



St Martin of Tours
Diocese of Edinburgh Scottish Charity No: 011137

Living our faith in our community
through prayer, reflection and action



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St Martin of Tours Episcopal Church
is part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion
www.stmartinedinburgh.org.uk

Who are we?

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Message from John

A friend once said to me that there are two types of people in the world – somewhere people and everywhere people; Somewhere people need to belong to a particular place whereas everywhere people are content moving around. Being ex-military, I am definitely an everywhere kind of person, having lived in 11 different houses in 18 years. Although I admire my friends who have lived in the same place for most of their life, I have always tried to make the most of the opportunities that a move brings; discovering new places and making new friends. It also gives me the perfect excuse to get away from people who I find difficult!

Children who have grown up in military families are sometimes called ‘dandelion kids’ because like the dandelion, they blow like the wind to different places and yet know that need to quickly put down strong roots; a good training for life which, whether we stay in one place or move, will experience change and have to learn to deal with uncertainties. If it is not a geographical change, there are other changes; changes in attitudes, opinions, beliefs and convictions. These also alter as they are challenged, shaken, or even undermined because of events and experiences and leave us wondering who or what to believe.

That is why we all need our still points in the turning world which root us into something that assures us that there are things which are unchanging and beyond the here and now. It can often be the simple things; I recall my joy when I was able to pick up the long running Radio Four series *The Archers* on my radio having been stuck in a remote location in the Iraqi desert for far too long. It made me feel human again and connected with my loved ones back home. Our faith can have the same effect; praying the familiar words from our prayer book, or going to a church service wherever we might find ourselves, roots us in our identity as God’s children, transcending culture and location.

The prophet Malachi writes in the Old Testament ‘I, The Lord, do not change’ (3:6). These words would have meant a lot to the nation of Israel whose early years had led to occupation and exile in foreign lands and oppression and injustice. They desperately needed to know what was important and who could be relied upon when so many other things were changing. But it is a message that can also speak to us today in

times of flux and uncertainty. God's love never changes, but it is our responsibility to create a space to allow his constant love to fill our lives.

For a while, I had to commute into London to work, and I remember travelling one morning on a very busy train with everyone fighting for a bit of space. Yet in among the chaos was a man totally oblivious to what was going on around him with his head buried in a prayer book. What a great example to the fact that with practice and routine, we can make space in our lives for God, and hear his still small voice of calm speaking to us wherever we may be. As one of the traditional night prayers says;

Be present, O merciful God,

and protect us through the silent hours of this night,

so that we who are wearied

by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,

may rest upon your eternal changelessness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John.

Stuart & Kate interviewed by Diana:

Thank you both for inviting me round to interview you.

As members of St Martin's have you always been aware of God in your life or did that awareness come to you later on?

S: Later on, not with the Church. I wasn't baptized until an adult. I went to boarding school in Bury St Edmunds where we were required to attend Cathedral on Sundays which wasn't a pleasant experience.

K: I was brought up a Methodist. My grandfather was circuit steward and had a lot to do with the Church. My grandparents were quite strict and no games were allowed on Sundays, though we were allowed to do embroidery and such like. I can't remember why I gave up the Methodists and went to the Church of England, I was aged 10 or 11 at the time. I was confirmed in the Church of England.

When you were a child, did you go on a bus trip with the Sunday School in summer? What do you remember about that?

K: I lived in a tiny village and my school was quite small, the classes were mixed ages and we didn't really go places.

Did your Church have a children's Christmas Party? What do you remember about that?

S: A friend who attended Sunday School suggested if I came along for a few weeks I would be eligible to attend the Christmas Party. So I did but didn't continue with it and was ill so didn't go to party anyway.

How did you meet?

K: I met Stuart on the school bus. Stuart and I were pupils travelling on the school bus to different single sex schools in Bury St Edmunds.

S: Yes, by sixth year at school I decided I didn't want to continue to board and became a day student, having to catch the school bus. We met the following year on the bus and I sat beside her - she did cooking at school and so that was a big attraction!

S: Our first "date" was to be a visit to the cinema. A friend of ours wanted to take his girlfriend, and since I could drive I was invited along. Not wanting to be the gooseberry I invited Kate too. As it happened the car wouldn't start so I had to tell the others we couldn't go.

K: He couldn't reach me and I thought I'd been stood up, but we went the next week after embarrassed apologies.

S: We both attended Liverpool University, Kate starting the year after me. She wanted to attend the nearby Church of England but didn't want to go on her own so I went along. I was asked to attend communion classes and wasn't keen, but was persuaded.

S: We were married before I was baptized and confirmed. I said I wasn't a believer but the rector agreed to marry us if I agreed to think seriously about the Christian faith.

Is there someone in your life who has been a great influence on your beliefs?

S: "Auntie Katie", who was actually a friend of Kate's mum and lived in Buxton, Derbyshire. She was a true Christian and I was happy to invite her when I was baptized and confirmed by Bishop of Warrington Michael Henshaw.

Where and what is God for you?

S: I saw David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, speaking. He described the current thinking on the size of the universe, and by comparison, we are very much insignificant beings. So why should God bother. David gave convincing arguments that he/she does.

At the start of the pandemic when we were all told to stay at home and only go out if necessary, how did you feel? Were you fearful or optimistic?

S & K: We coped really well. We began to take turns to read aloud to each other. We were very lucky, having the garden and the allotment. And Stuart had his bike.

How did you cope with being apart from family?

K: We were apart from the family but we got together at weekends on Zoom. We missed seeing the grandchildren and our daughter Fiona's second son was born just before the pandemic hit.

What did you miss in particular [socially perhaps]?

K: We got out of the habit of going out for meals and cinema and missed that.

S: We haven't returned to having meals out.

What brought you to Edinburgh?

S: We both worked in Liverpool, myself with United Biscuits in IT and Kate taught Home Economics, but I wasn't getting on so we moved to Greenock where I took up a job in the shipbuilding as a systems designer.

K: I was a teacher in Liverpool but gave up work when we moved to Greenock so we could start a family.

S: Eventually, people were being made redundant but because of my role running the redundancy calculation suite, I was denied redundancy myself, so we moved to Edinburgh for me to work at Scottish Widows. That was around 1987.

And St Martin's?

S: We were first in Port Glasgow and joined the Episcopal Church there before moving to Greenock. Before we came to Edinburgh I spoke to Donald Reid whom we knew as curate at our Church - St John's, Greenock - he'd previously been a student at St Martin's and gave it a glowing recommendation.

Thank you both for taking the time to speak to me and providing the coffee. I have thoroughly enjoyed talking with you. Diana



The daffodils we were presented with on Mothers' Day were really beautiful. I've framed them with an orchid ring Andrew bought for my birthday and it makes a stunning photograph with beautiful colours.

Incidentally, the orchids were supposed to live for a few weeks at most. They've been blooming for four months now! I'm so blessed.

Diana

Dignity of Women

I attended this event and found it most stimulating. I met women from other parts of Scotland and enjoyed sharing our thoughts on the exhibition and talks.

To mark International Women's Day Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network held an event - 'The Dignity of Women' - on **Tuesday 7th March** at the Scottish Storytelling Centre 43-45 High Street Edinburgh EH1 1SR.

There was an opportunity to view the Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network's unique and informative exhibition, 'The Dignity of Women - Scriptural Reflections'. The exhibition highlights the positive references on the status of women in the Sacred Scriptures of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian Religions.

These references are not commonly known and at times misrepresentation of religion causes women of faith to be discriminated against. It is hoped that this exhibition will educate religious and secular communities on the role and status of women and in turn help to overcome misrepresentation and discrimination of women and exalt their status as envisaged by the Founders of the World Religions.

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar (Chair of Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network)

Here are some of the quotes from various religions about the status of women.;

The Baha'i Faith

“ War and its ravages have blighted the world women.; the education of women will be a mighty step toward its abolition and ending, for she will use her whole influence against war..... In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration. Assuredly, women will abolish warfare among mankind.’
(‘Abdu’l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p108)

The Buddhist Religion

“Men are not wise in every situation, women are wise also, and women are equally capable”

Atthaka Nipata

Christianity

Though a woman cannot do without a man, neither can a man do without women, women may come from man but man is born of women - both come from God. (1 Corinthians 11, 12)

Hindu Religion

Hindu Scriptures state that the mother is more worthy of reverence than the father or a teacher.

“ The teacher who teaches true knowledge is more important than ten instructors. The father is more important than ten such teachers of true knowledge and the mother is more important than ten such fathers.

There is no greater guru than mother”

Mahabharata Shantiparva, chapter 30, sloka 9

Women in Islam

“I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours in My way, be it man or woman; each of you is equal to the other”

(Qur'an 3: 195)

The Jain Religion

“It is the essential characteristic of the wise that they do not harm any living being. One should know that non-violence and the equality of all living beings are the main principles of religion.”

(Sutra Krutaanga 1: 4: 10)

The Jewish Religion

Judges 4: 4-5

“ Now Deborah a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Isreal at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah

and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of Israel came to her for Judgement.”

Sikh Dharam Scriptural References

Social Status

Sikh Gurus taught that human beings should live with dignity, self-respect and grace as children of God. They should not be subjected, oppressed or disrespected due to the gender or social position. For this reason, the Gurus initiated practical reforms which made the spiritual journey open equally to all and recognized everyone’s dignity as a spark of the same divine flame.

Zoroastrian Religion

“Thy women worthy of reverence. We revere holy women advanced in pure-thought, speech and actions. We revere holy women well instructed, virtuous and capable of leadership”
(Aiwisruthrem Gah 9, Vispared 3. 4)

This exhibition gave me a lot to think about.
Felicity

Craft club

The craft club continues to meet in Monika and Sonya’s lounge, with a break for tea/coffee and biscuits. We are currently in the process of knitting angels and flags in red, white and blue to celebrate the Coronation.

Walter’s Walk

We went on our first walk in memory of Walter in March. We have discussed walks for the year, only two dates confirmed so far:

1. April 15th -Heriot Watt University walk. Bob and Penny organising
 - 2 June 3rd - pilgrimage walk in Fife. John organising
- More details will follow. Watch the pew sheet.
Liz Moir

Eco Group

Eleanor's Orphanage

The Coffee Morning went very well and with more donations on Sunday a grand total of £800. This has been sent to the Orphanage and will enable them to buy more rice.

The Eco Group Coffee Morning was a great success and with more sales on Sunday we reached a grand total of £700. We sent £550 to Elinor for her orphans and £150 to Tee Dennis and her two children, Sheba and God's Gift, to help with school fees, books, uniforms etc.

We've had a reply from both and they send their love, prayers and gratitude. For Elinor it was a timely gift as the rice supply was almost depleted and medicines were running low. *In a text message she said she was overcome with tears of joy and thanksgiving and sends her love to all at St Martin's.*

Grateful thanks to everyone who contributed in so many ways to the great success of our fundraiser – it's always amazing how everything comes together with such team work, care and consideration andcake/cakes, scones, biscuits, jams, marmalade, tablet and good chat and companionship.

Thank you for your generosity and loving kindness.

St Martin's Eco Group

DRAFT NET ZERO 2030 ACTION PLAN!

That's a very long title for a substantial draft document recently circulated by the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC); so, what is it and why should we be interested in it?

The Action Plan ⁽¹⁾ is a comprehensive document designed to get us to face the reality of climate change and for the SEC to get moving. I was asked to attend the online launch, on behalf of the vestry, of the consultation process to finalise the draft. There were subsequent online meetings in which Provincial Environmental Group (PEG) members presented some additional detail about their proposals and answered questions. There was, also, an opportunity to be in discussion groups with people from across Scotland. All our comments were to be sent to PEG by 28 March. Not all the churches were represented, but it was well over half, so that's hopeful.

At the end of February, I circulated the draft action plan to 16 persons in the congregation including clergy, vestry, SMCRC board members, and our eco-group, asking for comments to send to the Province. Other than from 3 eco-group members, no comments were received to pass on. This limited response is not very hopeful, in my opinion, because the implications of climate change are profound; not just for members of the eco-group - a group that has no executive power - but for all of us. All of us includes the congregation and our children, relatives, friends, enemies, the rich, the poor, the flora and fauna, in this country, and the rest of the world. We need to get on board the campaign to save lives on this planet, our home. There is no planet B!

There, I have been the St. Martin's eco-grump, talking gloom and disaster, but one eco-group member had good things to inspire us, in her contribution to our submission to PEG. She noted that the draft opens with the The Five Marks of Mission:

- *Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.*
- *Teach, baptise and nurture new believers.*
- *Respond to human need by loving service.*
- *Transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.*
- *Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*

Paraphrasing her response: The Five Marks of Mission speak to the Spirit within, and this makes me want to commit to this plan. Of course, as we tackle the work to be done, we'll meet many bumps in the road, but we are not alone – we are all in it together and it must be so. We must be brave, for this is no easy task. Thankfully, much help is at hand to guide us in our approach - strategically, financially, creatively, hopefully and prayerfully. The action plan includes appointment of a Provincial Net Zero Director, with each Diocese having a Net Zero Manager. The key will be the prompt appointment of good, talented people to these posts.

Here follows some quotes from the draft action plan that were noted as significant.

“a climate literate church, fully understanding the systemic link between climate change and biodiversity loss, acknowledging that these two aspects are part of a wider set of planetary boundaries which we must not transgress.”

“Our worship must be rooted, rejoicing in our interdependence within the ecosystems of creation.”

“We are the Scottish Episcopal Church which maintains a credible voice for justice in the world, being an active part of the solution in Scotland's journey to net zero and taking a leadership role in the process.”

“We must ensure discipleship, justice and hope are embedded at the heart of everything we do.”

“We are beacons of hope in action, actively participating in the process of healing creation.”

“Our intent is that with this hope-filled provincial future, each diocese and charge will adapt it and make it their own, contextualising it for

your mission whilst transforming it into living practice. This is, of course, just a vision, but what if we really strive to make this a reality? What if together we transformed apathy into action, despair into hope, doubt into faith.”

António Guterres (UN Secretary General), says that it is imperative that every organisation “walk the talk on their net zero promises. We cannot afford slow-movers, fake-movers or any form of greenwashing.”

Lord of life and giver of hope.

We pledge ourselves to care for your people and world to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

May your wisdom guide us so that all creation may flourish and sing your praise. May the commitment we’ve made this day be matched by our faithful living. ⁽²⁾

- George South

(With thanks for other contributions along the way)

⁽¹⁾ (PEG) has been tasked by the General Synod of 2020 to present the Draft Zero Net 2030 Action Plan for consideration and acceptance by this summer’s SEC General Synod. The draft is available for perusal on the SEC website, or for download to your preferred device.

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/boards-and-committees/the-provincial-environment-group/net-zero-action-plan-2023-2030-consultation-overview/>

⁽²⁾ Prayer from the Lambeth Conference 2022,

<https://www.lambethconference.org>

