



Faith in Older People

NEWSLETTER – Issue Spring 2010

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

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SC322915
Registered Charity
SC038225

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We all need something to look forward to, and after this long hard winter the hope that Easter, and the return of Spring, offers is vital.

As I write the crocus are out, and the snowdrops are still with us, almost a month later than usual, but soon, with the increasing warmth of the sun everything will come in a rush and the movement of sap from root to tip will break out in a riot of green, however old or gnarled the trunk.

Celebrating the greening of our countryside or the festival of Easter is easy. We do it with flowers and hymns, with chocolate and eggs, with services and family outings.

But it is the hard work of preparation, the prayers and the Lenten fasts, winter ploughing, pruning and digging over, the sending out of invitations or spring cleaning the house for the family visits that sets the scene and makes it possible.



Recently my teenage daughter was involved as a choir member in her first big performance – *Carmina Burana*. It was wonderful, a celebration of musical skills and efforts – from young and old, those starting their musical life and those with many years of skill to offer. As I left the hall I realised that the work that had gone into making it had produced a real sense of community amongst the performers. They were buzzing and now rightly proud of their achievement - firmly connected across age and skill range in the joy of what they had made between them.

It's as much the preparation that goes into a celebration as the event itself that leads to a meaning filled sense of community.

As we enjoy Easter, and Spring when it comes, let's make sure that we take the time to share the work of preparation for any celebration with all ages in our community. Remember, it's in the "doing together" that we find meaning, as much as in the ultimate burst of hallelujahs or outbreak of chocolate!

Mary Moffett

"We are not called by God to do extraordinary things but to do ordinary things with extra-ordinary love."

Jean Vanier



Professor John Swinton



Professor John Swinton has agreed to act as Theological Advisor to Faith in Older People.

His background is nursing, ministry and healthcare chaplaincy. He worked as a nurse for sixteen years initially within the field of mental health and latterly within the area of learning disabilities and has also worked as a hospital chaplain.

It was whilst working in these fields that he began to gain a passion for developing modes of care that are genuinely person centred and which take seriously the significance of theology, spirituality and religion within the processes of healing, and healing and community building.

He is an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland with a strong commitment to supporting the work of the church; a member of Aberdeen Presbytery and currently secretary of Christ's College, which is responsible for the welfare and education of candidates for the ministry of the Church of Scotland.

DVD

Spiritual care – have you found any yet?

A new DVD made by FiOP in conjunction with Alzheimer's Scotland and Artlink will be launched in May at the Conference *The Spiritual Journey & Wellbeing in Old Age*. The DVD will be available to care homes throughout Scotland to encourage staff in ensuring that people's spiritual needs are met.

FUTURE CONFERENCE

FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE

in collaboration with

The Crichton Centre for Research in Health & Social Issues; the Scottish Episcopal Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway and the Church of Scotland present a joint conference

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND WELL-BEING IN OLD AGE

Thursday, 27TH MAY 2010

9.30 – 4.30 - lunch will be provided

To be held at GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, DUMFRIES, Rutherford-McCowan Building Crichton University Campus

For further details please contact info@fiop.org.uk

INTERFAITH DISCUSSION

THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF OLDER PEOPLE - An Interfaith Dimension

How do we care for our older people and how do we honour their experience and wisdom?

What different approaches are there across cultures and faiths and what can we learn from one another?

The Festival of Spirituality and Peace, the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, and Faith in Older People are planning a Civic Café discussion on 11 May 2010 at St. John's Church (on the corner of Princes Street and Lothian Road) Edinburgh to explore these and other questions.

The civic café is open to people with a professional or personal interest in the issue and attendance is by invitation.

If you would like to express an interest in taking part

please contact Fiona Park – email: civic.cafe@festivalofspirituality.org.uk (or phone 0131 221 2273)



Faith in Older People's Chairman, Christopher Davies, receiving a cheque from The Rt Rev Brian Smith, Bishop of Edinburgh.

The Bishop presents Christopher Davies, chairman of *Faith in Older People* (FiOP) with a cheque for almost £8,000. This is half of the money raised by the Bishop's 2009 Lent Appeal and comes from donations given by people from every congregation in the diocese. In thanking the Bishop, Christopher said that he wished to thank every single person who had contributed to the Appeal and he wanted to assure them that the money would be spent wisely and creatively.

Dementia: Ethical Issues

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics has recently produced this publication which considers the ethical, legal and social issues raised by dementia. It addresses a range of issues such as attitudes toward those with dementia, ethical approaches to care and making decisions for people with dementia. It sets out an ethical framework to support those who face difficult ethical decisions and makes a number of recommendations to policy makers.

The very comprehensive report emphasises that "even with the best support, a person with dementia will experience profound effects in their life as a result of the disease. The decline in mental capacity and ability to function independently, together with the effect dementia may have on mood and behaviour, is highly distressing to the person with dementia and creates difficulties for carers as they seek to respond appropriately. The potential for frequent and serious conflicts of interest between the person being cared for and their carer or carers generates further ethical difficulties." The framework provides assistance to those facing difficult decisions but emphasises there is rarely a single 'right' answer.

Copies of the full report can be obtained from the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 28 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JS and electronic copies can be obtained via www.nuffieldbioethics.org

Supporting care home staff in delivering spiritual care

FiOP will be introducing a **MENTORING PROGRAMME**

for six care homes in the North of Scotland later this year. This will offer a six month programme of education, training and support to encourage staff and volunteers in residential homes and other care settings for older people to have confidence with the spiritual care needs of the older people.

The programme is aimed at helping staff introduce small but important changes in practice within the homes that facilitate the support of the spiritual lives of the whole home community. Each place will be different and will need different kinds of support and encouragement.

The intention of the programme is to offer specific and structured support using the framework of a reflective cycle of learning sometimes called action learning. FiOP is grateful to the **Scottish Government** for funding this pilot project.

CARING MEMORIES

The very word technology can leave a lot of people cold and the speed of change over the last few years has been quite bewildering; casting up an ever growing array of gadgets and gizmos. However, developments in the world of printing have enabled one company to produce personalised photo albums, or memory books that can form a lifeline between people with Dementia and their carers.



The albums are designed to encourage life story work, an exercise that academics have shown both encourages communication in

dementia and also makes that communication pleasurable, as it introduces a feel-good reminiscence factor for the person whose life story it is. Chris Wilkins is behind the Edinburgh based Caring Memories and it took two years to develop the album, in conjunction with experts at the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling.

“Basically, it’s about capturing memories from a person’s life,” he says. In dementia, when short-term memory is



impaired, “a lot of long-term memories are still alive and very vivid. So life story work is about tapping into those memories, and using various triggers to help people recount their past.” The Caring Memories book is structured on these well-established life story principles, and provides a project for the memory-impaired person, along with their family and carers, to focus on as a basis for communication, says Chris. “It’s an activity which has therapeutic value, and lots of other benefits—it means that the carer, for instance, sees a person rather than a disease, and there’s a relationship you can build on the basis of that.”

One such book has been made by Mary and her daughter Ann. Mary who is 84 and has Alzheimers, is a resident in an Edinburgh Care Home. For Mary and Ann, the entire process, from putting the book together to using it on a day-to-day basis has been an overwhelmingly positive experience, says Ann. Assembling the book took, “a good few months,” she explains, “because we had to get pictures and then sit at the computer with one of the volunteers who was helping us put the book together and making up the wee story from things mum was saying . . . we would just look at the pictures, and mum would tell us a wee bit about the pictures, and that was how we managed to put the captions in. We had great fun doing it.” The project came at just the right time to help distract both of them from the initial bleakness of Mary’s move into the care home, says Ann, providing them both with something positive to focus on. “It was nice to have something that we could come in and do together, something to look forward to each week.”

The finished product is also a success, she reckons. And it is striking how simply opening the book seems to bring Mary to life. As she leafs through the pages, the pictures elicit fragments of stories from her; laughter; the odd tear—but they are mostly happy memories, and Mary’s enjoyment is obvious

Chris Wilkins – www.caringmemories.net



CAMEO at Christ Church

In April 2008 a small group began meeting at this Edinburgh church, to look how the needs of the more senior members of the congregation could be met. The main impact was the organizing a quarterly Holy Communion service, on a Wednesday afternoon, in the Church Centre.



The aim was to provide a traditional service, in an easily accessible setting, which could be followed by socializing and tea. As some of our members have mobility problems, taxis are arranged, provided by the church, to bring folk to, and fro, the event if needed.

In July that year we held our first CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) day. The theme was 'the Festival' & a couple of artistes, who perform in street theatre, came and enabled us to make a large collage, to hang in church during the



Edinburgh Festival. They also gave us a performance of juggling and acrobatics, after the Holy Communion service in the afternoon.

The next CAMEO day was held in June 2009, with the 70th Anniversary providing the theme of 'The Second World War'. This evoked many memories, including what it was like to be child in Germany at that time.



As the quarterly service had grown in popularity we made the decision to hold it monthly, from September, with the planning group meeting every other month to decide the themes and organize each event.

The Communion service has remained central. This is followed by readings & reminiscences and then tea, provided by the Mothers' Union, which have been part of this event from the start. The delicious home baking, the fresh flowers and colourful serviettes are much appreciated.



In 2010 we hope to build on what has evolved, and enable more people to be able to come. A guest book reminds us who was there. The ratio of helpers to guests is usually one to one, with often over twenty people enjoying the time together.

We have decided to call ourselves the Cameo Group, as this how we are known! Sometimes the themes are obvious, such as the 'Carols at Christmas' and 'Remembrance Day'.

In January we had chosen 'Winter', before realizing how snowy it would be! This evoked memories of other severe winters and, for a few, the Cameo event was the only time they had been out in weeks.

Gill Davidson

COURSES - Recent Activities

Spiritual Care for Older People in Residential Care

Just before the snow came, we ran three Day Workshops in the North of Scotland in Inverness, Skye and Aberdeen. These were intended to accommodate only 12 people but we were bursting at the seams at two of the venues.

The intention was to offer residential care home staff the opportunity to take a day to think through some of the issues around ageing and spirituality and the implications of this for spiritual care for older people.

The day consisted of three parts. We thought about our own ageing and what that might mean in terms of our understanding of the ageing of others. We considered the challenges of working in residential care and the pressures on time and energies for the staff. We also thought about what "successful" ageing might look like. In the afternoon we thought about the spiritual care of older people using an exercise called "Cards on the Table". This allowed the group to share ideas and develop their thinking around the priorities and practicalities of spiritual care. We finished by looking at a model of spiritual care that has been developed by a group of healthcare chaplains and researchers working in the North of Scotland. This is now written up and about to be published in the *Scottish Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*.

Harriet Mowat

Making Sense of Later Life

This excellent and practical workshop, facilitated by John Killick, involved the participants considering how writing can help to make sense of events during their lives. It provided insights into how to work with older people to capture their memories and reflections.

"Affirming, relaxed, participative"

"Creativity never fades. Everyone has something joyful to offer. A moment of your time is all that's required to make someone's day."

Other Organisations

4th International Conference

"Coming of Age: Dementia in the 21st Century"

19-20 October 2010 –

Dementia Services Development Centre

www.dementia.stir.ac.uk

**Scottish Storytelling Centre,
43-45 High Street,
Edinburgh**

24 April 2010, 10am-1pm

Life Stories and Reminiscence workshop

The smell of cut grass, the sound of a VW camper van, the sight of a childhood home or the colour of the sea on a winter's day. Evoking these sensory memories through storytelling can be the beginning of a remarkable journey into our past.

Led by Jean Edmiston.

Refreshments will be provided.

£17.50 (£15 Network members)

This event is open to professional staff, carers, volunteers and storytellers working with older people.

A limited number of subsidised places are available.

Please contact Caroline Budge on 0131 652 3272 or caroline@scottishstorytellingcentre.com to book.

2010 Life Stories Leith project is funded by Leith Neighbourhood Partnership, City of Edinburgh Council

BOOK REVIEW

Telling Tales about Dementia: Experiences of Caring edited by Lucy Whitman (Jessica Kingsley: 2010)

Telling Tales about Dementia is a collection of accounts written by people caring for persons with dementia.

To me, the foreword by Joanna Trollope sets a rather unfortunate 'dread' tone for what follows, but in her editorial role Lucy Whitman provides both an overview of the book, and her concluding thoughts about what we should learn from the individual contributions.

Telling Tales should appeal both to those providing support (whether in family or formal capacities) and those who are responsible for making decisions about services. It is more difficult to say how a person who is themselves living with dementia might respond to this material.

One of the strengths of the book is its diversity, including stories from people who are in a range of family relationships, friendships and same-sex partnerships, writing about people with dementia who are widely various in their personalities, backgrounds and lifestyles. There are accounts written from different cultural and religious perspectives, as well as situations involving younger persons with dementia. This variety is important as in such a collection there is inevitably a degree of overlap in the shape of many of the contributions, from the appearance of problems, through the process of obtaining help and into the experience of 'care'.

On reading a book like this one learns to brace oneself for raw accounts of the losses which go along with dementia, the hugely difficult and complex situations people have to deal with, and painful examples of lamentably poor care or even abuse. There is a great deal of honesty and directness here, and the very real pain, anger and guilt which those close to the person with dementia experience as a result comes through loud and clear. But there are also examples of highly sensitive and loving interventions, as well as precious and sustaining moments of shared joy, humour and gratitude. These remind us that dementia does not have to be all about deterioration and grief, and there are many opportunities to learn and grow.

Themes which are of particular interest from a spiritual point of view include descriptions of how the continued or renewed practice of faith has been important for both the person at the centre and those who are supporting them. But there are also broader themes which attest to the centrality of spirituality in the experience of dementia. Rosemary Clarke writes of finding ways to connect with her mother in what would seem to many a hopeless situation, and Barbara Pointon describes how she continued to communicate with her husband through music, and other sensory experiences. And Steve Jeffery conveys the humour inherent in his relationship with his mother, and how important it was to write down her words when she was still able to speak.

Dementia is a condition which challenges us to revisit our values about what it is to be human, and Anna Young's reflections on the nature of personhood and close relationships, and how her ideas about these have changed as a result of supporting her husband, Crispian, through dementia provides one of the most thought-provoking passages in a book

I am glad to have read, and can certainly recommend, this book to others.

Kate Allan

Generations Working Together Newsletter.

The March edition of the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice newsletter is now available:

<http://www.scotcip.org.uk/news-events.html>

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
Director
Maureen O'Neill
Training Officer
Mary Moffett
Administrator
Jean Myers

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

MY GARDEN

I have a small urban garden right in the centre of the City.



It is a wonderful south facing tranquil site which I created myself (it once won a prize in a city centre garden competition). But more than that it represents a space into where I can step out, work, entertain and talk to my plants, relax and restore my soul when the need arises.

This isn't an especially low maintenance

garden either, and I think therein lies some of its value to me. It demands upkeep and the spin-off in terms of being outdoors and staying healthy is unquantifiable. I would be forced to recognise my real age, (which I mainly ignore) and either find less appealing means of maintaining well-being, or possibly succumb to low flying age-related maladies: (As it is I deal with low flying aphids and the like!).

My aim is to continue to live here, independently, cultivate my garden, ignore the vagaries of climate and contribute to the greening of Edinburgh.

In fact Edinburgh now has a greening policy, providing open spaces for small allotments and gardens in public areas and back greens. This would seem to open up opportunities for others to work outdoors and help maintain health, even where they don't have individual gardens.



Chard in an allotment

Anja Amsel

"It never ceases to amaze me that even in the eightieth year of my life, my faith can still be greened". A quote from *The Deeper Centre* by Sister Eva Heymann SHCJ, Darton, Longman & Todd