

## JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER



### **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

### **FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE BLOGS**

**Our regular blogs can be read on our website at [www.fiop.org.uk](http://www.fiop.org.uk) - here are two of our latest:**

#### **Stigma and Mental Health**

In March this year, Professor John Swinton gave a thought-provoking seminar on “Spirituality and Mental Health Challenges” for Faith in Older People (FIOP). A specific challenge for all of us is how we address stigma. “*It is not who I am, its how you see me*” was highlighted in his presentation.

To take this forward Professor Swinton has kindly agreed to FIOP publishing an extract from his book *Finding Jesus in the Storm – The Spiritual Lives of Christians with mental health Challenges*<sup>1</sup> which address this issue.

The Rev Professor John Swinton BD, PhD (Aberdeen), RMN (Registered Mental Nurse), RNMD (Registered Nurse for People with Learning Disabilities); Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care with the University of Aberdeen and Theological Advisory to Faith in Older People.



John Swinton is Professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Care and Chair in Divinity at the University of Aberdeen. He worked as a registered mental health nurse for a number of years as a hospital chaplain, and as a community mental health Chaplain. In 2004, he founded the University of Aberdeen’s Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability. He has published

in Practical Theology and Pastoral and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. For more than a decade John worked as a registered mental health nurse. He also worked for a number of years as a hospital chaplain, and as a community mental health Chaplain. In 2004, he founded the University of Aberdeen’s Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability. He has published

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<sup>1</sup> John Swinton (2020) *Finding Jesus in the Storm – The spiritual lives of Christians with mental health Challenges* which address this issue.

widely within the area of mental health, dementia, disability theology, spirituality and healthcare, qualitative research and pastoral care. In 2016 his book *Dementia: Living in the memories of God* won the Archbishop of Canterbury's Ramsey Prize for excellence in theological writing.

**EXTRACT** from *Finding Jesus in the Storm – The Spiritual Lives of Christians*

### **The Problem of Thin Descriptions**

There are different *kinds* of descriptions, depending on the angle from which one looks at a phenomenon, but there are also different *types* of descriptions. In his book *The Interpretation of Cultures*, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz presents us with the idea of thick and *thin* descriptions.<sup>2</sup> A thin description provides us with the minimum amount of information necessary to describe a situation or context. A survey, for example, provides a thin account of a phenomenon insofar as it captures only certain statistical aspects and provides no contextual, relational, experiential, or cultural information. Statistics also provide thin descriptions. So, for example, we might note that one in four people will experience mental health challenges over a lifetime. This emphasizes at a general level the fact that mental health challenges are a significant issue in the population. However, this statistic tells us very little about the particularities of either the one or the four. Thin descriptions provide us with high-level insights but no low-level details. Another example might be Google Translate, a web-based program that translates typed words into a different language. Through this process you do get a rough understanding of what words mean in other languages, but that understanding is extremely limited and can even be quite badly skewed. It is an understanding of language stripped of culture, experience, history, or linguistic subtleties and idioms. It is too thin to provide more than a very basic level of insight into the language.

As we enter the world of mental health, it will quickly become clear that thin descriptions abound, both within public conceptions of people's experiences and within the mental health professions. In what follows, I examine four key areas where thin descriptions have become particularly problematic.

### **Stigma as Thin Description**

We find a particularly powerful and devastating example of a thin description and its dangers in the phenomenon of stigma. Stigma is one of the most destructive aspects of living with unconventional mental health experiences and one of the most painful experiences that people have to endure. Stigma occurs when a person is reduced from being a whole to being a mere part; from being a full human being to being the sum of a single part. The sociologist Erving Goffman informs us that the concept of stigma originated in the Greek slave trade. After a slave was purchased, the slave was branded and, in branding, was reduced (or thinned down) to the size of the brand. The slave was no longer described as a person, a citizen, a friend, or a family member but was now simply property. Stigma functions in the area of mental health in a very similar way. Stigma reduces people living with unconventional mental health problems to the shape and form of their diagnosis, or more accurately, to people's perceptions and caricatures of the implications of their diagnosis. In this way stigma thins down or reduces people's descriptions to impersonal caricatures based on the connotations of their diagnoses. People cease to be perceived as persons and become "schizophrenics", "depressives", "neurotics", or any other thin diagnostic façade that people choose to project when they don't want to engage with real individuals.

### **A Spoiled Identity**

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<sup>2</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 33-35.

Goffman describes stigma as a phenomenon that occurs when an individual with an attribute deeply discredited by his or her society is rejected as a result of that attribute. “While a stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind – in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive.”<sup>3</sup> Stigma is most powerful when it urges us to “reclassify an individual from one socially anticipated category to a different but equally well-anticipated one, and the kind that causes us to alter our estimation of the individual downward.”<sup>4</sup> Such a powerful stigma re-describes individuals in negative ways that move them from one socially anticipated category to a difference and lesser social category.<sup>5</sup> Stigma is thus a malignant mode of social description that is very often aimed at some of the most vulnerable people within society.

One of the problems with mental health diagnoses is that they are highly stigmatized categories that take their meaning not only from their clinical descriptions but also and sometimes primarily from the negative cultural accretions that accompany such descriptions. This is particularly true in the Western world, which has a preoccupation with intellect, reason, and clarity of thinking. In such a cultural milieu, mental health challenges can easily be perceived as challenging each of these socially valued attributes and, in so doing, challenging our conceptions of what it means to be fully human.

Tanya Luhrmann notices this particularly in the diagnosis of schizophrenia in America: “One of the challenges of living schizophrenia in the United States is the clear identity conferred by the diagnostic label itself. To receive care in a society so acutely aware of individual rights is to receive an explicit diagnosis. A patient has the right to know. But the label ‘schizophrenia’ is often toxic for those who acquire it. It creates not only what Erving Goffman called a ‘spoiled identity’ but an identity framed in opposition to the nonlabelled social world.”<sup>6</sup> Describing someone as having schizophrenia or being a ‘schizophrenic’ has significant social and relational consequences, at least in Western cultures. As Esme Weijun Wang put it in relation to her personal experience of living schizoaffective disorder: “Giving someone a diagnosis of schizophrenia will impact how they see themselves. It will change how they interact with friends and family. The diagnosis will affect how they are seen by the medical community, the legal system, the Transportation Security Administration, and so on.”<sup>7</sup>

Importantly, this “spoiled identity” stands in direct opposition to those claiming to bear witness to “normality.” This is why schizophrenia can be so alienating. Built into the description is an assumption of distance and presumed Otherness. However, this is not true in all cultures, as we will see. Indeed, in certain cultures it is not possible to be “a schizophrenic”; constructing people in this way is just not what such cultures do. A question we will explore in various ways as we move on is this: What is it about Western culture that constructs schizophrenia (and other forms of mental health challenge) in such a way as to make it so dehumanizingly stigmatic?

Professor John Swinton

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<sup>3</sup> Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Goffman, *Stigma*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Goffman, *Stigma*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> T. M. Luhrmann and Jocelyn Marrow, eds., *Our Most Troubling Madness: Case Studies in Schizophrenia across Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Wang, *The Collected Schizophrenias*, Kindle locations 225-227.

## Caring worship

How can preachers and worship leaders offer worship that will assist church members in recovery from the problems of lockdown, and enable individual and congregational well-being, while they, themselves, are coping with their own stresses and anxieties?

This is the question I am planning to put in the opening session of an online weekend conference for Methodist preachers and worship leaders who will be discussing the offering of worship to people struggling with the effects of lockdown on all aspects of their lives.

Being able to offer helpful and meaningful worship and looking after their own well-being are inter-linked: none of us can care effectively for others, nor adequately meet their needs, while not ok ourselves.

“Love your neighbour as yourself” is what Jesus asks of us, his disciples. This is more than a ‘command’: within these words we find guidance. They remind us of our human inter-connectedness, of our inter-dependence. We develop an idea how to love our neighbour as we come to recognise what enables us to feel loved ourselves. But then, to truly love our neighbour, we must also be able to recognise where their particular needs are different from our own, and to be willing to offer *what they really need*, and not what we ourselves would want if coping with a similar difficulty.

Preachers and worship leaders - if they do not take the time to look after themselves and to recognise, and seek support with, their own particular stressors and difficulties - risk offering that relates more to their *own* needs rather than the needs of their congregations. What images of God may be the most helpful? Which might cause worry? Or confuse? This is where the self-awareness and the caring for self of the preacher or worship leader is so important. He or she may, for example, find “God is our Rock” to be reassuring; signifying

God as unchanging and ever-present. While in the minds of at least some of those listening to the sermon, these words may conjure up an image of God as immovable and impersonal and uncaring.

What is important is to discover, or re-discover, ways of worshipping that will encourage and support and inspire those who are feeling uncertain, or lonely, and those who are experiencing darkness or pain of any kind.

But ..... should the aim of worship be to encourage well-being?

What I intend to emphasise in my brief introduction is this. Yes, worship *should* enable and encourage the well-being of those who worship. *But* – an important but – the purpose of worship is much more than this.

Worship is about relationship with God. It is not the only way in which we communicate with God; but worship is an activity that enables and encourages our dependence on, and trust in, our creating and redeeming God. And that, surely, is essential to our well-being. Worship that enables and encourages relationship with God will enable and encourage well-being. And not just the well-being of those who worship, but also the well-being of the community around. Church members – whether thinking of themselves as disciples or good neighbours, as ‘doing mission’ or as offering pastoral care – when feeling encouraged and well in themselves, will be re-energised to enable well-being as they ‘love their neighbour’.

Worship is about relationship with God. Preachers and worship leaders aim to encourage this relationship in all that they offer; words and silence; action and symbol. What, then, to say? And how to say it? When to speak and when to be silent? Which symbols might be helpful? And how might they

be interpreted or understood? How can the preacher or worship leader ever know? Knowing is discovered through relationships. In relationship with God who guides and challenges the thinking of those preparing to lead worship. And in relationship with the congregation. For how else can we know - unless we ask - whether our words confuse or comfort, cause pain or lead to healing?

My ten minutes of presentation at this conference with preachers and worship leaders can, I think, be summarised in these (just over) ten words:

“know yourself; know your congregation; discover well-being through relationship with God”

**Rev Lorna Murray  
Mental Health Chaplain (retired)**

*Mental Health for All -Community Well-being and the Church.* Lorna Murray. 2020. Published by Handsel Press Ltd

### **\* \* \*FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE FORTHCOMING EVENTS \* \* \***

#### **MENTAL HEALTH AND FAITH COMMUNITIES**

FiOP has held four seminars in its planned series:

**Professor John Swinton** gave a thoughtful and stimulating talk on *Spirituality and Mental Health*

**Professor Austyn Snowden** gave an insightful presentation on *mental and spiritual distress and the importance of the chaplaincy in the NHS*

**Rev Canon Dr Marion Chatterley's** presentation *Whole person care in the final*

*chapters of life: exploring the impact on mental health of facing one's mortality*

**Dr Gill Yellowlees** discussed *Talking About Mental Illness*

The presentations are available, and the recordings of the sessions will be made available in due course. The four sessions were well attended and FiOP welcomes any feedback or suggestions for further sessions following the next three planned seminars below.

#### **The final seminar in the series**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021: 4.30pm - Mental health challenges from the perspectives of different faiths**

FiOP is delighted to be partnering with Interfaith Scotland on this important issue and to welcome as our panel:

- Rita Docherty (Baha'i)
- Nicola Maule (Buddhist)
- Robin Downie (Christian)

The session will last approximately 90 minutes to give each of our three speakers time for a presentation and then to have discussion.

**THIS EVENT IS FREE - PLEASE BOOK VIA EVENTBRITE [here](#)**

**Book suggestions:** *Mental Health for All - Community Well-being and the Church.* Lorna Murray. 2020. Published by Handsel Press Ltd.

*Finding Jesus in the Storm – The spiritual lives of Christians with mental health challenges.* John Swinton. 2020. Wm B Eerdmans Publishing.

**REVISED DATE - Thursday 14 October 2021**

**WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT DEATH AND DYING**

**Rev Canon Dr Marion Chatterley, Vice-Provost, Cathedral Church of St Mary's  
Edinburgh (Scottish Episcopal Church) and Associate of Faith in Older People**

**A workshop designed specifically for clergy and people in authorised ministries**

This Workshop will offer support and tools to enhance confidence in having pastoral conversations about death and dying. Using a model from the field of bereavement to explore emotional, psychological, and spiritual responses and building on the experiences of the participants, the day will resource those who attend to go deeper in their pastoral encounters with people who are actively addressing their own mortality.

***The programme assumes a degree of personal sharing and therefore participation is restricted to clergy and others in authorised ministries within churches.***

**REGISTRATION IS VIA EVENTBRITE COST £30.24**

**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, PLEASE CLICK [here](#)**

**RECENT EVENTS**

**The Malcolm Goldsmith Lecture 2021**

was given by Dr Donald Macaskill on  
Tuesday 11 May 2021 and was well received  
by those attending.



Dr Donald Macaskill  
CE, Scottish Care

**Human rights and spirituality: 'a veil as thin  
as gossamer'**

**This powerful lecture explored the  
relationship between human rights as a moral  
and legal framework and the world of  
spirituality. It considered our human rights in  
the context of social care and the treatment  
of older people, particularly in our care  
homes in the pandemic.**

*"Suffice to say we have all been deeply  
challenged as well as informed about our*

*attitudes...caring as they may be. Hopefully  
we, as an organisation and as individuals,  
will be able to draw on the "well" that  
Donald has revealed to us for our future  
lives and work."*

Bob Rendall, Chairperson,  
Faith in Older People

“

Marvellous presentation and  
discussion

Brilliant event.! I thought  
Donald's lecture tracing Roots  
and Routes, Choice and Voice,  
was very stimulating. Just sorry  
Malcolm isn't around to dialogue  
with him!

A fantastic event,

”

Dr Macaskill's Lecture and presentation can be  
downloaded from our website – please click

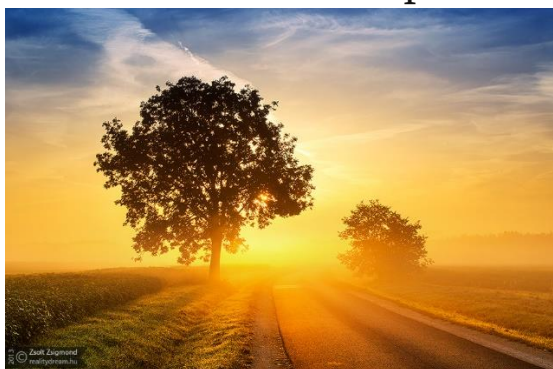
**[HERE](#)**

## FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE free ON-LINE TRAINING



*Spiritual Care Matters* are a series of e-learning courses for front-line staff and volunteers working in care homes, health and other care settings. Find out more about the courses and how they work by listening to our [introductory podcast](#).

### Spiritual Care Matters 1: Supporting the Spiritual Needs of Older People



This course builds confidence, skills and resilience to support the spiritual well-being of older people. The course explores how spiritual care is defined, what it means in practice and why it matters to support the spiritual needs of older people.

### Spiritual Care Matters 2: Looking after your own Spiritual Wellbeing



This course speaks directly to care workers and their need to develop tools for coping in emotionally demanding situations. The course explores why it is important to look after yourself, builds your skills and confidence and will help you find support when you need it.

### What's involved?

Listening and learning from the course podcasts. Each course involves five half-hour lessons' that you receive in a daily email. You can access the course through a laptop, computer, tablet, smart phone. You'll need an internet connection to receive the daily emails and podcasts.

Both courses use Scottish Social Services Council [Open Badges](#) to recognise learning for ongoing staff development and provide important evidence of learning for registration.

**for further information and to enrol, click [HERE](#)**

# SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT



[Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland](#)

**Scottish Ministers** invite applications from eligible candidates who are interested in appointment as General Members of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (MHTS). Legal Members and Medical Members are also being recruited, please view those vacancies at the following links respectively:

[applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job\\_search\\_view.aspx?jobId=3937](https://applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job_search_view.aspx?jobId=3937)

[applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job\\_search\\_view.aspx?jobId=3936](https://applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job_search_view.aspx?jobId=3936)

## Key Duties

- prepare for hearings by reading the papers;
- participate fully in the decision making of the three member tribunal panel;
- contribute to the panel's written decision;
- ensure that parties who are not always represented can fully present their case and have it considered fairly;
- ensure decisions and any orders of the panel are made efficiently, effectively and fairly.

## About the appointment

General Members of the MHTS attract a fee of £422.71 per day, committing around two days per month. This recruitment round aims to fill 10 General Member vacancies.

## Application information

Further details of the vacancies, including eligibility and the application process, can be viewed on the Public Appointments Scotland website:

[applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job\\_search\\_view.aspx?jobId=3938](https://applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job_search_view.aspx?jobId=3938)

For information on the MHTS, please visit: <https://www.mhtscotland.gov.uk/>

Applications must be submitted by midnight on **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021**.

The [Roll Up Your Sleeves campaign video](#) is available in additional languages: [BSL](#), [Arabic](#), [Cantonese](#), [Gujarati](#), [Hindi](#), [Polish](#), [Romanian](#) and [Urdu](#)

Special thanks to @MECOPP for partnering with us on the campaign and doing translated voiced over versions of the ad in 7 community languages. If this is shared via social channels, please include the #MECOPP hashtag.

If you need further information, please let Victoria Lopez know: [Victoria.lopez@gov.scot](mailto:Victoria.lopez@gov.scot)

**Dr Heather Mole | Policy Manager | Older People and Healthy Ageing**

Equality Unit | Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights |

3-H North Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ Mobile 07721 238225



## GENERAL INFORMATION



**SILVER SUNDAY**  
CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE

Over 100 organisations have already signed up to action their Silver Sunday event, details of which are on our Silver Sunday map. As our communities continue to open up further and most of us can officially hug our grandparents again, we are gearing up for a

bright and busy Autumn and a fantastic Silver Sunday on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Could I urge you please to start planning for this year's event. This year we have been working hard behind the scenes to make things really easy for you. Our **new 2021 resources including Info Pack, Event Toolkit and templates** are all ready for you [here](#) and have everything you need to take part. Whether indoors, outdoors, online or in person, we look forward to celebrating our amazing older generation with you this Silver Sunday!

### **A Blog by Dr Donald Macaskill, CEO Scottish Care**

[A human right to creativity: older age and wellbeing. - Scottish Care](#)

### **Dementia Awareness**

**AGE SCOTLAND** will be running their very popular **Dementia Awareness** courses; for full information visit

[Dementia Awareness Training | Online Course \(highspeedtraining.co.uk\)](https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk)

### **Scottish Churches Housing Action**

We would like to draw particular attention to **Homeless Sunday** which will take place on **10th October** this year. More details about this can be found within Our Homeless Neighbour - please do encourage your church to take part. <https://www.churches-housing.org/ohn-april/>

## Heart of the Matter Radio Broadcast



HotM is a weekly radio programme produced for community radio and was established when Black Diamond FM was founded in 2017 in Midlothian. Each broadcast usually consists of an interview with a person who is willing to talk about their faith and how that has impacted their life. The programme has been described as being similar to “Desert Island Discs” which brings a great mix of music to surround someone’s life story. In addition, there is a thought for the week, a short, usually Bible based reflection, which is relevant to life today. As a radio programme it can be heard on FM, online live or later through a download at [heartofthematter.biz](http://heartofthematter.biz).

We are aware that it is used in a care home setting as a substitute to a church service and those who listen may particularly like the music, interview or the reflective part written specifically for each broadcast by a team of enthusiastic writers. Radio produces wonderful mind pictures and everyone loves to hear a story from someone about their life. We have the great privilege to pull the curtain back as the interviewer and the listener drop into what is always an exciting, interesting, and sometimes unexpected journey.

David Aird, Producer/Presenter,  
Heart of the Matter

### Planned Guests for Heart of the Matter - June 2021

20 June: Gold 24 - A Special from the Archives

27 June: TBC

Weekly Broadcasting Schedule

**Black Diamond FM 107.8:** Sunday 9 am. and 7 am. (repeat)

**Crystal FM 107.4:** Sunday at 11 am., 12 midnight, Sunday, Tuesday 11am.

**Alive FM:** 107.3: Sunday 12 noon, Tuesday 1 am.

All above on FM and online

#### Internet stations:

**Heartsonglive:** Sunday 9 am., Wednesday 12 am,

**G4G (Gospel 4 Grampian):** Wednesday 9 am. Saturday 9 am.

Updated website: [www.heartofthematter.biz](http://www.heartofthematter.biz)



**TO READ OUR LATEST E-BULLETIN please click the link**

<https://vhscotland.org.uk/whats-new-read-our-june-2021-e-bulletin/>

## **VHS Annual Conference 2021 - Health at the Heart of Communities**

Save the date: Wednesday 6th October via Zoom

FIND OUT  
MORE

### **Date for your diary- 6th October 2021**

Our 2021 Annual Conference will take place via Zoom on the 6th October. We are currently working on our exciting and interactive agenda for the day.

**A new Scottish information resource** for people living with a diagnosis of dementia and their families and friends. Possibly the first resource to be produced in Gaelic and English.

If you were unable to attend the launch of Knowledge is Power Scotland, never fear - here is the recording link: <https://vimeo.com/543202562>

You can download the booklet in either Scots Gaelic or English here:

<https://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/project/knowledge-power-english-and-scottish-gaelic-versions>

and here:

<https://www.dementivoices.org.uk/deep-resources/external-resources-by-members-of-the-deep-network/>

**It is a large download at 60 pages. Paper copies available to anyone who would like one. Please contact [Ruth.McCabe@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.McCabe@fife.gov.uk)**

We very much welcome feedback too. Please do not hesitate to be in touch. If you would like to have a copy of the chat links and comments please email me at [Niblock@myid.org.uk](mailto:Niblock@myid.org.uk)



We are delighted to alert everyone to the theme for Scottish Interfaith Week 2021 and to highlight resources that have been gathered and produced for our Year of Climate Action.

Earth Day 2021 (22nd April) saw the launch of the theme for Scottish Interfaith Week and we are so excited that this year's theme ties in with COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021) and is **'Together for our Planet'**. COP26 will be taking place in Scotland (Glasgow) from Monday 1st November to Friday 12th November and we will be holding Scottish Interfaith Week during this period to allow creative engagement with both Scottish Interfaith Week and with COP26. An exciting event to mark the start of the week will be hosted in partnership with Interfaith Glasgow on 31st October – a date to keep free in your diary.

It is vitally important for people of all backgrounds, faiths and cultures to work 'together for our planet' and spreading climate awareness is key to building a future where all people and eco-systems can flourish. The team at Interfaith Scotland have been profoundly moved by seeing the incredible work that faith

communities and organisations across Scotland are doing to address climate change and it is exciting to know that our Interfaith Year of Climate Action and Scottish Interfaith Week will be used as opportunities to amplify these efforts and to encourage nation-wide conversations and action.

Please see our range of resources on our website (link below).

<https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources>

The Climate Conference may well be a pivotal moment for humanity and requires deep spiritual reflection and we are asking everyone, from all faiths and none to join us in taking action 'together for our planet'.

We are hosting and co-hosting lots of exciting events in the build up to COP26, please see the 'Together for our Plant' webinar.

**Interfaith Scotland Team**

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

### New digital connection guides

The [Digital Buddies project](#) has created new how-to guides for people getting started with a new tablet or smartphone.



The impact of getting connected can be huge, as one member shared:

**“I wish I'd done this sooner, it's changed my life... I have my independence back.”**

We hope the guides help more people learning to use new tablets and becoming digitally included. Please feel free to use and share! [Read and download the Digital Connection how-to guides.](#)

We've been uploading all our pdf tech guides onto our borders Digital Buddies page - we've also added some older guides that people might find helpful. There is a mix of written guides and videos which can be found on our YouTube page.

### Digital Buddies YouTube Playlist

- [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8M7hpJnew3pCKCRFpKo75\\_gKkEbogqz0](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8M7hpJnew3pCKCRFpKo75_gKkEbogqz0)

Digital Buddies pdf Guides - <https://otbds.org/projects/digital-buddies/>

Digital Buddies Resource Blog - <https://otbds.org/digital-buddies-videos/>



To read **GOOD LIFE, GOOD DEATH, GOOD GRIEF** latest updates please click [HERE](#)



## CONFERENCE CALLS

**May, June, July, August 2021  
INVITATION**

**Conference Calls** are discussions on important issues open to anyone interested in the work of the Churches with and for older people. They are free and involve no commitment to membership. Each session starts at 10.30 am and lasts for an hour and a half. You join the discussion via a Zoom link which will be sent to you following registration of interest. All sessions over the last twelve months have been fully subscribed within a short while of registration opening. All sessions will start at 10.30am and end at midday, and have a lead speaker.

**15 June**

**Supporting those who care for us**

Maureen O'Neill

The presentation will focus on the issues which have emerged for health and social care staff in our care homes and care at home organisations

as a result of the pandemic. These will be seen through the lens of a recent review of the effectiveness of the listening and caring service set by Faith in Older People as a response to the pressures and fears experienced by these staff during this past year.'

**20 July**

### **Importance of Faith amongst Black Older Christians**

*Charles Kwaku-Odoi*

Faith is an important part of many older Black people, as a matter-of-fact faith is engrained in their lives. In most cases it does not just define who they are, or what they do, but it also shapes their life day-to-day choices. Older Black Christians use their faith as a coping mechanism. When facing life stressors, their religious beliefs help them to manage personal

### **Conference Calls are open to all and there is no charge for taking part.**

If you would like to join one or all of the new series just write to David Jolley using the e-mail link [discussion@ccoa.org.uk](mailto:discussion@ccoa.org.uk) You will need to be able to access Zoom to take part but there is no need to take out a subscription; use your search engine to learn about how to do this if you have not tried this new technology already. You will be sent an e-mail with a link allowing you to join the discussion nearer the time of the Call.

Please ask any questions when you register your interest.

**Register your interest or enquire about places by e-mailing [discussion@ccoa.org.uk](mailto:discussion@ccoa.org.uk)**

behaviour and response to others. Faith is woven in the intergenerational engagement in the Black community, the interactions with the younger generation. Faith comes to the fore .....

**17 August**

### **Older people and spiritual strength in the world of nature**

*Barbara Stephens*

We are surrounded by the beauty of nature and immersed in its power: but how much do we really 'notice' in our busy everyday lives? This session will explore the emotional and spiritual benefits of connecting with nature, stimulating the senses, boosting physical and mental health, enhancing wellbeing. We will discuss research evidence that demonstrates the impact of nature on people's physical and mental health

## **THE ALLIANCE**

**Registration has opened for Equally Valued: Equally Connected, ALLIANCE Annual Conference 2021.** As Scotland recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to learn from everyone's experiences and explore positive change in health and social care – to help shape a more equal future that ensures people with lived experience are at the centre.

Equally Valued: Equally Connected will be delivered online. It will feature high profile keynote speakers, interactive workshops and webinars, creative sessions, film screenings, and more. Participation is free, inclusive and open to all.

**[Find out more and register here](#)**

Please see the link below for further information

**[Exploring the application of Human Rights Principles in Digital Health and Social Care – Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland \(alliance-scotland.org.uk\)](https://alliance-scotland.org.uk)**



## Charity launches self-study platform for carers' rights training

**This Carers' Week, Age Scotland is launching a self-study platform for carers of people living with dementia.**

Age Scotland's Dementia Training team offers online workshops which make information on a range of rights and entitlements available to carers of people living with dementia and the professionals who support them.

**However, the charity is aware that attending sessions at set times can prove difficult for people due to their unpredictable caring commitments.**

The new self-study platform will allow carers to learn about their rights when it is convenient to them and without time constraints.

**The charity hopes this will increase accessibility of their training and help reach a greater number of carers.**

When considering booking Age Scotland training sessions in the past, carers of people living with dementia have said:

*"The online courses look really interesting and I've booked on a couple of times, but I haven't made it along yet. I never know what each day is going to be like."*

*"The only time I'm guaranteed peace and quiet is between 11pm and 1am, so that's when I log into the internet and do most of my reading and emails."*

Registrations for the first self-study modules open today (Monday 7 June) and access to course contents will be available from next week (Wednesday 16 June). To register, please email [dementiatraining@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:dementiatraining@agescotland.org.uk).

## OUT OF THE BOX

Community Solutions: Finding the Right Support, Showing the Impact  
Community Solutions partnership work

Community Solutions is a series of projects working towards increasing the learning and options around community solutions to social care in Scotland. Together they support people in communities and public sector teams, to develop social care services and community supports that work well for people in local communities across Scotland.

Outside the Box has been working in partnership with [the innovation hub at Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#), [SENScot](#), [People Powered Results at Nesta](#) and other organisations, as well as lots of community groups and social enterprises.

[Shared learning: New Community Solutions reports](#)

These new reports share learning around what helps people get support from community services and other local activities, and the benefits for people and their communities.

Read the new report here: [Community Solutions – Showing the Impact](#)

Read the new report here: [Community Solutions – Finding the Right Support](#)

**And finally .....**

**Please become a FRIEND of FiOP. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY - we'd like to ask you to become a FRIEND OF FIOP**

An annual contribution of, say, £25 would make an enormous difference to our small organisation.

As a Friend you will receive our regular eNewsletter and invitations to our regular events.

**PLEASE CONTACT US FOR AN APPLICATION FORM – [info@fiop.org.uk](mailto:info@fiop.org.uk)**

You can find out more about our work on [www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

**OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY SIGNED UP**

**IF YOU WISH TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM OUR NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL [info@fiop.org.uk](mailto:info@fiop.org.uk)**



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