

THIS ISSUE
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THE TITHING
GROUP
OLD ST PAUL'S
EDINBURGH
www.osp.org.uk

Mission Statement

Faith in Older People aims to celebrate the lives of older people and to support the spiritual care of older people and their families

Faith in Older People

Registered Company
SC322915
Registered Charity
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Trustees:

Christopher Davies
(Chairman)
Malcolm Goldsmith
(Secretary)
Sandra Carter, MBE
Geoffrey Lord, OBE
Lissa Smith
Professor John Starr
Margaret Stevenson

Contact details:

Faith in Older People
21a Grosvenor
Crescent EDINBURGH
EH12 5EL

Tel: **0131 346 7981**

Email:
info@fiop.org.uk

Website:
www.faihinolderpeople.org.uk

From Divali to Candlemas

As the seasons turn from the plenty of harvest, to the apparent wasteland of winter, and increasing darkness shortens the days, we begin to realize the archetypal power of flame as a source of and inspiration in the darkness.

Whether it is bonfires, fireworks, oil lamps or candles, many faiths use the power in the imagery of light in these dark winter months.



In pre-Christian times the Celtic peoples' year started with this coming of the darkness in the festival of Samhain on the last day of October. They celebrated with fires, and candles lit to remember the dead, (and treats to placate them, should they come knocking on the door!) and our turnip lanterns, bonfires and candlelit All Souls services all echo these ancient traditions.

This year the Hindu festival of Divali, which like Easter, is calculated by lunar calendar and so moves, fell at the end of October with the climactic 4th day, the "New Year" coinciding with Halloween on the 31st. The story of the return from exile by Rama and Sita, as told in the Ramayana, celebrates the triumph of good over evil and is marked with fireworks and by the lighting of hundreds of small oil lamps both in and outside homes.



Jenners - Edinburgh

As we move through December the pagan, current faith or secular reasons for "winter lights" all merge. The Christmas tree and yuletide painted candles, the Advent wreaths, and the city lights all lift our spirits.

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120 people attended a very successful gathering held at Gillis College in Edinburgh on 29th October.

This was a joint conference supported by ACTS, the Church in Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Faith in Older People and drew speakers and participants from as far afield as Inverness and Norwich.

The purpose was to raise the profile of all the insights to be shared from recent work done on issues surrounding old age and spiritual care.

Demographic change alerts us to the importance of considering the needs of the older members of our society not least within our congregations. We hoped to encourage those involved in *training* pastoral carers, elders, clergy, chaplains and all who visit or work with older people on behalf of our churches to take the topic seriously!

Amongst those attending we were delighted to welcome Jo & Susan Kennedy from Christian Council on Ageing, an organisation which has championed this subject for many years. They would welcome new members in Scotland so check their website www.ccoa.org.uk or write to: CCOA, 3 Stuart Street, Derby, DE1 2EQ

We had four main speakers and ran four different workshops (see next page) there were stalls and book displays and we were particularly grateful to Gillis College for a wonderful lunch.

We had to refuse places to 40 people as the conference was fully subscribed so we hope to offer a similar event in May in Inverness.

Best Conference Quote:
What is the best thing about being 104?
Lack of peer pressure!

"Remember: we are all growing older! Our need for affection, for personal dignity and for acceptance by others increases rather than diminishes with the passing years"

FEEDBACK

"An excellent conference. The principal speakers were all so different that everyone must have found something to their taste. Brilliantly organised. I was only able to get to one workshop, which was absolutely first class (*Worshipping with people with dementia*). Two weeks later, reflecting on the theme I realised that we had hardly touched on Wasteland because there was so much Harvest to celebrate! Well done to everyone involved."

Malcolm Goldsmith

"Three cheers for the organizers of this conference!

The combination of input from diverse experts and opportunities to reflect made for a day that was stimulating of both action and careful reflection".

The Revd Canon Dr Michael Fuller

There are plans afoot to run more sessions of **Dr Harriet Mowat's - End of Life Issues.**

We also hope to offer **Rev Sue Kirkbride's Worshipping with people with Dementia** outside the Edinburgh area.

God is in the facts, so the facts must be kind. Does this include ageing?

Fr Gerard Hughes' wise words emphasised listening and letting older people talk; listening and empathising; listening and allowing needs to be expressed, (otherwise known as grumbling). In such a process *the spirit acts and people get more in touch with themselves.*



"Blissfully happy are those who know their needs"

Older people are faced with challenges and opportunities in their third age. Others make assumptions but older people can still pursue their own agendas.

Margo MacDonald MSP looked at how grandparents can pass on their values and knowledge and how delaying retirement enables them to contribute their experience of what works to everybody's benefit. Line dancing or aqua-fit with armbands, whatever exercise suits - she highly recommends.



Professor John Starr defined what it is to be healthy in old age – to be included and active; to have choice and independence; and to be able to enjoy yourself. The good and not so good aspects of increased life expectancy were outlined and some interesting myths dispelled.



The gaze of kindness will often relieve the darkness of the abyss
– John Donaghue

Older people who impress have resilience, that is, the capacity to spring back into shape again, and the **Revd Dr Albert Jewell** outlined how we can cope. He identified balancing the pros and cons or counting your blessings; prayer; help from other people and helping others help themselves; and keeping things in perspective - with humour.



What shone through **Rev Sue**

Kirkbride's workshop was the compassion and imagination that the leaders bring to their preparation and conduct of worship in this situation.

Little wonder that the people for whom such worship is intended are able to engage with it and enjoy it!.

Worshipping With People With Dementia workshop



Discussing the Seven Tasks of Ageing [Jung] with **Dr Harriet Mowat** was wonderfully challenging but needed a day [at least!] not 40 minutes!

End Of Life Issues workshop

Understanding, training, and a healing ministry was the message from

Frances Molloy whose pastoral care project is an inspiring example of an integrated holistic approach to ageing and dementia.

Continuing The Church Community Outside The Church Building workshop



Some sound advice and reassurance from **Ranald Mair** unpacked the recent legislation and systems being developed for protecting and making decisions on behalf of others.

Safeguarding: The Legal Thicket Workshop

VOICING THE SPIRITUAL

The aim of this project which was undertaken by **Dr. Harriet Mowat, Revd Jim Simpson and Fran Faulkes** was focused on the spiritual needs of people with dementia and their carers. Spiritual needs include religious needs and they adopted the definition of spiritual care used by the multi faith NHS working group.

Spiritual needs may not always be expressed within a religious framework. It is important to be aware that all human beings are spiritual beings who have spiritual needs at different times of their lives.

Although spiritual care is not necessarily religious care, religious care, at its best, should always be spiritual (Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains, 2003).

The following are brief extracts from the full report of the project which was part of the Mental Well Being in Later Life Programme supported by NHS Health. The project is important to Faith in Older People as it influenced our current project within care home settings on 'Voicing the Spiritual'. We have deliberately chosen to use the same title in order to show progression and the fact that the collaborators in the current project include those from the previous project.

"It is important to note at the outset that we have taken the position that we are **all** on a spiritual journey, we are **all** ageing and we are **all** vulnerable to cognitive impairment. This means that carers, cared for, professional health and social care staff are all involved in the same human processes. This project and the spiritual care agenda generally is not concerned to "do" spiritual care to others, more it is concerned to share spiritual journeys and learn from each other. It was in this spirit that we embarked on the project. This approach was welcomed and supported by all involved."

"People do not generally embark on discussions about the meaning in their lives, or their understanding of the spiritual as a discrete and identifiable process. Instead spiritual matters, insights and anxieties "pop up" as a consequence of other discussion. The spiritual carer needs to be mindful of the sporadic, fragmented nature of spiritual discussion, its apparently ad hoc and surprising appearance and the presence of serendipity. This is not unique to people with dementia. Indeed it is possible that people with dementia are better able to speak about spiritual matters as they set aside some of the more restraining forms of social control and manners. The framework suggested here takes into account this typical presentation of spiritual matters. The framework is not faith specific. It works for those of any faith, and for those of no faith. It assumes we are all spiritual beings."

A copy of the full report can be obtained from Mowat Research and is also on our website www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk

BOOK REVIEW.....CONTENTED DEMENTIA

When I introduced Oliver James and his mother-in-law Penny Garner to a packed meeting at this year's Festival of Peace and Spirituality I said that this was the best book I had read on the subject of helping carers to understand and cope with the problems of dementia. Penny Garner has devised a pattern of care which, if followed, can offer some hope and contentment to carers and people with dementia alike. She speaks from the experience of caring for her mother and subsequently of 18 years working with people with dementia. She sets out some simple 'rules', some techniques for coping with endless questions, and many stories and illustrations. Sometimes slightly simplistic, sometimes over directive and perhaps rather expensive, nonetheless this book can be of great help to any carer who wants to find ways of developing coping strategies.

Malcolm Goldsmith

ISBN 978 0 09 190180 6

BOOK REVIEWS

Cornerstone Books – An independent, inclusive and ecumenical charitable bookstore tucked away on the terrace of St John's Episcopal Church, in the West End of Edinburgh. It has a wide range of titles relating to spiritual care.

www.cornerstonebooks.org.uk

Other Recommendations

[Lighting up Lives](#)

A report on the palliative care needs of people with end stage dementia living in Dumfries & Galloway 2004-2006 – copies available online from www.alzscot.org.

[Celebrating Age in Worship](#)

Leveson paper No. 18

Can be ordered online

www.levesoncentre.org.uk

The following are suggested from Jessica Kingsley Publishers ...

[The Creative Arts in Palliative Care](#)

[Dying, Bereavement and the Healing Arts](#)

[Speaking of Dying](#)

[Involving Families in Care Homes](#)

[How to Make Your Care Home Fun](#)

see their website for further details:

www.jkp.com/catalogue/index.php/cat/older

TITHING SUPPORT

In Matthew 23, Jesus says to the lawyers and Pharisees: "You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

At Old St Paul's Episcopal Church, 10% of our net income goes towards helping people facing various kinds of challenges.

Over the years, we've helped a range of different causes from the Bible Society in Malawi to people living on the streets; from children with special needs to young out-of-work women who've missed out on education.

This year, we're delighted to help Faith in Older People (FIOP) to fund their newsletter with a donation of £1,500. FIOP came to us looking for some help with the cost of creating, printing and distributing its quarterly newsletter.

Streetwork/Space 44 received £1,200. Old St Paul's has long supported The Ark, a facility for homeless people, but the Council has withdrawn its funding and the organisation is restructuring.

Josie Soutar is Senior Administrator for Streetwork, which has taken over: "Our plans are to reopen the Ark Cafe and develop this as a social enterprise that will get vulnerable people off the streets and into long-term sustainable employment. We would also like to continue with the successful voucher scheme and ensure that those who need it most are fed and provided with support."

Good Food in Tackling Homelessness received £1,500.

The Cyrenians run a scheme in Edinburgh that picks up 462 tonnes of surplus food from 27 companies around the city. The food is then delivered to homelessness projects - not blindly but according to what they will actually use, so there's no waste.

Carol-Anne Alcorn is the programme manager: "The project is all about 'a hand up and not a hand out.' As Cyrenians celebrate their 40th birthday, we continue to work with individuals who are living on the margins of our society and we now have evidence that their involvement in the project makes a major contribution to the sustainability of a tenancy and an increase in self-esteem.

*Maggie Stanfield, Old St Paul's Tithing Group
Scottish Episcopal Church*
www.osp.org.uk

We are running a one-day course

which will explore some of these ideas and offer suggestions which can be used in the course of work with persons with dementia.

It will take place in Edinburgh on:

13th January 2009 – 10am-4pm

at the Gillis Centre – Strathearn Road

Communication:

A matter of the life and death of the mind: Finding ways to connect with people with dementia.

Aim - This one-day workshop will explore the subject of communication with people with dementia, with particular emphasis on its role in underpinning the personhood and wellbeing of all concerned, as well as the provision of care. The implications of authentic communication for meeting the spiritual needs of persons with dementia will be highlighted throughout.

Participants will be invited to consider many aspects of communication including language, non-verbal channels, creativity and humour and will gain many ideas for new ways of connecting with persons with the condition, and approaching their usual work in novel ways.

Style of Workshop

The style of the workshop will be fully participatory with illustrative activities and opportunities for discussion.

Target participants

This workshop will appeal to all of those involved in supporting people with dementia, including those with an interest in the subject of spirituality.

Facilitators

Kate Allan is a clinical psychologist who has worked in the dementia field for over ten years. She has lectured and written widely on the subject.

John Killick is a poet, writer and broadcaster who has been a writer in residence with people with dementia.

Their website: www.dementiapositive.co.uk

If you would like to participate, please download a booking form from our website (www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk under "Activities" –) Costs: £95 per person, including lunch

GENUINE COMMUNICATION

We believe that in work with people who have dementia, communication is the key to everything. And of course communication is not all about words. As well as talking, communicating can be sitting in silence, holding hands, making marks on paper, walking together, smiling and laughing, looking at pictures, arranging objects or moving to music. Whenever we truly communicate with another individual we are making real our commitment to their uniqueness and value as a person, and this works both ways. By connecting in a genuine way we also receive affirmation at an emotional and spiritual level which can renew our energy and passion, and remind us about what is really important.

Our understanding of the central place of communication in supporting persons with dementia has recently been deepened by lessons from the new field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is about learning about how individuals, families and whole communities can thrive, about "what makes life worth living", in the words of its founder psychologist Martin Seligman.

Whilst this may not seem to have obvious relevance to the situation of those living with dementia, we are excited by how much potential it has to offer. For example, we need to find out more about how experiencing positive emotions like joy, contentment and interest might be able to offer benefits beyond just feeling good. The capacity to be 'in the moment' in a profound way seems crucial to being able to get into the shoes of the person with dementia and to make the most of the shared present. And there is a great need to focus on the strengths of the individual in order to support wellbeing and help people to connect, for example by exercising gratitude, appreciating beauty or being playful and humorous.

Kate Allan



**SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION FOR
PASTORAL CARE & COUNSELLING
CONFERENCE AT ST MATTHEWS
CHURCH PERTH 11TH OCTOBER 2008**

CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

As a member of SAPCC I attended their Annual Conference with a good deal of interest because of the subject. I understand that the majority of the 60 plus people attending were pastoral care visitors, and 2 were trainee ministers.

The two speakers were Malcolm Goldsmith and Elspeth McPheat. We were led into their input by a beautiful sensitive meditation of music and readings from two of the SAPCC Council. This enhanced the tone and approach of both speakers most effectively.

Malcolm spoke with a mixture of hard facts about the dementias, the actual changes in the brain etc, and his profound empathic understanding and sensitivity towards those living with the condition. We were invited to use our imaginations for a few minutes in order to have a glimpse into the experience of dementia. Remembering our life, maybe 20 years ago, and then finding ourselves in a world where all memory of the intervening years had gone.

Malcolm emphasized the continuing possibilities of communicating with people with dementia. Words being slow and simple, but also that we do not always need to use words. Being alongside the person; nourishing their senses, with flowers, music, and poetry; being willing to just be in silence with them. Encounter happens in ways we don't always understand.

Following lunch, Elspeth McPheat spoke of her work as Unit Manager for a Church of Scotland Cross Reach Home, St Margaret's, Polmont. This is home for 36 people with dementia.

Elspeth shared with humour and insight, her experiences of living with, caring for, and constantly working to understand, people with dementia. She made many practical suggestions for visitors to care homes. Making no bones about how hard it can be sometimes! Two TV sets tuned to different channels in a home's sitting room being one example of

making any kind of communication pretty hard going. Asking to be taken to a quiet space in the home, or to the resident's room should always be possible. Worshipping with people with dementia was an important part of her input.

Elspeth talked about 'cueing' faith memory in people. Using familiar objects associated with worship, flowers, a bible, or pictures etc., taking account of people's tradition. Taking time; explaining who you are. She had found, however, that the Eucharist was the most profound 'cue' of all, even for those who appear to have advanced dementia and may have lost language altogether.

The Conference finished with time for questions. Malcolm had had to leave early, so I was asked to join Elspeth for these last few minutes. I had the opportunity to tell the Conference more about FIOP. I took the opportunity to pick up on Malcolm's point about understanding that the dementias are a physical illness with specific changes in the brain. It seemed helpful to emphasise the physiological changes in the brain produced by a visitor spending time being really 'with' the person: even when there seems to have been no recognition or communication. Endorphins and other neurotransmitters will have been stimulated in the brain, and can result in the person feeling calm and happier maybe for many hours after the visit, even though they have no memory of anyone being with them.

This was an enjoyable and useful day, and was obviously greatly appreciated by everyone who attended.

*Penny Grieve-
Associate Trainer with FiOP*

We celebrate ageing and faith

Developing an understanding of spiritual care of older people.

Encouraging people to celebrate growing older and

recognising and affirming their gifts and experience.

We offer support and training to pastoral carers and

ordained members on an ecumenical basis and amongst people of other faiths.

Supporting caregivers within health and long term care institutions to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing

by ensuring the inclusion of spiritual care for older people

Faith in Older People

Staff

Mary Moffett
Training Coordinator
Maureen O'Neill
Development
Coordinator
Jean Myers
Administrator

We are very grateful for donations from congregations. Can you help?



Photo © Holy Land Gifts

(continued from p1)

The Jewish festival of Hanukkah, this year, coincides with midwinter, starting at dusk on the 21st December.

The word means "dedication" in Hebrew, and the festival celebrates the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem in 165 BCE.

The Greek king of the Syrian Empire, Antiochus Epiphanes, had tried to force the Jews to worship a statue of him and after many years of revolt, Judah Maccabee recaptured the Temple and destroyed his image.

As part of the rededication the sacred candelabra, The Menorah, needed to be lit, and only one small flask of sanctified oil could be found, but as Talmudic legend recalls, it miraculously lasted the 8 days it took to replenish stocks. Each year, in homes round the world, the Hanukkah candles are lit, with appropriate blessings such as:

"Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season"

The pagan Celtic festival of Imbolc, marked on the 2nd February, a quarter of the year after Samhain, celebrated the return of the light, the birth of new lambs and was the feast day of Brigid, the goddess of fire, fertility and healing, (though she herself was deemed to remain ever virgin).

The Christian festival of Candlemas, set 40 days after Jesus birth, falls on the same day. Luke's Gospel tells how his parents, as the time for Mary's purification was due, brought him to the temple, and Simeon, recognizing him as The Messiah, calls him a "light to lighten the gentiles"

All candles have a finite existence, and none of us last for ever;

as we light our candles throughout this winter season, for whatever reason, sacred or secular,

let us enjoy them and perhaps think of them as a reflection of the human spirit, capable of shedding light in the darkness.



Mary Moffett