

Epiphany Group Regional Report - Edinburgh

'Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living' course

GPRL ran again at Christ Church Centre with 17 people, including those from charismatic churches looking to learn from other traditions and several with no formal church connection; there was encouraging sharing and support within a diverse group – something which, year after year, does seem to be a key ingredient of GPRL for many people. An opening weekend was a new addition and was quite a full time but a good way to begin to bond. The white winter caused plan A to become plan B.. and then C.. in December but in general the practicalities were smoothed and, again this year, people travelled from Fife and the Borders to be with us. We feel good seeds were sown.

Elizabeth White

'Six Days'

With GPRL not being offered in 2011/12 in Edinburgh the idea of a series of 'taster' days to link to - and from - GPRL began to emerge in early 2011. This quickly grew into something much broader and open to all, addressing a need for topical but reflective day events which had been unmet since the closure of The House of Prayer at Nile Grove. An overwhelming response over the summer to the release of advertising for the six Saturdays (between October 2011 and June 2012) has attracted folk new to EG as well as those who are offering direction. The organisation has been much more extensive than initially expected, partly due to the large response, as well as feeling our way with putting a new programme of dates and presenters together, but we are pleased to be branching out in this way. Having had an encouraging first day in October on Celtic Spirituality and Contemporary Cosmology, there will be more news on the days in next year's report.

Claire Starr & Elizabeth White

'Parents , Prayer and Pre-schoolers' course

Possibly something more for next year's report, having only just started in October but we mention this new venture because it has also come out of there being no GPRL running this year. This six week course combines the desire to offer 'something in the daytime' with the experience of accompanying parents who have young children. We excitedly made plans, and with 13 families (including 19 under 5s!) signed up and having been gifted the use of a church, we are hoping to bring awareness of God and prayer into everyday activities of young families. Eating, painting, stories with sand, hand massage, bubbles, going on journeys; all helping us to experience and talk with and about God who is with us in everything. Feedback has been enthusiastic so far with interest and requests from children's church workers to also come along or meet with us to learn more. Watch this space for future opportunities and developments.

Claire Starr & Elizabeth White

Retreats in Daily Life

A year into the life of the 'Retreat in Daily Life' team for the Edinburgh area we now have a good feel for the team and work involved; team members have clearer roles and we have looked further at remit and structure of the team, including the 'rotation' of members (much like the core committee) to give all guides a chance to be involved in this way at some point. As well as team meetings, two 'all guides' meetings in April and September gave the opportunity for input, discussion and community; as a team, we are open to being contacted at any time with suggestions and feedback. Our two RDLs this past year each had a distinctive flavour and opened new doors – the first quite literally into a nursery in February

for the opening and closing of a week-long RDL, a different community-type base for a dozen retreatants, two of whom came particularly because of the location. The second, a 6 week RDL, opened at St Marks after Easter and represented a new link with this Unitarian church of whom several members took part. Working as a diverse team of guides and amongst 23 folk from varying backgrounds was challenging particularly in terms of 'matching' guides with retreatants yet always a huge privilege with many ongoing, fruitful links and faces popping up at other EG events. This year we also produced a RDL 'Ways of Praying' booklet which is currently being 'tweaked' with the hope that it will be available online for others to use shortly.

Elizabeth White

Supervision Group

A group of 4 students who had trained in Spiritual Conversation in 2009/10 continued to meet as a supervision group with one of the course tutors during the year 2010/11. They met on 6 occasions for about an hour, using the session to reflect about their beginning practice. All four took it in turns to present material for reflection and response. The group set their own ground rules at the beginning. During the year they also looked at codes of conduct, and discussed a chapter on supervision of beginning spiritual directors from Supervision of Spiritual Directors by Bumpus and Langer. Continuing to meet as a peer group with facilitation in this way bridged the 'gap' between completing Training in Spiritual Conversation and waiting for Training in Spiritual Direction to be offered. Mutual support and encouragement in the group also helped to develop confidence in practice. All four have now started their training in spiritual direction.

Elizabeth South

Spiritual Exercises Seminar

A Spiritual Exercises Training Seminar took place in Edinburgh 2010 – 2011. Nine days, at monthly intervals, were given over to the seminar. There were 14 participants coming from Kirkcudbright, Ayrshire, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the Borders, Fife and the Black Isle. The course was led by Gero McLoughlin, Elizabeth South and Alison Moody. At each meeting participants gave presentations of a different section of the Exercises based on their reading and own experience. This was followed by discussion and plenary. At the end of the day the leaders introduced the topics for the following meeting with suggestions for reading and reflective questions. The feedback indicated that people found the course helpful for their own personal development and reconnecting with the Exercises. For those offering spiritual direction it suggested a framework by which to understand and explore a person's journey and for those considering giving the Exercises or already engaged in this ministry it imbued confidence and offered a wealth of resources.

Alison Moody

Sacred Spaces

Sacred Spaces ran 5 quiet days last session, in various locations across the Lothians, in association with the Epiphany Group. The days were a mixture of guided meditations, reflections on various topics (these have included: 'Life', 'Chosen', and 'A Journey'), interactive prayer stations, and silence. This combination has been very well received, particularly as it offers those who may be less familiar with spending an hour and a half in silence a way into prayer and stillness that offers some focal points. Our final day last year was a meditative walk in Newbattle near Dalkeith. We ask people to bring a packed lunch, but provide tea, coffee and cake (which has become something of a Sacred Spaces tradition!), and charge £15 to cover our costs. For information on the coming year's days please see www.sacredspacescotland.webs.com or email: quietdaysinfo@yahoo.co.uk.

Sharon Laidlaw