CROSSTALK

The Newsletter of
South East Edinburgh Churches Acting Together

Issue 36 November 2023

WHAT'S NEW IN SEECAT?

NEW EVENT—A "BIG READ"



The words of the writer to the Hebrews *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword . . ."* seemed very real as we read through Mark's Gospel together on 4th November. It was a powerful and emotional morning. It seemed right to stand as Chapter 15 was read and Jesus was crucified, a small acknowledgement of a very special sacrifice. We are so used to hearing or reading short Bible passages, but reading a whole Gospel at one go is different, and doing it together, with people from different churches and some different translations, is a special experience. We were agreed that we should do it again, so watch out for next year's syllabus and don't miss it!

NEW EVENTS TO COME:

ADVENT REFLECTIONS—see page 2

PILGRIMAGE WALK NEXT SEPTEMBER TO THE BALMWELL

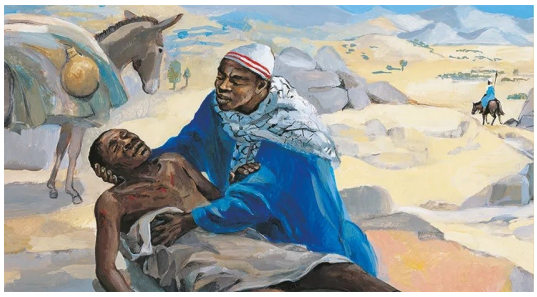


NEW SEECAT CHAIR APPOINTED AT THE AGM

Our new SEECAT Chair is Christine Johnson, who has been a supporter of SEECAT events for many years. She is an elder at Liberton Kirk and is also on the Board of Crossreach, which is the operating name of the Church of Scotland's Social Care. She has three daughters and two grandchildren, some living abroad, so has a busy time keeping in touch!

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18th—25th JANUARY

This year the material has been prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso. The theme is '*You shall love the Lord your God… and your neighbour as yourself'* (Luke 10:27), and we are reminded of Jesus' words after telling the story of the Good Samaritan: 'Go and do likewise'.



SEECAT is all about Christian Unity so this week is an important one in our calendar. We have two services: one short service at St. Barnabas' in Moredun Park View at 2pm on Monday 22nd January, and the main service followed by refreshments at St. Gregory's in Walter Scott Avenue on Thursday 25th January at 7pm.

Even if you can't manage to be at either of these services you can be part of this special week by picking up from your local church one of the prayer cards which covers the whole 8 days and gives themes and readings you can follow at home.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING . . . . . .

. . . and we all know how busy it can be in these weeks leading up to it. That's why SEECAT has tried to set aside some time in Advent to be still and to think about what Christmas means.

Instead of the Quiet Mornings we have held in the past, this year we have a series of Reflections for Advent, to be held at St. Gregory's Church, Walter Scott Avenue, from 7pm to 8.30pm on four Monday evenings from 27th November.

The evenings have been prepared by the Connect Groups in the RC Cluster of churches and will include a Bible reading and a mix of poetry, prayer, songs, hymns, thoughts on an artwork, and discussion in small groups around the Bible theme.

The last half-hour of the evening is for tea/ coffee and festive nibbles, and chat with fellow Christians from across SEECAT.

We are grateful to those who have put these evenings together. This is another new venture in SEECAT this year—please come along! Even if you can't make all four evenings, come when you can. It would be good to have all the SEECAT churches represented.

COME AND MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO CHEER THE SHOPPERS!

We will be singing carols in Morrisons on Saturday 16th December from 12noon to 1pm. Come and join in—carol sheets provided!

RETREAT AT GULLANE (from Maureen Quinn)


(with Maureen behind the camera!)

From 1st to 3rd September 16 people from 5 local churches spent the weekend together at Whatton Lodge in Gullane on the Annual Retreat.

Thanks to Margaret and David Dixon, who organised everything so efficiently. Also thanks to David and Alice for leading us in prayer, communion and reflection.

Such a peaceful and fruitful time, allowing us all to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit guiding and nourishing us in love and fruitfulness. The weather was beautiful. The sun shone, allowing us all to enjoy the garden and beach and rest in the peaceful surroundings. This was so appropriate, as we celebrated the Season of Creation, an opportunity to savour the beauty and peace of God's world all around us.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We have all been shocked by the horrific events in Israel and then in Gaza and we can feel totally helpless. We must not forget to **PRAY** continually that there will be peace, and that there will be a just settlement agreed for the future well-being of both Israelis and Palestinians. We have on our website under Justice and Peace Events how to access "See and Pray" sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays, 6.30 to 6.50pm on Zoom. Another way of being informed and guided in prayer is to sign up for the Wave of Prayer, which is free, on the website for Sabeel-Kairos, www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk

CONVERSATION CORNER AT LIBERTON NORTHFIELD . . . . . .

is a new project running from September to November with other churches and Friends International. The aim is to offer friendship and fellowship and share cultural experiences with those from overseas living in our community, including students. There are light refreshments, an ice-breaker, and chats in small groups on a specific topic such as travel or shopping, with set questions to start things off. This will be repeated after Christmas. If you would like any more information about this please contact Alistair Lawson on email at libertonnorthfieldpc@gmail.com

BOWING OUT

We were sad at the SEECAT AGM in September to hear that George McDermid felt he could no longer be an active representative from St. Catherine's at SEECAT Business meetings. George has been a constant presence in SEECAT affairs including Justice & Peace meetings and events for many years and he will be sadly missed, although we will see him at our events and services.



George at the SEECAT Retreat at Gullane a couple of months ago (see page 3) with another SEECAT stalwart, Margaret Ellison.

George believes in SEECAT and its aims as do all of us involved in the planning of its activities. We all treasure the ties that bind us together as followers of Jesus, and want to develop our friendships.

If you would like to be involved in the planning of SEECAT's activities please speak to your church leader or any SEECAT representative.

PRAYERS NEEDED . . . .

- *of thanksgiving for the Big Read and the very special atmosphere as we read Mark's Gospel together*
- *for our Advent Reflections that they would help us to focus on Jesus in all the busyness of Christmas*
- *for our carol-singing on 16th December to the staff and shoppers in Morrisons, that it would bring joy to all*
- *that all our churches would be able to reach out to those around us with the good news of Jesus this Christmas*
- *for peace in the land where Jesus walked on earth, for comfort for all those who are suffering or grieving, for safety for the hostages, for a long-term just settlement*
- *for those in our communities who struggle to make ends meet and find Christmas very difficult, with all its temptations to spend*
- *for our church leaders, for health and strength, for support and encouragement*

This newsletter is also on our website. The next issue will be in February 2024—contributions should be sent to crosstalk@seecat.org by end January.

CROSSTALK is the Newsletter of SEECAT and is published by Ruth Davies, Liberton Kirk Centre, 28 Kirkgate, Edinburgh EH16 6RY.

The churches in SEECAT are Gracemount Church, Liberton Kirk, Liberton Northfield, Tron Kirk (Gilmerton and Moredun), St. Barnabas', St. Catherine's, St. John Vianney's and St. Gregory's. Our website, **www.seecat.org**, has links to them.