

## FEBRUARY 2018 NEWS FROM SEI



**January Residential Weekend** Midway through last month, staff and students of SEI gathered in St Mary's Kinnoull for the third residential weekend of the academic year, the topical theme this time being 'interreligious relations'. The Saturday afternoon sessions were led by Dr Anthony Allison, Tutor in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Glasgow (in the middle of the photograph), an expert on Islamic-Christian



relations, and Dr Stephen Innes, an interfaith practitioner and scholar of Christian-Jewish Relations. In the evening Canon Cedric Blakey (far left), Convenor of the Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths, convened a Panel of five practitioners: Mirella Yandoli, Interfaith Programme Officer, Church of Scotland is on the far right and Miriam Weibye, SEC Church Relations Office, second left.

The remainder of the weekend was spent studying Reflective Practice, looking theologically at the Pastoral Offices, engaging in eight acts of worship and sharing food and conversation. Students also paid tribute to Sr Maureen, giving thanks for her ministry of hospitality at St Mary's over many years and wishing her a happy retirement. The photo shows one of the four 'Small Groups' in the Oratory at the close of Saturday.



**Meet the SEI Ambassadors:3** Mrs Georgina Middleton, Diocese of Brechin, writes: 'When the priest at St George's Anglican Church in Berlin made a serious request for me to consider working in the church rather than in the secular world after our last diplomatic posting, my ears pricked up. How exciting, are you sure, Lord? What work? The brief conversation after our Eucharist in the Marienkirche included God's having a holy jealousy for his work and calling. So for me and for other Christians, the calling fills us with both excitement and fear and is the beginning of a long journey, the main thoroughfare being the training in ministry.

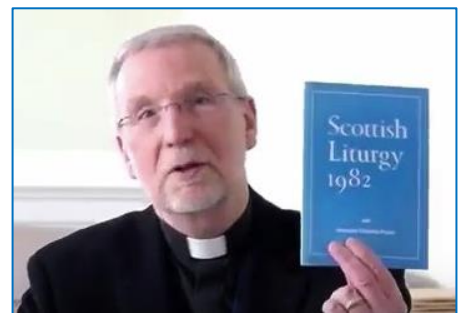
When we moved back from Germany, nearly ten years ago, we had already found a welcoming community in the village of Auchenblae, south of Aberdeen. The Church of Scotland was the foundation of many friendships, but I had always missed the liturgical worship of my Anglican roots, so it was to the Episcopal church that I looked when testing my vocation. I felt Lay Readership was my calling rather than priesthood because of our life circumstances, and though I pondered and prayed about ordination, I didn't hear that call! I could have done the shorter two-year course then available for Lay Readership, but I was supported by my church, St Laurence's in Laurencekirk, and by the Diocese of Brechin to do the same three-year course in academic terms as the ordinands.

The beauty of our training course is that ordinands and Lay Reader candidates train together in the diocese and at Residential Weekends, everyone participating and learning together. We worship and plan worship together, we mix together in large and small discussion groups, and in cell groups for prayer and encouragement. Each weekend includes several guest speakers. The course is designed to enable you to explore a huge range of theology and practice.

My training spanned two years with TISEC and a year with the SEI. Most people, when asked, are glad that they have stretched themselves to their limit, and for me this was a big challenge which I am happy to have taken. Of our church, I have learnt more, experienced more and met more people during the residential weekends and Summer School, and so for me, that extra year has been a valuable bonus.

The final year students now spend a year on placement with the church or chaplaincy they are connected to, one of the changes brought by the Institute. I enjoyed my placements so much that I have continued with Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland in Aberdeen as a Chaplain in Union Street and am licensed to St Luke's Centre of Mission, a Café Church in Dundee and to St Laurence's. This gives opportunities to preach and lead worship in traditional and new ways of worship. And one thing I really enjoy is to play the violin in the band in Café Church. Over the last eight years I was on the committee and served as Chairman of the Association for my old school, Gordonstoun, which gave me opportunities to speak God's love in community and to worship in the Carol Services and Thanksgiving Services for the Gordonstoun family. I am pleased to be an Ambassador for SEI as I would like others to fulfil their vocation, just as I was enabled to answer that serious and exciting call to serve God'.

**Wednesday seminars** Every Wednesday evening between 19.00 and 21.00 one of the four subject areas of the curriculum is taught: 'Biblical Studies', 'Christian Tradition', 'Ministry and Mission' and 'Theological Reflection and Reflective Practice'. If students live in the centre of Edinburgh, they gather in the General Synod Office, but if they are located further away, they participate in the sessions via Skype. Canon Ian Paton has just completed his term's teaching of *Christian Worship: Principles and Practice*. This involved study of key theological principles underlying Christian liturgical practice, including an exploration of the relationship between theology and worship; sacramental theology; the place of ritual and culture; the importance of participation in worship; and the relationship between worship and the mission of the church. The Revd Jane MacLaren has now embarked upon teaching *Developing Preaching*, a module on the theology and theory of preaching which includes looking at different models and forms of preaching, critical approaches to engaging with Scripture and doctrine, and further rhetorical strategies.



**The SEI Training Fund** benefited last month from several generous donations, including one from the congregation of St Ninian's, Castle Douglas (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) who kindly chose to make the Fund one of the beneficiaries of its annual charitable giving, and another from Gill Reynolds, SEI Ambassador for the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway. St Mary's Dalmahoy (Diocese of Edinburgh) had a collection following the Revd Dr Robert Gould's period of interim ministry there, the proceeds of which Bob very kindly donated to the Fund. A hugely generous cheque was received from St John's Forres (Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness) following the licensing and installation of the Revd Dr Hamilton Inbadas (left) as Priest-in-Charge on 20 January. Locum fees were again very kindly donated by Canon Robin Paisley and the Revd Sally Gorton (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway).



**The 2018 Staff Training Residential** will be held in the Conforti Institute, Coatbridge at the beginning of March. The invited speakers are Professor Heather Walton, Professor of Theology and Creative Practice Glasgow University and Dr Kenneth Farrimond, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Blended Learning Officer for Ministry Division. Core SEI staff and Associate Tutors will also consider issues such as marking, moderation, feedback and evaluation.

**Vocations Sunday** Eight congregations in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway and four others across the Province have responded to the invitation in recent *Newsletters* to invite a Lay Reader candidate or ordinand to preach on Vocations Sunday, 22 April 2018, about God's call to them and what it means. This is a great response and we look forward to hearing from those congregations and students afterwards.