

# SEPTEMBER NEWS FROM SEI

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## New Provincial Director of Ordinands



At the beginning of July, the Revd Ian Barcroft began work as the SEC's Provincial Director of Ordinands, a full-time post based in the General Synod Office. Here he describes some of the new developments taking place in the areas of recruitment and selection. 'The discernment process for ordained ministry in the SEC is now taking shape, and my role is to oversee a wholly provincial system that assists the College of Bishops in the process of recommending individuals for formation and training at SEI. The Scottish context for ministry and mission is a valid part of the discernment process. Significantly, candidates can now be assessed by advisers who are fully conversant with the SEC and the environment in which it operates. A team of 30 people has been brought together, in collaboration with the PDO, to oversee the discernment process for ordained ministry. Importantly, the team will be used across diocesan boundaries.

The main changes are that the local priest and congregation are to be confident and supportive throughout the process recognising that discernment may suggest vocational options other than ordained ministry. The individual enquiring about discernment first enters a period of *local* discernment and is called an "enquirer". A Vocational Advisor (VA) is assigned by the PDO who conducts a series of focussed conversations, before writing a report for the local diocesan bishop and PDO offering guidance about future recommendations for ministry. Local discernment offers the widest opportunity to fulfil lay ministry, validating the gifts of the individual in the diocese but used provincially. The bishop may recommend *provincial* discernment for ordained ministry and the PDO assigns an assistant director of ordinands (ADO) to accompany the individual; now a "candidate".

The ADO makes evidence-based recommendations in a report based on the Discernment Curriculum to the diocesan bishop and PDO, as to whether the candidate progresses to a formal Discernment meeting, consisting of two lay people and one clergy person from the Province. After interview, recommendations are sent to the PDO, and copied to the Bishop, about the candidate proceeding to an Advisory Selection Panel, or taking further time with the ADO to address identified issues. The diocesan bishop meets with the individual, in consultation with the PDO, to discuss the next steps.

The Advisory Selection Panel, receiving the required reports and references from the PDO, is made up of experienced clergy and lay advisers. Interviews, written work, and presentations allow the PDO to offer a full report of the Panel, based on the Advisors' written reports, for the candidate's diocesan bishop. The diocesan bishop decides what the candidate will do next based on the various recommendations. Formation and training with the SEI may be the outcome'.  
Revd Ian Barcroft

## SEI Training Fund

This month we extend warm thanks to **Mr Clive Brayshaw** (Glasgow and Galloway) for his kind gift to the student body of a cassock alb; to the congregations of **Holy Trinity Elgin** and **St Margaret's Lossiemouth** (Moray, Ross and Caithness) for the donation of the offering uplifted at the Institution of the Revd Tembu Rongong as new Priest-In-Charge; to **St Michael and All Angels Helensburgh** and **Canon Robin Paisley** (Glasgow and Galloway) for the donation of the latter's deputising fees; to **St Oswald's Kingspark** (Glasgow and Galloway) and the **Revd Sally Gorton** for the donation of the latter's deputising fees; to **Mrs Gill Davidson** (Edinburgh) for the kind gift of books from her late husband's library, and an array of clerical garments.

*Next month, four candidates will be ordained to the Vocational Diaconate, indicative of our Church's resurgence in understanding of the calling to - and the need for - this Order. As will be declared at these ordinations, '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'. Deacons are essential to a missional church. The Newsletter will thus be running a series of articles by Deacons, beginning with this one from the Revd Norma Higgott.*

### **The Life of a Deacon in the SEC today (i)**

What is it like being a Deacon in the SEC today? Well, the answer to that will be different for each and every one of us depending on what God calls us to do and be.



During my training at SEI, I was very fortunate to do a placement with the Chaplaincy Team at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness during which I discovered a calling to be alongside patients, especially those with terminal illnesses. I had been asked to come sit with and listen to folk about where they were on their journey by the Charge Nurse in the MacMillan Suite who felt there was a need for someone to be available to her patients. It proved to be an incredibly rewarding, although challenging, experience and one which I voluntarily

continued with after my placement – it truly felt as if God was calling me to this work – even more so when just before I was deaconed I was asked if I would be willing to cover the extended leave of the Chaplain at the Highland Hospice (which later became the full-time Chaplaincy job there).

Although feeling a little overwhelmed by the task, I accepted and have found it the greatest privilege to walk alongside so many people in the most difficult days of their life through to their death. I have been asked all the hardest questions – 'why does God let this happen', 'why me' and 'what happens after we die'? I have learned to encourage folk to answer those questions for themselves before offering what it is that I hope for so that we can talk about death and dying in an incredibly open and honest way. I have seen such courage, such determination and such love alongside great sorrow, hurt and despair, and I have felt truly blessed by God in doing this job that I love, because that is the truth. I love my work, I'm happy to go every day and to work alongside people at the end of their lives – it is a truly missional opportunity to show God's love at work.

What I learn in my work life is also something which I can share with those in my church life. It is an opportunity to share the prophetic message of how we can truly be God's body in the world, offering God's love and compassion to all those we meet so that they too may know the Lord. **Revd Norma Higgott**

