

## **SEASON'S GREETINGS TO EVERYONE IN OUR DECEMBER 2020 WISHES**

### *FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE*

is a small voluntary organisation which aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care



## **Looking back, ..... and looking forward ...**

**As this extraordinary year of 2020 ends, we have a chance to take stock of what it has meant to us individually and collectively. We wanted to end the year with hope, so we invited people to contribute two sentences; one to reflect on the past year and the other an aspiration for the future. We have been gratified by the wonderful response which we share with you in our last newsletter of the year.**

**We have seen courage embodied by those who care for us and those who have experienced loss and death as well as isolation. We have seen commitment and fortitude from all those who make our lives possible. We have seen communities and organisations pulling together to ensure that there is food for people and to provide contact to prevent loneliness. We have also felt fear of the virus, frustration that it has caused limitations to our lives but mostly acknowledged that keeping to the rules is for the benefit of others. We are now acutely aware that the situation is unequal. We are aware of the differences in geography, income, education, outdoors and support.**

**We have learned much from the past few months so we take forward the hope that we will build on the experiences; continue with a stronger sense of community; focus on our realisation of what matters to us as individuals and our preparedness to support others and to recognise and be thankful for what we have however big or small.**

**My reflection for the year is increased awareness of the issues faced by people and gratitude for the care, friendship, and family that has sustained me. My aspiration is that we have the resolution to keep what is good but not be afraid of change.**

Maureen O'Neill  
Director, Faith in Older People

**2020**

Walking through the seasons has brought joy, refreshment and new energy.

**2021**

..... That hope will steal in like the dawn, dispelling shadows and enriching relationships with new light.

**Robert Rendall, Chair, Faith in Older People**



**“As never before, I have learned to take one day at a time and to ‘lean not on my own understanding.’ (Proverbs 3:5-6)**

**My deepest aspiration is that I might come to see God more clearly, know Him more nearly and love Him more dearly.”**

*Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair*

*Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*



**‘The pandemic has asked hard questions of us. It has produced some remarkable examples of creativity, compassion and self-sacrifice from people of all ages; it has reminded us of what we hold most dear. My hope for 2021 is that we shall embed these lessons in the way we treat the most vulnerable and in our care for our planet. That, in short, we shall not return to the way things were. +John’**

*The Rt Rev Dr John Armes*

*Bishop of the Diocese of Edinburgh, Scottish Episcopal Church*



**This year we have learnt that many things we take for granted can be taken from us in an instant and have been forced to consider our true priorities. As we hopefully, move out of our current situation let us therefore continue to be grateful for what we have and learn from our experience to focus what is truly important.**

*Rabbi David Rose*

*Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation*

*2020 has been a year that many of us have felt long and frustrating, as the experience of lockdown took its toll of being with other people. But for me there were also small ordinary moments that broke through that sense of isolation - of our youngest granddaughter in Brighton trying to give us a weekly hug via the laptop; of freshly baked croissants with coffee after our early morning weekly shop; of reading my favourite cartoonist Steven Camley in the Herald with his humorous and pertinent comments on the world.*

*And my hope for 2021, while looking forward eventually to re-connecting with many people and activities, is that we also do not lose sight of the small ordinary and humorous experiences that can feed our spiritual and mental well-being.*

**Best wishes**

*The Rt Rev Bishop Bruce Cameron, Previous Chair Faith in Older People  
Previously Primus/Bishop, Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney*



**A crisis can often be a time of beginning** – and we have at our best seen the growth of community, the sharing of mutual concern and the coming together of strangers during the Covid19 period. I hope as we move into a new normal in 2021 that we will learn to listen to those who differ from us, root ourselves in the solidarity of a working together and as a whole society appreciate ever more the humanity which comes from those who work in care, and so value the care sector as we have never before.

**Dr Donald Macaskill**  
**Chief Executive, Scottish Care**



*‘In a dark time, the eye begins to see.’ Theodore Roethke 1908-1963*

2020 has been the year of COVID-19, the year that kept families and friends apart, the year when older and poorer people, and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds suffered much more than most, but also the year that saw kindness and compassion flourish in all sorts of unexpected ways in villages, towns and communities across Scotland.

As 2020 closes, I see hope in these many individual acts of kindness and compassion,

and in the astonishing and rapid development of science—COVID-19 treatments, vaccines- to help extinguish the pandemic and relieve the suffering of the past year.

I hope too, that our eye, in the American poet’s words, continues to see that compassion is the way forward for us as individuals, as communities, as societies. For hope, as Seumas Heaney said, is a state of the soul.

**DR JOHN GILLIES OBE, MA (Ethics & Law), FRSE, FRCGP, FRCPE**  
**Deputy Director, Scottish School of Primary Care, Honorary Professor of General Practice**  
**Senior Adviser, Global Health Academy; Board Member of FIOF**

On reflection of the past year I would say "It was a great blessing to witness all segments of Scottish Societies standing together in Solidarity supporting our beloved NHS , Frontline Services and Emergency Services during these difficult times.'

My aspirations for the future is to be part of a new beginning when all of Humanity conducts itself with equal rights for all communities in the world starting here in Scotland.

*Shabir Beg  
Ahlul Bayt Society*

**On reflection - although the most difficult year for so many, there has been the most wonderful acts of kindness, generosity, and a spirit of togetherness. Existing and new volunteers have shown great determination to be there for others. Looking forward we need to aspire to continue to be kind and hold onto what we have learnt and amplify where we can.**

*Paul Okroj  
Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland*



This year I have seen all the seasons come and go in the view from my window. Next year I pray that I will be able to go out and live the seasons with all my family, hugging them, crying and laughing with them, eating and sharing with them. Watching those seasons have made me ever thankful to the God who made them and yet holds us in his hands.

*Ruth E Aird Qualified General Nurse MSc Ed  
Research Associate with Faith in Older People*

"People are inherently kind, it is the human condition. However, kindness can flourish or wither depending upon circumstances. During the pandemic I have had first-hand experience of the unexpected kindness of others and I have noticed that I think more about doing things to make people feel happier. I thought it shameful at first - that it took a pandemic to foster kind acts - but reflecting on this, there is no shame. We know our own vulnerabilities and needs and don't always see the vulnerabilities and struggles of others. However, in times of crisis, the default is that everyone is vulnerable and struggling - we therefore don't wait until we feel the need is there, we just act. My note to self in a post-covid world is that kindness should be an action and not a reaction."

*Professor Angela Kydd  
Clinical Professor in Nursing RGU  
and NHS Grampian*

For me as I reflect on 2020, my one admiration has been for the staff working in care homes. They have borne the brunt of the pandemic with 50% of all COVID-19 deaths in the UK occurring in care homes. My hope and aspiration for next year, is for staff in care homes to be able to be recognised for their huge achievements not only in keeping residents safe but being the extended arm for families when their relative has died. Care home staff across Scotland are committed, kind and go the extra mile – thank you for what you do so well.

**Jo Hockley OBE FRCP(Edin) PhD MSc RN**  
*Macmillan Senior Research Fellow*  
*The University of Edinburgh, and Board Member of FiOP*



When I reflect on the year, I see a year of hardship, heartbreak for so many people coupled with amazing acts of kindness and compassion witnessed time and time again. My hope would be that we remember this kindness and compassion and we take this to the future with us to make the world a better place.

Best wishes  
 Alan

Alan Gibbon  
 Head of Spiritual Care  
 NHS Tayside

I have been struck by the way individuals and communities have mobilised to address the social isolation, loneliness, poor mental and physical health, poverty and disrupted lives that this pandemic has resulted in. My hope for 2021 is that kindness and compassion will become even more contagious and empowering, and that our increased understanding about the origins and spread of viruses will transform how we look after the natural world and our planet.

Kind regards  
 Claire

Claire Stevens  
 Chief Executive  
 Voluntary Health Scotland

My reflection is that 2020 has highlighted the importance of working across and with all the generations as we seek to support people during the pandemic. My hope for next year is that this work can be expanded, intentionally creating communities that bring people of all ages together, including faith communities.

*Bella Kerr*  
*Intergenerational Development Officer*  
*Generations Working Together*

**I'm hoping that 2021 is the year we leave the virus behind, but take the community spirit and connections we found forward with us. We're looking forward to the Big Lunch next summer already!**

*Sophie Bridger (she/her), Country Manager, Scotland  
Eden Project Communities*

The challenges and opportunities of 2020 have clarified, for me, that the ways of the past cannot sustain us in the future and that we need new ways of thinking and engaging, recalling the wisdom of Albert Einstein: *'we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'*. May 2021 be the year when the current culture of fear is transformed into a culture of shared responsibility for what the future holds for ourselves, our neighbour and our earth... and personally, may I continue to nurture, with gratitude, the delight I have had this year of being ever more present to the beauty within each day.

***Nancy Adams, FiOP Associate  
and Listener***



**"Thanks to the collaborative work we were privileged to undertake with FiOP this year NES is better informed about the place of Spiritual Care in the training of Nurses, Midwives and Allied health professionals and can look forward to improving the quality and impact of this area of training in the future."**

**Dr Iain Macritchie  
Head of Programme for Spiritual Care  
NES**

"We Older People, having lived longer than most, have encountered challenges and difficulties in our past and have overcome them and hopefully learnt from the experience.

I look at COVID-19 as yet another challenge to be met positively and from which we will move forward to re-gain a sort of normality once more in the very near future.

We need courage and a positive attitude - a mask and keeping your distance with very clean hands and believing that we will get through is how we will beat the virus! Hang on to the thought that history tells us that following previous pandemics there has always been a time for great growth.

All good wishes for a Happy and Healthy Festive Season from everyone at SOPA".

***Diana Findlay  
Chairperson Scottish Older People's Assembly***

2020 forced us to stop, to talk to each other differently, to consider what makes our communities tick, to value some people's jobs more and to reflect on how we spend our time. I hope that while we want to say goodbye to much of what 2020 has brought, that these are things we all choose to keep doing and take forward into 2021 and beyond.

**Mike Nicolson**  
**Writer and Consultant**  
**FIOP Associate**

## Reflection and Hope



When I look back over this last year, I will remember the kindness that people in our

community showed to each other. The care, love, support, and encouragement neighbours' gave, many of whom had hardly spoken before. I will remember the way in which our community pulled together in a time of uncertainty and fear and showed resilience and the ability to adapt in tremendously difficult times.

My hope for the year to come is that we can once again come together freely with those that

we love and treasure in our lives. That we will never again fear hugging our parents, children, and friends. I hope that as we do so we will continue to show the kindness and care that we have done in this past year to those in both our close and wide communities and continue to make time for each other.

**Frankie Greenwood PhD (Edin)**  
**Board Member of FIOP**



**One hopeful thing this year has been the beginnings of a realization of how much carers of every kind contribute, both to individuals and to society.**

**I hope that this will not fade and will lead to them being more justly rewarded for all the work they do.**

**And thanks to you for all the work that you do too!**

**Cath McManus**

**Listener, FIOP Associate**

In the 1970's there was a little book which influenced my thinking greatly - 'Enough is Enough' by John Vincent Taylor, and I have thought about its wisdom, of the negative impact of endless growth, a lot during this year, when I have been forced to stay home and consume less. I have discovered again that Enough really is Enough.

So my hope for next year as life begins to return to normal is that we won't return to over consuming, but will be content to live with, and waste less, and really think about the fragility and sustainability of our beautiful little planet.

*Linda Wright, FiOP Board Member and NHS Chaplain*



### **Dancing again**

We've been locked in and locked down  
hectoring and harassed  
tempted and teased.

We've unlearnt the steps to the old dances  
remembering how we used to struggle with them anyway.

The 'Dancing Master' lies open beside the HD TV  
Strictly what? you ask...

Are we too old to discover  
the delights of hanging halfway between the stars and the earth  
in the arms of another  
as the music plays  
and we rise into unsuspected ecstasy?

Will we learn the new steps of the new dances  
Experimenting cautiously  
but ready to spring rudely and joyously into life?

We better had if we know what's good for us.....

*Simon Jaquet, FiOP Associate*



This year, Covid has denied all of us of the chance to hug and touch so important in good times and bad. It has also shown us there are different ways to work and make things happen.

Next year the sun will shine, spring will come, and children will laugh! Folk will go about their business without a sense of fear and apprehension.

**Jenny Henderson**  
**FiOP Associate, Consultant in Dementia**



**“Another year has nearly passed where we have been faced with some stark realities of the vulnerability of older people and potential for abuse. The opportunities for harm have been exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic and, for example, we have seen a significant increase in the incidence of older people being subject to scams; in particular romance scams.**

**With the very recent launch of our Community Response hub in Scotland, I am much more optimistic about our ability to raise awareness of the abuse of older people and to provide more pragmatic support to keep them safer in 2021 and beyond. “**

*Brian Rapley*  
*Development Manager Scotland, Hourglass Scotland*

## LATE INFORMATION

### **Scottish Government New Visiting Guidance and Vaccine Information**

[Adult Care Homes Christmas and New Year guidance - FINAL 4.12.20.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com/Adult-Care-Homes/Christmas-and-New-Year-guidance-FINAL-4.12.20.pdf)



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