

## MAY 2021 NEWS FROM SEI

**Vocations Sunday 2021:** *On Sunday 25 April, SEI students preached in nine charges across the Province. Here Diaconal candidate Valerie Cameron and Lay Reader candidate Sandra Wright (both Diocese of Edinburgh) reflect respectively upon their experiences of preaching in St Anne's, Dunbar and St Andrew's, Kelso, as do the clergy of those two charges, the Revd Diana Hall, the Revd Canon Bob King and the Revd Grace Redpath. A link is also provided to the dialogue which took place between first year ordinand Godwin Chimara, (Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney) and the Revd Dr Nerys Brown, Rector of St Mary's Dunblane (Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane).*

(i) **Vocations Sunday at St Anne's Dunbar:** 'How time flies!' writes Val Cameron (right). 'The last year seems to have flown since I preached at St John's, Forfar. This year I was paired with St Anne's, Dunbar. Canon Tomlinson put me in touch with Revd Diana Hall and we discussed the format being used for services there. It was really lovely to talk with Diana again as she had been my Assistant Director of Ordinands (ADO) during my discernment and recommendation for training as a Vocational Deacon.'



'We were still in Lockdown when the early conversations took place and I agreed to deliver my sermon on Zoom. Although the restrictions were being relaxed, and churches were starting to open for worship, we decided to continue on Zoom.'

'At the beginning of the service, Diana asked me a series of questions as an introduction to the congregation. This was an opportunity to talk about my calling to the diaconate and my vocation to work with people on the margins of society. During my career I had always been a public servant and, in my role before retirement, I had been involved with people with varying mental health conditions and homelessness and had great empathy with them.'

'The congregation at St Anne's was studying John's First Epistle, so the reading for the day was 1 John 3: 16-24, and not the usual Good Shepherd Gospel passage. I found the passage challenging at first but I had a real sense of God's love shining through the words. God's Son laid down his life for us for the forgiveness of our sins and John's words were trying to provide reassurance of our salvation through this act of amazing love. John went on to say that we too should lay down our lives for others through service to each other. I linked this to Romans 12 where we are called to be a 'living sacrifice' and to share our gifts. I found this really resonated with my calling to the Diaconate. With its roots in Biblical Greek, 'diakonía' means 'service among (to) others' or 'one who serves', and this is where my true vocation lies.'

After the service the Revd Diana Hall said: 'It was a joy to welcome Val to preach on Zoom. We heard the invitation in 1 John 3:16-24 to love God in word and deed reflected through Val's own inspiring story of the call to help bridge the gap between the church and the wider community. Her sermon is available to listen to at: <http://www.stannedunbar.org.uk/sermons>'

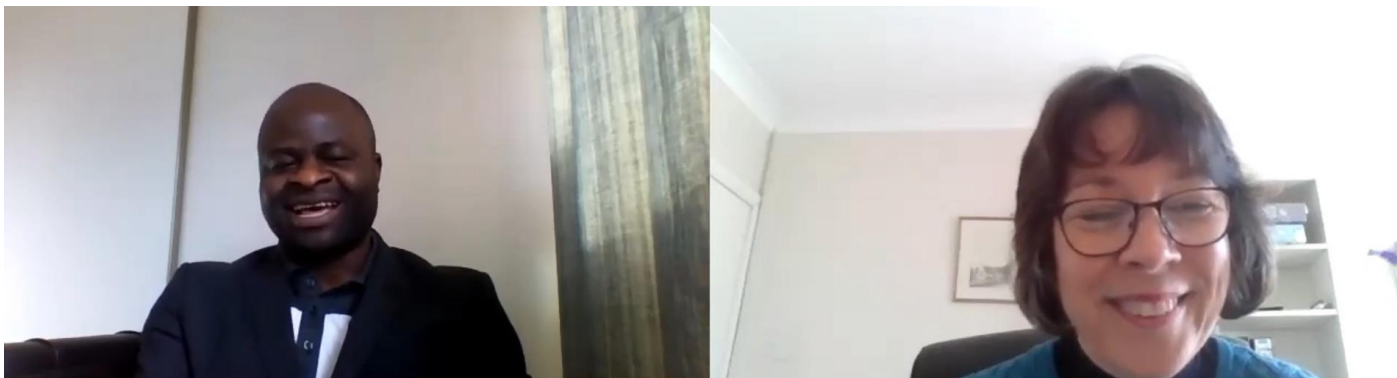
Dr Valerie Cameron

(ii) **Vocations Sunday at St Andrew's, Kelso:** Sandra Wright (*centre below*), a third year Lay Reader candidate from the Diocese of Edinburgh, was invited to preach on Vocations Sunday at her home church of St Andrew's in Kelso. The Rector, the Revd Canon Bob King, (Celebrant at 10am 1982 Eucharist), the Associate Priest, the Revd Grace Redpath, (Celebrant at 8.30am Scottish Prayer Book Holy Communion) and Sandra share some reflections on the experience.



Sandra writes: 'I was able to preach my Vocation Sunday sermon three times, once pre-recorded for an online Eucharist service and then in church for the 8.30am and 10am services thanks to Sunday services resuming, so it gave me plenty of opportunity to practise presentation skills! I must admit I preferred speaking to a live congregation than to a camera, and it was lovely to be back in my home church, although I wasn't sure how I would feel being among familiar faces in a different role. However, everyone was very encouraging and I enjoyed sharing a little about my Lay Readership journey with those who have been supporting me in prayer throughout.'

Bob writes: 'It was great to have Sandra back with us today and the people I have spoken to enjoyed the sermon very much. We also had a good reflective discussion after the service on how everything went.' Grace added: 'Sandra's sermon was delivered with brightness and genuine warmth and tied in with the Gospel reading of the day on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Thank you for being yourself - the Sandra we know and love.' Sandra's sermon is available [here](#).



(iii) **Vocations Sunday at St Mary's Dunblane:** Godwin Chimara (*above left*), first year ordinand (Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney), was in dialogue with the Revd Dr Nerys Brown (*right*), Rector of St Mary's Dunblane (Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane). You can access this very moving account of his faith journey and of what is entailed in listening obediently to God's calling [here](#).

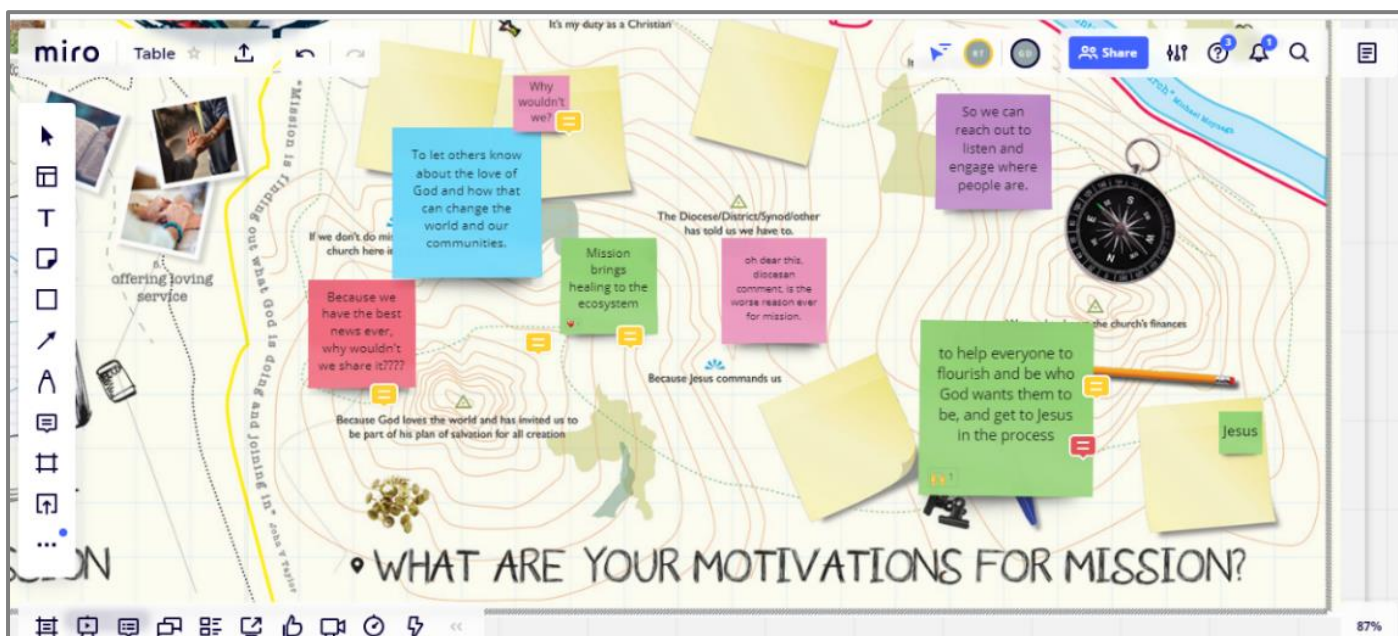
A day in the life of .... the Director of Mixed Mode Training, the Revd Dr Richard Tiplady: It's appraisal season at SEI, when we meet with each student in turn to review their formational and training progress over the year and discuss any areas for development in the next academic year. For the Mixed Mode students, this means that a report needs to be written by me and by their training supervisor, along with their own vocational reflections, all of which are then discussed at their review, chaired by the SEI Principal or Director of Studies.

So the first task of the day is to write one of these reports, ready for a May appraisal conference. I meet with each Mixed Mode student every month and keep a record of our discussions, so it's not arduous. In fact it's a joy, to review my notes and produce a report that looks at topics as diverse as their learning, their spiritual lives, how they relate to others, their engagement in church and community, their involvement in preaching and worship leading, even their time management. This is the core of my job, supporting the training and development of the Mixed Mode students. To be able to invest in and support the next generation of SEC leaders .... what's not to like?



Richard, on one of the mountains he didn't fall off

Of course, these reports always take longer to write than you think, and before I know it, it's time for a quick coffee before I get ready for the first of today's Zoom meetings (only three of those today, so that's a bonus). Maybe one day soon we'll be living post-Zoom, but not yet! Over the past year, I have run an *Introduction to Pioneer Ministry* course six times, and this Zoom call is to introduce a participatory discussion tool for aspiring pioneers, called Table.



Based around five artistic and well-designed tablecloths, this resource allows churches and small groups to have discussions about what mission might look like in their neighbourhood. It's not cheap (£80 for the five tablecloths; £50 for the electronic version). Today was the second introductory seminar for those who wanted to experience it for themselves before deciding whether it was worth shelling out on. You can register for the third one here. There's an appetite across the breadth of the SEC for finding new ways to reach out in mission in the name of Jesus Christ, and my course and this resource are just one way of doing that.

After lunch, it's time for a second Zoom call, this time with +Andrew. He has taken the lead in introducing a new training course for Transitional Ministers in the SEC. A new concept for us (at least formally), this training will be delivered by outside consultants. But he has recently joined the Institute Council and +Andrew is keen to ensure that the SEC's training body is involved. So I will be participating in this first course as an observer, alongside ten SEC clergy who have signed up. What this will lead to, I don't yet know. It is possible that some of the learning will be integrated into SEI's own formational programmes in future. This is part of our ethos at SEI - to be lifelong learners ourselves, reviewing and re-assessing what we do, so that we can equip others for ministry and mission in an ever-changing world.

The final Zoom call of the day is another one-to-one, this time with Ricky McAddock, the founder and chief executive of **Street Connect**, a Glasgow-based charity that works with churches to reach out to those affected by homelessness, mental health problems, and addictions. Ricky has been a friend for a number of years, and we meet from time to time to chat about issues and questions. As a former charity chief executive myself, there's a lot we can discuss. We have looked at team leadership and stakeholder management in the recent past; this time it's how they might develop their online training for new church partners, based on SEI's own experience of delivering online training. It's a privilege and a joy to stay connected with people who are doing hard work on the ground, reaching out to some of those *in extremis* on the margins of society and seeing them transformed in the name of Christ. In the end, that's what it's all about, and what SEI tries its very best to do through all its training and formational work across the SEC.

Revd Dr Richard Tiplady

**Institute Council:** Much of the discussion at the Institute Council's business in April was about growth and establishing thriving connections. The Principal's Report provided us with information on two future modules to be offered: the first, looking at the theologies around community development that will help to stretch students' thinking and practice. Similarly, a module exploring the links between faith and health will enable students to explore the interdisciplinary field of healthcare and Christian theology, developing SEI's contribution to collaborative ministry. Later too in the meeting we considered the potential for greater partnership working with other denominations and enabling ministers in the future to be working in teams and flourishing in this collaborative environment.

From the numbers involved in the different stages of discernment for training we got a sense of the energy around those engaged in this process for potential licensed and ordained ministries. We noted the important role of the Training Incumbents and were encouraged by their desire to organise their own supportive meetings between those offered by SEI.

Developing previous discussions and being encouraged by the SEI staff's paper on lay ministries, we teased out more ideas about how this might be developed and so respond to the growing appetite for more training and resources to be available across the Province. These are all such great signs of growth. Finally, we said 'farewell and thank you' to Philip Schonken (*right*), student representative, for his contribution and for bringing the voice of the student body to the Institute Council.

Revd Elaine Garman



**Training Fund:** Many thanks to the congregation of St Columba's Largs and the Revd Sally Gorton (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) for the kind donation of Sally's deputising fee from a recent Sunday service. As ever, we are very grateful for such generosity and thoughtfulness.

*April saw the Final Year Appraisal Conferences taking place for the five 'Leavers', those who will be ordained or licensed as a Lay Reader at Michaelmas - Claire Nicholson, Lesley Penny and Sandra Wright (Diocese of Edinburgh); Lisa Curtice (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway); and Philip Schonken (Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness). More will be written about these five candidates in next month's Newsletter, but for now we focus upon two of the Diocesan Advisors who have accompanied them on their journey of formation over the past three years: Jennie Godfrey and Jenny Paton-Williams.*

*As the title of the role suggests, these two women – and the other three Diocesan Advisors not featured here: the Revd Grace Siromony (Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness), the Revd Liz O'Ryan and the Revd Grace Redpath (both Diocese of Edinburgh) – have faithfully accompanied the candidates through their training, acting as 'critical friends', mentors and role models, advisors and helpmeets, and people with whom to laugh, cry and drink coffee companionably.*



**Journeying together:** 'It was with trepidation that I responded to Anne Tomlinson's invitation to support a student at SEI as a Diocesan Advisor', writes the Revd Jennie Godfrey, Team Priest at St Mary's Dalkeith and St Leonard's Lasswade, Diocese of Edinburgh. 'The student and I met before the course started in the picnic area of The Melville, Dalkeith, over a cup of coffee .... we did not then know what lay ahead.

'Before lockdown arrived, we would meet in my kitchen after my student had finished work and before she went home. Over a hot drink we would begin. At first I took written notes ... but latterly I touch-typed instead and that was much more helpful. I listened for quotable quotes that gave evidence of learning and developing experience of the various aspects of the course under discussion.

'In an almost natural way all areas were covered although different meetings may have been slightly more weighted on one topic or another. At the end of the year I had my notes and quotes to write the appraisal document.

'A small example of travelling from first year: an evangelical meets the Blue Book! By the end of that year a more comfortable position in both practical and spiritual terms was clear evidence of the journey travelled! Over the three years and appropriate placement experiences it is exciting now to hear a new voice reflect on the two strong expressions of church that we have. What a journey awaits ... for both the student and the church!

'Being a Diocesan Advisor has been an interesting and exciting experience, as well as a privilege to serve the church in such a way.'

**Revd Jennie Godfrey**

**Getting alongside:** 'For the last 2½ years I have been accompanying Sandra Wright as she trains for Lay Ministry in the SEC', writes Jenny Paton-Williams, Lay Reader at St.Columba's-by-the-Castle, shown right. 'It was humbling to be asked by Anne Tomlinson to be a Diocesan Advisor, particularly as I was taking the place of our much-respected Lay Reader, John Starr. I hope I have done justice to the role, in his absence. I have been glad to have the opportunity to contribute something to the diocese as well as my church.'



'Sandra and I met every month. At first our meetings were during her lunchtimes in her office in Edinburgh. We gradually got to know each other, and Sandra would tell me what she was doing for her course, how she was managing her work-study-life balance. Sometimes we would talk about future developments in her training such as placements and sometimes we would reflect together on what had gone before.'

'Since February 2020 our meetings transferred to a WhatsApp format. Sandra was always better than myself at anything techie, but even I could organise WhatsApp efficiently! We kept to the same framework of conversation and concluding prayers.'

'I always hoped that I was being a secure confidante, a gentle encouragement, a prayerful support and an occasional voice of experience.'

'At the end of each academic year I submitted a Report and contributed to the 3-way Appraisal. I am not at all surprised that Sandra has been recommended for Licensing with flying colours and I look forward to her Licensing and to her future contribution to the Church as a Lay Reader.'

**Jenny Paton-Williams**

**DIOCESAN ADVISORS' TRAINING SESSION**  
**MONDAY 28 JUNE 2021**

**10.30 – 15.00 VIA ZOOM**

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**PROGRAMME**

<b>10.30 - 10.50</b>	<b>Welcome, checking in and prayer</b>
<b>10.50 - 11.30</b>	<b>Context:</b> community, consistency and Common Awards  <i>Coffee and stretch</i>
<b>11.45 - 12.45</b>	<b>Role and Responsibilities:</b> accompaniment, advocacy and appraisal
<b>12.45 - 13.30</b>	<i>Lunch</i>
<b>13.30 - 14.15</b>	<b>Theological Reflection:</b> purpose, process and placements
<b>14.15 - 14.45</b>	<b>Moodle mysteries!</b>
<b>14.45 - 15.00</b>	<b>Final questions and closing prayers</b>

**New Diocesan Advisors:** With between eight and twelve new candidates likely to enter the Institute at the start of the new academic year in August, several new Diocesan Advisors have had to be discerned across the Province. The Principal has worked with the Bishops to select suitable candidates, pairing them with candidates as soon as they are recommended via an Advisory Selection Panel.

Now that SEI has been in existence for seven years, Diocesan Advisors are increasingly being called from the ranks of those who themselves have had experience of being accompanied by a Diocesan Advisor during their time at SEI. In replying to the invitation to serve in this capacity, several have expressed the desire to pass on their positive experience to someone else. These new Diocesan Advisors will be invited to attend a training session in June (*left*) when they will be inducted into the role - and introduced to the mysteries of SEI's Moodle learning platform!

**One more Zoom marathon:** May sees the final ‘Residential Weekend’ of this academic year taking place. Not that this one, as with the preceding four and the opening Orientation Week, have been ‘residential’ in the sense of ‘being at Kinnoull’; but as Chapter Chair Dr Lesley Penny said recently, ‘keeping the name gives us hope’.



At it, we will welcome two guests. On Friday evening the Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth (*left*) will present two sessions on ‘Leading a Growing Church’ as the final part of Richard Tiplady’s *Mission and Evangelism* modules. Kelvin is the Provost of St Mary’s Cathedral, Glasgow (Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway) and over his time there – since 2006 – that congregation has doubled in size. We will also be joined by the Rt Revd Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin. It is traditional to welcome a member of the College of Bishops to the final weekend of each academic year, and highly appropriate that it will be

Bishop Andrew’s turn this year as he has recently joined the Institute Council as the College’s representative on that governing body. He will speak on ‘how nothing is wasted by God’ as regards vocation during the Saturday afternoon sessions, and lead the Farewell Liturgy for the Leavers following Sunday’s Service of the Word.

As ever at the May weekend (*timetable below*), family members of candidates are invited to a dedicated session on Sunday morning at which they will look at issues of ‘boundaries and expectations’: how to follow your own life calling while still supporting your spouse, and the art of navigating being a spouse of a clergyperson/Reader while also being a congregant and friend of people to whom your spouse ministers.

Friday May 7				
17.00-17.30	‘Checking in’ (Zoom)			Small groups/staff
17.30-17.45	Evening Prayer			
17.45-19.00				
19.00-19.50	Session 1 TMM1361 Level 4/TMM2401 Level 5 Mission and Evangelism (Zoom)			Richard Tiplady Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth
20.00-20.50	Session 2 TMM1361 Level 4/TMM2401 Level 5 Mission and Evangelism (Zoom)			
21.00	Compline in Small Groups (BBB)			
Saturday May 8				
08.30-08.50	Morning Prayer			Anne Tomlinson
09.00-09.50	Session 3 TMM 1447 Reflective Practice Level 4 (BBB)	Session 3 TMM 2531 Reflective Practice Level 5 ‘long’ (Zoom)	Anne Tomlinson TMM 1447	Michael Hull TMM 2531
10.00-10.50	Session 4 TMM 1447 Case Study 3	Session 4 TMM 2531 Reflective Practice Level 5 ‘long’ (Zoom)	Tony and Dominic	
11.00-12.00	Chat rooms open (BBB)			
12.00-13.00	Mid-day Service			Richard Tiplady
13.00-14.00				
14.00-14.50	Session 5 ‘Nothing is wasted with God’ (Zoom)			Rt Revd Andrew Swift
15.00-15.50	Session 6 ‘Nothing is wasted with God’ (Zoom)			
16.00-17.00	Bravetalk (Zoom)			Student-led
17.30-17.45	Evening Prayer (Zoom)			
17.45-19.00				
19.00-19.50	Session 7 TMM 2527 Reflective Practice Level 5 (BBB)			Anne Tomlinson ‘Sharing our reflections’
20.00-20.50	Session 8 TMM 2527 Reflective Practice Level 5 (BBB)			
21.00	Compline in Small Groups			
Social Time: Farewell to Leavers				
Sunday May 9				
08.30-08.50	Morning Prayer (Zoom)			
09.00-10.00	Session 9 Bible Study Acts 20, 7-12			Sandra Wright
10.20-11.20	Session 10 Chapter (Zoom)	Families (Zoom 10-11.30)		Student-led Anne Tomlinson
11.45-12.45	Service of the Word and Farewell Liturgy		Preacher: Rachael Wright	Michael Hull

## Theological Education



**Comparisons and contrasts:** The second of three seminars run by TEAC, the department for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion, took place on 20 April, entitled '*Leading Seminaries and Theological Colleges: a forum on the challenges and opportunities*'. 63 participants from the Americas, Europe and Africa gathered on Zoom, with the seminar being re-presented for Asian time zones two days later.

At this time of transition and danger for theological education across the world, TEAC believes that the need for listening to each other across the Communion, and pooling knowledge and wisdom, is greater than ever. In response, the department has set up a series of webinars for faculty and staff of institutions and courses and church leaders to provide an opportunity to hear from theological educators in different parts of the world and discuss some of the key issues.

Three speakers presented papers at April's session: the Revd Canon Dr Vicentia Kgabe (*right*), Rector of the College of the Transfiguration, Grahamstown, Eastern Cape; the Revd Dr Sunil Caleb, Principal of Bishop's College, Kolkata; and the Revd Dr Pedro Triana of the Episcopal Church of Brazil. The event was moderated by the General Secretary of the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa, the Ven. Kofi deGraft-Johnson. As ever, given the geographical spread of the participants, simultaneous translation from Portuguese and Spanish was available.



It was clear that those responsible for guiding theological formation in colleges and courses across the Communion shared many challenges: of finding ever-new ways of offering theological education to the whole people of God in contexts of religious pluralism and socio-economic upheaval; of learning how best to empower students to be 'social activists', truly engaged with and connected to the needs and gifts of their local communities; of reimagining curricula in a way that breaks down any secular-sacred divide; of trying to ensure a holistic programme that integrates spiritual formation, academic studies and ministerial practice. We discovered that we had much in common.

But what was most telling for me as I listened to the keynote speakers and also participated in small group discussions were the risks involved and the sacrifices made by so many engaging in theological education in other areas of the Communion; to be reminded that aspects of formation that we take for granted face others with insurmountable problems. These included the difficulties of accessing theological texts given the import charges imposed on foreign (largely European) publications; the prohibitive cost of using Journal aggregators such as JSTOR and EBSCO; the difficulty of online pedagogy because students can only afford limited data packs; the dangers of engaging in field work with marginalised communities because it can challenge what was darkly referred to as 'vested interests'. As the Tutor for Field Education at SEI I am hugely relieved that I don't have to weigh up the risks of student placements in quite this way, and am humbled by having listened to the faithfulness of those for whom this is a part of their everyday experience. I thank TEAC for providing this invaluable listening exercise and look forward to the final one in May '*Women in Leadership in Theological Education: a forum on the challenges and opportunities*' led by Dr Gloria Mapangdol, Principal of St Andrew's Seminary, Manila.

**Revd Anne Tomlinson**