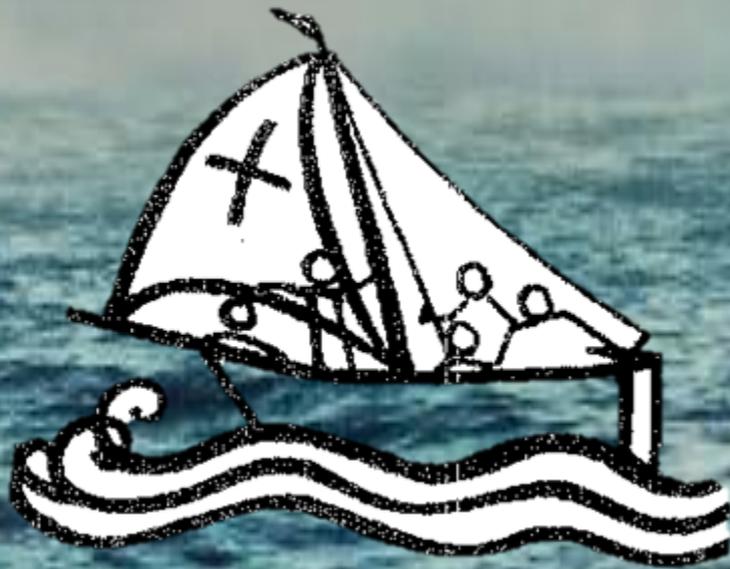


EDINBURGH CHURCHES TOGETHER NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2020



In this edition:

- ECT's annual service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Churches as rest centres
- The Listening Service - an update
- Easter Play 2020

And much more....

WELCOME!

Although it doesn't feel very like spring at the moment, the days are getting longer and the Spring edition of ECT's newsletter is here! Read on for updates on one of our on-going projects - Churches as Rest Centres with a report on a recent incident that highlights the importance of access to local places of refuge in an emergency. Our usual feature on workplace chaplaincy in Edinburgh this time focuses further afield – Australia - where the Victoria Chaplains have been working round the clock to offer support, help and kindness to victims of the terrible bushfires. And we celebrate two important anniversaries – Greyfriars Kirk aged 400 and Saughtonhall United Reformed Church aged 90 - happy anniversary! And happy Easter to all our readers.

'THEY SHOWED US UNUSUAL KINDNESS' ACTS 28:2

On 22nd January, a service was held by Edinburgh Churches Together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service was held in the beautiful surroundings of the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church and was well attended by people from a variety of different denominations from all over Edinburgh. The resources for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by churches in Malta. The history of Christianity on that small island nation dates back to the time of the apostles. According to tradition, St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, reached the shores of Malta in year 60 where he took refuge after a shipwreck, described in the final two chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The prayers and reflections of the service were centred on the hospitality shown by the islanders to the strangers who had just been cast upon the island. A real rubber dinghy was the centre-piece of the gathering and eight oars were



brought one by one into the assembly by different communities. Each oar bore a single word – reconciliation, enlightenment, hope, trust, strength, hospitality, conversion and generosity. Rt Rev. Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, gave a moving and profound address and music was provided by members of the Ecumenical Music Group led by Maureen Bruce with members from St. Kentigern's RC, St. Andrews, Clementon COS, St. Josephs RC, Fairmile head COS and St. Catherine's Convent of Mercy. Refreshments were kindly

provided by members of City of Edinburgh Methodist Church. A retiring collection resulted in over £400 being donated to The Welcoming, a local charity that provides support, help and advice to refugees.

CHURCHES AS REST CENTRES

Edinburgh Churches Together maintains a database of city-wide churches which have volunteered to provide their facilities as a refuge for the community in the event of an emergency. This database is shared with the Resilience Team at City of Edinburgh Council. In September last year, a rest centre was opened as part of the emergency



response to an explosion and subsequent fire in a Fountainbridge tenement. Several affected residents were safely sheltered for a few hours in The Salvation Army Hall on Gorgie Road until alternative temporary and permanent arrangements could be made. The rest centre worked well and those people impacted were able to utilise the quieter, calmer space away from the fire to take stock of the situation, have a tea or coffee and receive information relayed from the emergency services on the ongoing incident as well as begin to make contact with their insurance companies. Having a space within the community but slightly out with the fire area was vital in the fire response in what was a difficult situation with, tragically, one fatality and many residents losing their homes. If you would like your church and facilities to be part of the database then please get

in touch with imogen.gibson.ect@gmail.com

EMERGENCIES MINISTRY DOWN UNDER

The new decade began with storms, floods and heavy rain in the UK and terrible and unprecedented bushfires in Australia. In the past few weeks, volunteer chaplains and personal support workers of the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry have made thousands of cups of tea and coffee for locals affected by the devastating bushfires in the Australian southern state. More than 247 individual volunteers – not including managers in the operations office – have been activated in 14 relief centres and three reception centres across the state. Many VCC EM volunteers have travelled up to 400km to the affected areas and been billeted in houses, granny flats and caravans. Over 655 days of service, those volunteer chaplains have had more than 7000 significant



VCC EM prepare to fly into bushfire ravaged East Gippsland

conversations with affected persons. And they have shared more than just a cuppa – tales of survival, tales of woe, heart-breaking stories of loss, heart-warming tales of heroism and quite a few tears in between. Volunteers are well trained to provide Psychological First Aid and Emotional Spiritual Care in a wide range of emergency situations. Recent research has shown that a large percentage of affected persons – such as those at these bushfires - who talk out their stories in the early days after the event do not need follow-up support in the coming weeks and months. VCC EM has been active for about two decades, growing to about 1600 volunteers. A paid staff of three operate from a small office just outside the Melbourne CBD. VCC EM is a multi-faith organisation including Pentecostals, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs. Call-outs are not restricted just to bushfires and floods. Recent activations have included visiting the neighbourhood surrounding the site of the tragic slaying of

an 18-month-old boy; the “Bourke St incident”, in which a car mowed down pedestrians on a footpath causing six deaths and dozens of injuries; the death of a cyclist near the city; and a toxic fire at a warehouse, as well as house fires and missing person searches. In most cases, it’s that cuppa that makes all the difference. “It’s amazing how just asking if they would like a cup of tea or coffee can light a spark in an affected person,” one first-time VCC EM responder said. “I must have made more than 100 on the day I was at Bairnsdale. I guess they feel more comfortable talking to a stranger from behind a cup.” As well as becoming baristas on their shifts, VCC EM volunteers carry out a wide range of tasks, including providing directions to services available at the relief centres, to showers and toilets, as well as erecting tents and blowing up mattresses – and becoming dog walkers. “One woman wanted to register at the relief centre, but wasn’t allowed in with her dog,” another VCC EM volunteer said. “She told me she couldn’t tie him up because he would fret without her after what they had been through, so I offered to mind him while she registered. When she came back, she had such a look of relief on her face.”

THE LISTENING SERVICE

Supported by Edinburgh Churches Together and Edinburgh Interfaith Association, the Listening Service has been operating in Edinburgh Sheriff Court since 2017. The court can be a daunting place although court staff are there to help, they are very busy. The Listening Service volunteers offer time and a listening ear to support those who are finding



their experience at court difficult, stressful and confusing. Shirley, a volunteer for TLS, wrote an article for *The National* newspaper. Here is an edited version:

“No two shifts are the same when you are supporting people at Court. I have volunteered with The Listening Service at Edinburgh Sheriff Court since June 2019. I am part of a team of volunteers who attend the Court daily to be an approachable face who will listen to any anxieties those attending the Court may have. There are usually three volunteers at any time who volunteer for two or three sessions a month. The role involves helping any court user by offering a confidential, non-judgemental listening ear. This could be by signposting,

helping find a solicitor or offering reassurance at what can be a very anxious and frustrating time. Court users are usually asked to attend at 9.30am but may have a lengthy wait for a case to be called, perhaps not until the afternoon. Many different people attend the Court, accused, often with family or friends in support, witnesses, jurors, as well as solicitors, interpreters, carers and support workers. Volunteers are available to engage with anyone attending the Court. Many are there for the first time and may be suffering mental health issues or be drug or alcohol dependent involving a cyclical pattern of offending which can be difficult to break. One of the wider benefits of volunteering is that it frees up the very busy court staff to carry on their valuable work. They know we are in the court public areas to offer support to any court user. The diversity of court users and their reaction to the court process is wide and varied making not two shifts the same.” TLS now has charitable status, registered SCIO SC049587. If you would like to volunteer for TLS contact info@listening-service.org and find out more by visiting <https://listening-service.org/>

ORCHARD PROJECT



Rev. Anne Ross describes a new project for Greyfriars Kirk:

“If I knew that tomorrow was the end of the world, I would plant an apple tree today.”, Martin Luther is often quoted as saying. Apple trees are a sign of hope. They are an investment in the future. In our case an investment in the future of the Greyfriars’ congregation, the Grassmarket Community Project and the future of the Kirkyard. We want to make this green spot in the middle of the Old Town even greener. We want to observe the seasons through the apple and pear trees. We want to look at them as signs of God’s generosity

and life in fullness that he wants for us to experience. People from the Grassmarket Community Project and the congregation want to care for the trees jointly and will be trained in doing so. Being aware of the long history of the church and the kirkyard (celebrating their 400th anniversary this year) the selected varieties will include heritage apples from the 17th century. If you want to know more or get involved please contact Anne Ross (aross@churchofscotland.org.uk).

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

SFAR seeks to promote common values of hospitality and welcome, and coordinates and encourages action by faith communities in Scotland to support asylum seekers and refugees. SFAR is committed to increase awareness and understanding of this issue and work with local churches to develop and support their engagement with refugees, and we would welcome the opportunity to come to speak with you. Recently we had the pleasure of being welcomed by Corstorphine Churches Together who hosted a 'Welcoming the World' night. Through fun quizzes, discussions and an interactive presentation we



spent the evening learning about the global situation of refugees, integration challenges that refugees face in Scotland and Edinburgh, and how churches in Corstorphine can be part of a meaningful response. We'd love to explore these issues with you as well! Our desire is that churches can set an example in what it means to welcome people irrespective of where they are from. With your ambition and support we would like to help create a hospitable Scottish community that says no to hostility and yes to welcoming the stranger; a society that embraces differences and celebrates diversity; a community that extends a hand of friendship to unfamiliar faces; and a people of faith who serves their new neighbours in love. Contact Sabine Chalmers, National Faith Groups Refugee Integration Coordinator (schalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk), for more information on a free workshop or presentation.

EMERGENCY APPEAL BY EDINBURGH DIRECT AID



While we cope with miserable travelling, floods, colds and flu in the British winter, severe storms are creating unimaginable hardship for Syrians already enduring dire conditions, as the war drags on into its 10th year. So many are living in tents now enveloped in snow in sub-zero temperatures, with access to vital supplies of heating oil, food and medicines under threat. In north west Syria, hundreds of thousands of civilians recently displaced by intense fighting in Idlib gather in such conditions around the closed Turkish border. On the other side of the border with Lebanon, tens of thousands of refugees in Aarsal, which lies at an altitude higher than Ben Nevis, contend with rising prices, road closures, and diminishing access to aid. For all, the immediate issue is keeping the snow out of the tents and getting enough food and heat for their families. Other problems will follow – floods as the snows melt, increasing illness as immunity lowers. And ever present is the fear and lack of hope as the war drags on. Edinburgh Direct

Aid (www.edinburghdirectaid.org T: 0131 552 1545) is a small Scottish charity

(SC021007) of volunteers doing what they can to help those in desperate need as a result of war or natural disaster. EDA is currently sending supplies of clothes & blankets to Idlib and distributing heating oil and food in Aarsal, where it also provides more long-term support with education and training. Edinburgh Direct Aid is urgently appealing for financial donations to support the refugees through their worst winter yet.

SAUGHTONHALL URC – 90 YEARS YOUNG!

On Saturday 30th November 2019 Saughtonhall United Reformed Church celebrated its 90th anniversary by holding a ceilidh in the Church. Tartan material rosettes made by our own craft club were given to everyone to wear. The Minister, the Revd David Scott, also entertained with a few Scottish tunes on the bagpipes. A buffet meal was served at half time and enjoyed by all. On Sunday 1st December a joint Service for Advent Sunday with our partners at Murrayfield Churches Together was held with the Church at full capacity. A cake for the Churches 90th anniversary was cut and enjoyed with a cup of tea or coffee which completed the celebrations.



Saughtonhall Congregational Church traces its roots to 1929 when worshippers met in a dance hall. The foundation stone for their first Church building was laid in 1935. In 1991 major repairs were needed to the roof and the congregation agreed with Canmore Housing Association to demolish its old building and replace it with housing and a modern church. However, a fire in 1993 altered those plans, with terraced houses replacing the old church and the new church being built on the site of the former hall. When the Congregational Union of Scotland united with the United Reformed Church in the UK on 1st April 2000, the Church became Saughtonhall United Reformed Church. It continues to witness the Good News of God's Grace shown in Jesus Christ. In 1930 the formation of the Women's Union took place. This time of fellowship continues into the present day and meets every Monday at Saughtonhall. Since it was founded in 1948 to help service personnel ease back into civilian life after the second world war, Saughtonhall Drama Group have met at the Church. The Drama group put on two to three shows per year and provide a good way to interact with the local Community. One of the original founders, Gladys Bell has appeared in a good many of the shows. Although now no longer able to participate, Gladys remains a member of the Drama Group. The Scottish Country dancing club had been in the Church organisation for over 40 years and the class stopped in April 2019. The club had around 20 members from all parts of the city and beyond. Saughtonhall URC regularly worships with our partners at Murrayfield Churches Together made up of the Church of Good Shepherd (Scottish Episcopal Church) Murrayfield Parish Church (Church of Scotland) and Saughtonhall URC. MCT is at the heart of the Congregation's life. Its origins date back to 1960s and it has stood as a formal body since 1987, making it one of the earliest public displays in Scotland of Christian Unity. Many happy returns!

GREYFRIARS KIRK – CELEBRATING 400 YEARS

CELEBRATE

400

GREYFRIARS 

Greyfriars Kirk is commemorating 400 years since it first opened its doors on Christmas Day 1620 and four centuries of continuous worship and community. A celebratory programme is set to take place focused on themes of “community”, “history” and “enlightenment”. Highlights include a Festival of Science, Wisdom and Faith, a Flower Festival and music throughout the year. The first celebrates the legacy left by prominent Enlightenment figures connected with Kirk, such as James Hutton and William Robertson. Does the success of modern science make faith easier or harder as we understand more of the incredible intricacy of our planet? Do scientific knowledge and faith make us wiser? Richard Holloway and Dame Sue Black will lead a stellar line-up of participants to explore these questions and consider the historic tension between matters of science and faith (5th -7th June). The Flower Festival will coincide with the Cockburn Association’s popular Open Doors Weekend across the city. Ambitious flower arrangements will commemorate the 17 churches and congregations that have united within Greyfriars over the years, with dazzling colours and wonderful scents to fill the Kirk. In March, for the Lenten season, Dunedin Consort and Scottish Ensemble perform together Sir James Macmillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross*. There will be a “Come and Sing”, including Brahms’ *Requiem* on 25th April, conducted by Angus Tully of Edinburgh Academy. In November, the Edinburgh Royal Choral Union will perform a piece specially commissioned for the anniversary. SCO Chorus bring a concert based on “Christmas Journeys” in December. The Kirk looks forward to welcoming visitors, local and from all over the world, to enjoy these events and help celebrate this fantastic anniversary. www.greyfriarskirk.com/celebrate400

CHRISTIANS FOR CLIMATE ACTION



Christian Climate Action is the name given for the Christians of Extinction Rebellion. We are a community of Christians committed to prayerful direct action and public witness in the face of imminent and catastrophic climate breakdown. Inspired by Jesus Christ, and social justice movements of the past, we urge those in power to make the change needed. There is a small, but growing group in Edinburgh who would love to have more folks, and members of the clergy, who have a passion for God’s Creation and for Climate Justice, come alongside and help Christian Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion be impactful in 2020. If your church or group would like to have a talk to learn more about our urgent climate and

ecological emergency, and to understand more about Extinction Rebellion and Christian Climate Action, please get in touch. As Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, CEO of Christian Aid says “The climate crisis is the biggest issue facing humanity today ... It is only together that we can make a difference.”

Our email: cclimateactionedin@gmail.com

Please see Christian Climate Action’s website, where you can find helpful resources; talks, sermons, prayers and more. <https://christianclimateaction.org>

You can follow on Twitter @CClimateAction and Facebook too <https://www.facebook.com/christianclimateaction>

NEWS AND EVENTS AROUND EDINBURGH



Are you a woman of faith who wants to:

- Understand more about the climate emergency?
- Learn about what we can do in our homes and communities?
- Connect your action with your faith?

Join us for a free training session, learn more about the climate emergency and create change in your community

ABERDEEN (12TH MARCH)
GLASGOW (17TH & 26TH MARCH)
EDINBURGH (2ND APRIL)

READ MORE AT EVENTBRITE.COM



The Church of Scotland

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Sanctuary in Scotland



Saturday 14 March 2020, 10am-3.30pm
Central Church Tollcross
2 West Tollcross
Edinburgh EH3 9BP
Lunch provided.

BOOKING:
sanctuaryinScotland_gathering.eventbrite.co.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353
www.sfar.org.uk

@withrefugees

Equalities of the New Scots Migration, Rights and Community Project, part funded by the EU, Scottish Government and the Department for International Trade, Home Office and the European Union.

FUNDRAISING CONCERTS FOR ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH

Concerts in the Cathedral



FRIDAY 06 MARCH 2020
ALY BAIN & PHIL CUNNINGHAM

SATURDAY 07 MARCH 2020
BARBARA DICKSON

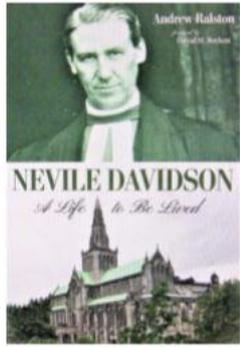
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL BRIGHTON STREET EDINBURGH
DOORS 7.00PM FOR 7.30PM START £25

Tickets available online at eventbrite.co.uk. Simply search 'Concerts in the Cathedral'.

NEW BOOK

"Nevile Davidson: A Life to be Lived"

by Andrew G. Ralston



A new biography of one of the most prominent Scottish churchmen of the twentieth century, Dr. A. Nevile Davidson, Minister of Glasgow Cathedral from 1935 until 1967, has been published by Wipf & Stock (USA).

Dr. Davidson was moderator of the General Assembly in 1962 and worked tirelessly for ecumenical co-operation.

The new book draws on personal reminiscences and on the collection of papers and diaries deposited by Dr. Davidson's wife Peggy in the National Library of Scotland – a source which has never been systematically studied before.

Copies of the book are on sale from www.glasgowcathedral.org.uk for a special launch price of £9.99. (plus £2.50 P & P). Please use the contact form on the website to order.

All proceeds go towards the Society of Friends of Glasgow Cathedral.

"A distinctive feature of this elegantly written book is that it is primary-source based... and so constitutes an original contribution to the life and work of an eminent Glasgow minister. The book should both be illuminating for a wide spectrum of readers and add a very useful source for historians of modern Scottish church history and Presbyterianism."
(W. Ian P. Hazlett, Emeritus Professor University of Glasgow)

"Andrew Ralston has provided us with a well-written and researched, yet highly accessible, biography of a key Christian figure in mid-twentieth-century Scotland, whose life and work deserves the detailed and engaging treatment that Ralston provides. Nevile Davidson's dynamic ministry at Glasgow Cathedral, his ecumenical drive, and his compassion and humanity shine through. This book is an excellent contribution to our understanding of the buoyant post-war period in Scottish Christianity, and its lessons for us now."
(Sandy Forsyth, New College, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh)



COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 14 March 10.30am – 12.30pm

Teas, coffees, cakes, snacks; home-baking & book stall
Fundraiser for the Christian Aid Book Sale in May

Tickets £3.00 (adults)
Children FREE



City of Edinburgh Methodist Church,
25 Nicolson Square,
Edinburgh,
EH8 9BX

Scottish Charity Number: SC037422



The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) would like to invite denominations to contribute articles for future monthly newsletters relating to churches and their engagement with politics, campaigns, and any action that urges transformational change within society. Please contact SCPO at info@scpo.scot if this is something that you would be interested in doing. It could relate to an issue that is politically current or tie in with events highlighting a specific cause. We would also like to encourage groups to share the information enclosed in their newsletters and online – feel free to sign up at www.scpo.scot

WORKSHOPS

Exploring Spiritual Abuse

Saturday 25th April 1.30 - 4pm

At St Columba's by the Castle hall, 10min walk from Waverley Station, Edinburgh

What is spiritual abuse? What are the key characteristics that lie behind this difficult label? And what impact does the experience of spiritual abuse have on people's lives? Through input from current research, small group discussion and plenary, this workshop will help 'soul care practitioners' to consider the definitions and implications of these questions for their work. Brief pointers may be given for accompanying those who have experienced abuse, but the main emphasis will be on what we need to be aware of as we hold safe, sacred space for others. This event is open to faith leaders, spiritual directors, and therapists etc, particularly those working in 1:1 or small group settings. Suitable as a CPD event, certificates are available on request.



Anne Solomon is an experienced spiritual director and supervisor working in Cheltenham. Also a Chartered Psychologist with an MA in Religion and Society, and Divinity awards, she works and writes within the fruitful dialogue between spirituality and psychology. She tutors on the ecumenical two year Gloucestershire

spiritual direction training course, supports other formation programmes and runs workshops for experienced spiritual accompaniers.

Bookings £25 (£10) via:

<https://spiritualabuse.brownpapertickets.com>

Info: www.reflectivespaces.org.uk/soul-care-workshops

'Right Use of Power' Workshop

Many caring people in helping roles are cautious about the idea of power, not wishing to have 'power over' others. Come and join a workshop affirming positive relationship to role power.

Saturday 23rd May 10.30 - 1pm

At Diocesan Office, 21A Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh, 3min walk from Haymarket



Power is the ability to influence and be influenced by others. Power is relational, and relationships can be messy. Good intentions are essential, but not enough to ensure we use our power well; we make mistakes, or even *under-use* the appropriate power we have to effect change. Most misuses of power happen when those who have influence due to their roles misjudge the impact on others; limited knowledge of power dynamics can leave us adrift. This event explores how we can relate positively to power with reflection, sensitivity and heart, and offer reparation when difficulties occur. For faith leaders, pastoral teams, teachers, counsellors, spiritual accompaniers etc.

Elizabeth White is a spiritual director and senior accredited pastoral supervisor. Having formerly co-ordinated the adult learning programme for the Diocese of Edinburgh, she now offers group and individual opportunities for spiritual reflection on life and work.

Responding to interest, this is a re-run of a workshop first held in November 2019 "Hugely interesting and enjoyable - it's made me think about power in a completely new way. I've already noticed myself re-framing the ways I approach things. I'd thoroughly recommend this inspiring course."

12 places available, £25 each. Info and bookings:

elizabeth@reflectivespaces.org.uk

EDINBURGH EASTER PLAY



The Performance of The Edinburgh Easter Play will be held in Princes Street Gardens on Saturday 11th April at 2pm <http://www.easterplay.org/en/> However, in addition, this year the entire Easter story will be played out over the course of the weekend in locations all around the city. Cutting Edge Theatre is looking for volunteers to be part of a community cast who will take part in "flash mob" type theatre scenes over Easter weekend. Cutting Edge are looking at "do not judge" and "love one another" and setting the Easter story to a very modern interpretation. The cast can select whatever

hours they can manage. There is flexibility in time - everything from being part of just one hour to being part of 20+ hours. Rehearsals are every Thursday night 7pm at Edinburgh Elim Church, 18 Morningside Road, EH10 4DB. Just turn up. The cast will be supported by stewards and co-ordinators for safety. For further information, please contact hello@edinburghpassion.com (Suzanne Lofthus), or call 01316520968, or visit <https://www.edinburghpassion.com> The deadline is Monday 16th March 2020 at 18:00.



Please email material for the Summer edition of ECT's newsletter (covering June, July, August) by 22nd May 2020 to imogen.gibson.ect@gmail.com

Visit <http://edinburghchurchestogether.org.uk> for information and resources.

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Follow us on Twitter <https://twitter.com/ECTEdinburgh>