CROSSTALK

The Newsletter of
South East Edinburgh Churches Acting Together

Issue 42 **May 2025**

HEALING SERVICE AT THE BALMWELL



We will hold our annual Healing Service at 3pm on Saturday 7th June (the day before Pentecost) at the Balm Well in the grounds of the Toby Carvery, 41 Howden Hall Road, EH16 6PG. The Balm Well has been a site of pilgrimage for centuries, and the waters were believed to have healing properties. During the service there will be an opportunity if you wish to meet with people who will pray for healing of body, spirit or mind. All are welcome to join in the worship and feel the peace of the place.

COMING UP IN THE AUTUMN

At our AGM on 11th May we looked forward to a new year of activities together. The full programme will be available on cards from churches in September. Our first events are described below:

A ***Day Retreat*** will take place on Saturday 20th September at Liberton Northfield Church, led once again by Gerry Mulvenna. Further details will be given in the August Crosstalk and the day is open to all.

The ***Pilgrimage Walk*** ending at the Balm Well in 2023 was very popular, and we are hoping to do something similar, this time *starting* at the Balm Well, in or near to the Season of Creation which falls every year in September/October. There will be points where we can stop and appreciate the beauties of God's Creation around us and think of its needs. Again, more details in the August Crosstalk, and everyone is welcome to join us as we walk and talk.



CHANGE AT THE TOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



All Christians were sad to hear of the death of Pope Francis, who was much admired and loved in the R.C. Church and beyond. He was a man of deep humility, but not afraid to speak out when he felt strongly about something. He had a great heart for the poor and needy, and for justice to be done, and felt strongly that God's beautiful creation needed care and attention from all. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by many.



The process of electing a new Pope was watched with much interest, and we didn't have long to wait for billows of white smoke to let everyone know that someone had been chosen. We wait with anticipation to get to know Pope Leo XIV, the first American Pope, who was inaugurated at a Mass in St. Peter's Square in Rome on 18th May. At his first general audience on 21st May he appealed for peace and for humanitarian aid to reach Gaza. We pray for him as he begins his papacy and wish him every blessing in this difficult and onerous post.

OLD CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH (www.liberalcatholics.uk)

Father Michael of the OCAC (now an Associate Member of SEECAT) has told us the plans for their Synod on 20th-22nd June in Edinburgh. On the Friday they will explore St. Giles' Cathedral in the early evening. The next day, Saturday, 21st June, they will be using Liberton Kirk and Kirk Centre for their Synod business and refreshments, and on Sunday 22nd they will hold an open air service at the Balm Well in the grounds of the Toby Carvery. They will have times of social fellowship on the Friday evening, Saturday evening and Sunday lunchtime. Visitors from local churches welcome.

FATHER ALEX . . . . .

was able to be at the afternoon service on Good Friday in Gracemount High School but sadly has been in hospital again since then. He is now at home recovering, before gradually and carefully returning to church life. Please keep him in your prayers.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CROSSTALK

In every issue of this newsletter your editor mentions where to send contributions to the next issue but contributions very, very rarely come in. Don't be shy! Suggestions also welcomed.

WHAT A WEEK THAT WAS!

It started with the ***Passover Meal*** on Monday 14th April in Liberton Kirk Centre. What a good time of fellowship it was, with people from the other SEECAT churches. Kay Haggarty, the Ordained Local Minister at Gracemount Church, spoke to us and gave us things to think about and discuss, and we enjoyed a delicious meal together, with the essential components of lamb, bitter herbs, wine, and unleavened bread. We remembered Jesus' last Passover Meal and sang as he and the disciples did before leaving. Then, two days later, we met at St. Gregory's Church for a ***Stations of the Cross*** Service where different churches took part, led by people from the R.C. Cluster, as we followed Jesus' journey to the cross. A peaceful and thoughtful time.

Good Friday started for many of us at 10 or 10.15am, when we set out from different churches to walk to Morrisons, Gilmerton Road, praying for our communities as we went, stopping to pray together (and sing in some instances!) A great way to let the public know Good Friday is special and spark their interest!


Stopping at Aldi to pray and sing!
(Liberton Kirk, Liberton Northfield + others)



We all met up in Morrisons Car Park for an ***Open Air Service*** at 11am (with extras joining us, unable to do the walk, or just passing). Our singing and the prayers, Bible reading, and talk by Alistair Chalmers of Ferniehill Evangelical Church spoke to us all (and to the shoppers!) of the wonderful message for us of Jesus' sacrifice for our sakes on the cross.

Finally, we held our annual ***Good Friday Service*** at 3pm in the main hall of Gracemount High School. The big cross was carried in as we sang "When I survey the wondrous cross". John Young spoke movingly about it never being too late to turn to Jesus, and we were all able to walk up to the cross and leave the stone we picked up as we came in, acknowledging that Jesus takes away our sins and frees us from our burdens. A wonderful week altogether!



JUSTICE AND PEACE

Half-hour meetings on Zoom still continue as follows:

Eco circle—Tuesdays 5.30pm

See/Pray for the Holy Land—Tuesdays and Fridays 6.30pm (with participants far beyond this area).

See the justice and peace pages on www.seecat.org for more details and links to helpful sources of information on Israel/Palestine. Some churches have a supply of three cards (see below) for you to pick up giving ways of being better informed and prayers.



PRAYERS NEEDED . . . .

- *for our healing service on 7th June—for good weather and for people to come along*
- *for a ceasefire in Gaza, the return of hostages, aid to reach all those who need it, and for a longterm peace agreement which is fair to all the people in that area*
- *for health and strength for all our church leaders, and in particular healing for Father Alex so that he may return to church life*
- *for the new Pope, Leo XIV, as he gets used to his new role and for inspiration and guidance as he leads his church and takes his place on the world stage*
- *for our new programme starting in September, that our churches will grow closer together in worship and fellowship, and witness to our shared faith in our communities*

This newsletter is also on our website. The next issue will be in August 2025—contributions should be sent to crosstalk@seecat.org by end July.

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.