregations, each affirming that environmental issues and caring for God's creation form part of the local church's life and mission. They are encouraged in spiritual, practical and global living, with over 100 now having received Eco-Congregation Awards to recognise their environmental focus and activities.



© David Coleman and Stephen Curran  
*Enjoying conversation over an 'Eco-Lunch', longstanding eco-congregation St Martin of Tours in Gorgie/Dalry*



© David Coleman and Stephen Curran  
*Rev'd Trevor Jamison and Rev'd David Coleman*

This past year saw the United Reformed Church extend the ecumenical Environmental Chaplain's post with SEC support, appointing Rev'd David Coleman for a further five years following Rev'd Trevor Jamison's previous five years in the role.

Both Chaplains were invited to speak with or preach at SEC congregations in all nine dioceses over the past year. ECS support also provided Creation Time material for use during September.



© David Coleman and Stephen Curran  
*Rev'd Mitchell Bunting, Rev'd Dom Ind and Rev'd David Coleman in St Michael & All Angels at ecumenical Creationtide Service for Helensburgh & Lomond network*

21 local networks of eco-congregations organised a programme of events, bringing active churches together and encouraging new interest in the environment, while more than 100 volunteers attended the Annual Gathering in Edinburgh on 28 April 2018, considering intergenerational climate justice during Scotland's Year of Young People.

ECS played an active role in the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition, lobbying MSPs for ambitious targets in the new Climate Change Bill and continues to encourage behaviour change to address global warming. Faith Action for Nature, a new pilot project formed through partnership between RSPB Scotland, ECS, SEC and the Church of Scotland, encouraged churches to take more active interest in wildlife and build closer links with RSPB Scotland locally.



© David Coleman and Stephen Curran  
*'Climate Conversation' discussing action to tackle climate change at St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow, hosted by the Justice & Aid Group*

The charity looks forward to working in every diocese over the coming year, encouraging more registered eco-congregations across the Scottish Episcopal Church.

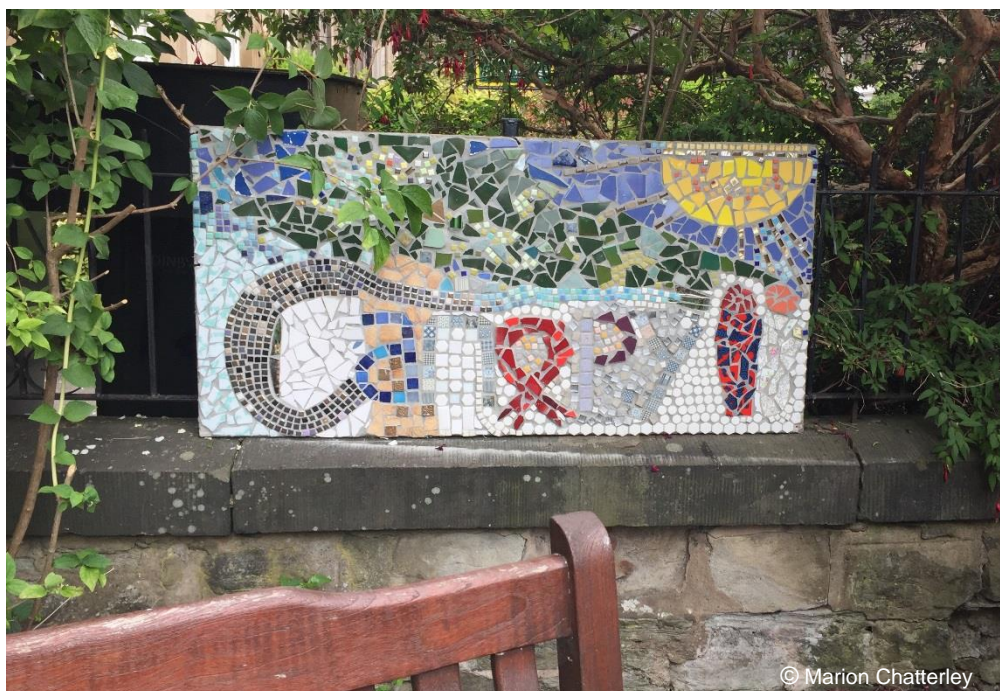
[www.ecocongregationscotland.org](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ecocongregationscotland](https://www.facebook.com/ecocongregationscotland)

## HIV Chaplaincy

Rev Canon Dr Marion Chatterley's Edinburgh ministry is focussed on people who have been living long term (20+ years) with HIV. There is a cohort of people who are ageing and developing co-morbidities and whose care and support needs continue to grow.

The regular drop-in group, Canopy, has met throughout the year. The current pattern is to meet once a month at Emmaus House for tea and cake and once a month at the Filmhouse to eat together and see a film. The Filmhouse has donated cheap tickets to the group which has enabled the cinema trips to become a regular routine. Those trips are especially valued as they encourage people to have a night out that is both affordable and supported.

The drop-in group is supported by FareShare donations – a local Tesco donates bread, fruit and vegetables which are distributed to the people who attend.



In addition to the groupwork, there is ongoing and regular 1:1 support offered. That has been accessed by a range of people, some of whom have needed one or two pastoral support sessions and some for whom very regular support is appropriate. One of the regular clients is serving a long prison sentence.

World Aids Day has been marked with a special Evensong at St Mary's Cathedral where red ribbons are distributed and people are reminded that HIV is still an issue within our communities and our churches.



## The Just Festivals

Just Festivals offer a platform for marginalised voices to be heard and represented in public discourse. We recognise a need for a collective approach towards tackling inequalities and promoting diversity through arts and open dialogue. Having observed how the community landscape of Edinburgh and Scotland has changed in the past 18 years, we have revisited our ways of engaging with communities and remodelled our programming activities.

In 2018, using the theme ***Outsideln***, The Just Festival engaged new and returning audiences in reflecting on vital social justice issues through talks, shows, poetry exhibitions and music.



We aim to continue working with disadvantaged groups and individuals and provide them with skills and support in ensuring their stories are told. We plan to increase our community outreach by engaging more disadvantaged individuals in the 'Age & Stage' project delivered in partnership with Active Inquiry and with the support from the Corra Foundation. In addition to the core funding from the Scottish Episcopal

Church's Church in Society Committee, the SEC Global Partnerships Committee also funded a project to provide two South African drama graduates with an opportunity to participate in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and present, to audience and reviewers' acclaim, their take on the highly renowned play *The Island*. With our technical and employability skills project, *Staged for Life* we will further engage young unemployed people in training sessions and provide work placement opportunities. Our events engage volunteers from Edinburgh and beyond and offer a safe and welcoming space to enhance their customer services, communications, technical and management skills. As part of our *Just Skills Academy Project* supported by the Scottish Government and the Voluntary Service Fund, we not only engage individuals but also third sector organisations in workshop sessions that equip them with skills while providing a platform for sharing ideas surrounding public engagement by means of expressive arts and events.



## The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office



The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) is a multi-denominational organisation which exists to build meaningful relationships between the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, UK Government and religious groups in Scotland. SCPO enables Scotland's churches to:

- Engage effectively in the political process
- Translate their commitment to the welfare of Scotland into Parliamentary debate
- Contribute the range and depth of their experience to the decision-making process

Highlights for SCPO in 2018 included:

### Church Leaders and Representatives' meeting with the First Minister



In March 2018, SCPO organised the annual meeting between church leaders and representatives of 10 denominations in Scotland with the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

For the first time church leaders were joined by young adults from within their denominations to mark 2018 as the

Year of Young People. The meeting focused on social isolation and loneliness, child poverty and the Give Me Five campaign to top up Child Benefit.

### Engagement on current issues

- Homelessness  
The SCPO Advisory Group explored the issue of homelessness and church responses through a series of conversations with Scottish Churches Housing Action, Bethany Christian Trust and the Very Rev Russell Barr (former Moderator of the Church of Scotland and member of the Scottish Government Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group).
- Dementia  
SCPO hosted a roundtable conversation with civil servants working in dementia policy about the role of churches in supporting people with dementia and their families. Following the meeting there was an opportunity for church representatives to participate in a consultation about loneliness and social isolation, with particular reference to dementia.
- Review of Transgender Recognition  
SCPO hosted an informal roundtable conversation with civil servants to hear about the Review of Transgender Recognition. This was an opportunity for church representatives to learn about the details of what was proposed and ask questions.

### Campaigns and Awareness Raising

- Give Me Five campaign  
The campaign continues to lobby the Scottish Government to take positive action to alleviate child poverty by increasing Child Benefit by £5 a week. The campaign group recognises that the recent Child Poverty Delivery Plan from the Scottish Government, 'Every Child Every Chance – Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-2022' would not have included the commitment to an



## The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office

Income Supplement had it not been for the successful lobbying of the *Give Me Five* campaign.

The campaign is now focusing on the Income Supplement for families in need and challenging the Scottish Government to reveal how it will work and if it can be implemented sooner than the current 2022 deadline.

- Challenge Poverty Week 1-7 October 2018

Irene MacKinnon, SCPO Research and Resource Development Officer, was on the steering group for Challenge Poverty Week 2018. Weekly Worship resources will be produced through the Church of Scotland Priority Areas. The key messages for this year's Challenge Poverty Week are: Poverty exists in Scotland and affects us all; Poverty can be solved by boosting incomes and reducing costs; and, solving poverty is about ensuring we can all participate in society.

### Current Projects

- Meet Your MSP

Over 120 events have now taken place as part of the Meet Your MSP project and meetings continue to be planned across Scotland. Meetings have included visits to foodbanks, care homes, chats in the church, afternoon teas, coffee mornings, as well as more targeted meetings. The project is ecumenical in focus with a number of denominations taking part, including the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Reformed Church, the United Free Church and the Salvation Army. For ideas and resources please go to [www.scpo.scot/meet-your-msp](http://www.scpo.scot/meet-your-msp)

- Meet Your MP

Around 20 MPs have taken part in the Meet Your MP project with more meetings planned for the rest of the year. The project was launched on 29 March 2018 and has been welcomed by MPs across Scotland and churches from different denominations. The Rt Rev Mark Strange met with Drew Hendry, MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey, at Inverness Cathedral where they talked about the work that the congregation are doing in the local community.

The project was also launched in England and Wales in partnership with the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) in September 2018. For more information go to <http://www.scpo.scot/meet-your-mp>

- Democracy Matters Community Consultations

SCPO, on behalf of the Church of Scotland, facilitated 17 community consultation events across Scotland as part of the Scottish Government Review of Local Governance.

- Participatory Budgeting

In 2016-17 and 2017-18, SCPO through the Church of Scotland, supported a total of 11 congregations to receive training about participative budgeting (PB) and support to design and deliver a PB process locally. The project was funded by the Scottish Government and Church of Scotland Go For It Fund. Invitations to participate in the project were ecumenical and of the 11 congregations, nine were Church of Scotland, one was URC, and Livingstone Ecumenical Parish was also involved.

Funding has just been received for a further PB Project in 2018-19 to operate in Moray, Dundee and Clackmannanshire.