

## Lay Representative Annual Report

(for year ending 30 September 2009)

### Area of Responsibility

As lay representative my main responsibility is to attend the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod twice each year. The other responsibilities are to keep in touch with other churches in our area namely the East End Churches Together and the Forth Area Council of Episcopal Churches.

### Summary of preceding year

**East End Churches Together** consisted of Broughton St. Mary's Church of Scotland, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Stockbridge Parish Church and St. Andrew's and St. George's Church of Scotland. The EECT met five times each year and in the past clergy from various churches attended these meetings but latterly only lay representatives from the various churches were present. The main focus of these evenings was to share news of the various activities going on in our churches and to plan communal activities together. At the beginning of the 2008/09 session there was a general feeling that we were not achieving the main purpose of our constitution. It was decided at that time that each church representative would discuss with their clergy ways in which we could revitalise EECT and obtain more involvement from congregations. After many months of discussion a decision was finally reached in May that EECT should no longer function. It was agreed however that any outreach ventures in the future which individual churches were organising would be open to former EECT member churches. There was a distinct feeling of sadness that EECT was being disbanded but realistically there was a general consensus that this decision was the correct one. We participated in the annual carol singing in the local Tesco supermarket in Broughton Road and this event afforded us the opportunity of distributing Christmas cards to shoppers detailing the Christmas services in our churches. It is our intention to continue this joint venture. We hosted the World Day of Prayer Service in March which was written by the women from Papua, New Guinea. We had an attendance of around thirty at this service.

**Forth Area Council:** There has only been one meeting of this group of churches in the current year.

**Diocesan Synod - October 2008:** In the Bishop's Address he referred to the fact that society seems to be falling apart; references were made to climate change, the financial situation and following on from Lambeth, the Anglican communion. He felt that previous crises did not have the same impact as our current situation. Globalisation played such a huge part in life to-day and he gave the example of a smoky factory in Wales creating problems for polar bears in the Arctic and of course, in the Anglican communion, decisions in one church have repercussions on the other side of the world. He concluded by saying that for the Christian, the answer must lie in God and quoted St. Augustine, "Our hearts are restless till we rest in Thee". Many viewpoints were then expressed throughout the discussion of the St. Andrews draft Anglican covenant and further meetings were to take place. It is always interesting to listen to reports on the Youth and Children's work carried out in the diocese mainly through the work of the Youth and Children's Officer. She very clearly gives a lot of valued assistance to churches in the diocese where repeatedly there is the cry, "We have no children in our church". One realises again and again in listening to such reports, how blessed we are when we see the vast numbers of young people streaming through our doors each Sunday. **March 2009:** The format of the March synod took the form of both plenary and group discussion. This change of format was accepted positively by all present and it was interesting and stimulating to hear varying viewpoints expressed by both clergy and lay representatives from very diverse backgrounds to our own. The Bishop in his opening talk highlighted the fact that the church to-day faces a militant atheist culture which comes in so many forms. He referred to the various changes in society which have taken place over the years and highlighted the need to engage with the younger generation for the future of the Church. Once again, we heard from the diocesan Youth and Children's Officer as she referred to the various culture changes which contribute to falling away of families attending church. It was most interesting to hear in our subsequent group discussion of the varied ways in which some churches are reaching out to their communities. I was very impressed to hear about "Messy Church" which takes the form of parents bringing along children to church, usually on a Saturday morning, and involving them in various "messy" activities and then moving on to a brief act of worship altogether. Following lunch there was discussion re changes to various Canons and the final session was devoted to finance and administration.

### Targets for the coming year

The Lay Representative will continue to attend the above events and encourage support for any outreach events which EECT may plan in the future.