



The Congregational
Institute for
Practical Theology
Alumni

Newsletter Issue #1

Welcome to the first Alumni newsletter. It gives me great pleasure to be sharing this with you. Our aim is to produce 2 newsletters a year, to keep you updated with developments and news, as well as connected with other members of our Alumni Association.

This is very much YOUR newsletter! We would love to hear from you with any news items, stories or snippets of interest that you would like to have included. Please email us or post anything to us and we will do our best to include it next time!

We do hope you enjoy reading this and if you have any comments then do feel free to get back to us.

As always, our prayers are with all who are studying, and have studied, with CIPT so may God continue to bless you in all you do in his service.

Catherine

ALUMNI EVENT - SPEAKER

The speaker at the recent Alumni event was Rebecca Benfield, one of the Directors of Armed Forces Christian Union, who led a very interesting afternoon session for us.

In part one of the session, she reminded us of the story of Joseph and the way that God prepared Joseph for each step of the journey. Joseph was helped to learn the lessons he needed to progress and as the story unfolds it is amazing the connections that are made and the ways that events fitted together.

Rebecca told us a little of her own life and the way that she had been prepared for the mission God had for her throughout her life and with reference to the good and bad times she had been through. We then shared our own God-incidences and how those connections have led us to where we are.

It was fascinating to hear one another's stories and to have that time to share together.

In the second half of the afternoon, Rebecca told us something of the work she does with AFCU and how that organisation operates to support Christians serving in the Armed Forces.



L-R: Richard Pickering, George Crossley, Rebecca Benfield (Speaker), Catherine Booton, Christine Denwood, Nigel Lindsey

This service takes a number of different forms, including supporting those who serve in front line forces, as well as Chaplains and Padres, those who are part of the MOD and the Cadet forces.

AFCU runs programmes to support members including Iccachar, which helps to develop leadership skills, prayer groups and other prayer support, retreat events and other ways of supporting Christians in the military. The organisation also creates resources that those leading worship and other devotions can use.

For more information see their website at www.afcu.org.uk

We were very grateful for her coming to share with us and I am sure she gave us all lots to think about.

"It was good to see old friends...
Rebecca gave us encouragement and
a lot to think about."

ALUMNI AGM

Our AGM was held in the morning session of the day and we had a full agenda with lots to catch up on since our last meeting in 2021

Catherine was able to give us an update on the FD Course and other courses being offered by the CF Learning and Development department and CIPT. Numbers of students on the FD are good and have now recovered to pre-pandemic levels. There were 7 students who graduated in 2024 and 10 new students have joined the course, bringing the total number of students to 22.

There have been some changes and additions to the modules being taught, changes to the tutor team with new tutors joining, and some including Richard Cleaves, Paul Davis, and at the end of this current academic year, Janet Wootton taking well earned retirements.

New CIPT merchandise, which will enhance the student experience, have been purchased thanks to funding received from grant awarding bodies. This includes planners, memory sticks, page markers and book marks. The Alumni were also introduced the Knitty the CIPT mascot, who accompanies Catherine on her work and can often be found in the Cock and Hoop after a long and tiring day of learning at the FD Residential weekends!

New courses are very much in the pipeline too – Being Congregational is being written to help churches and those new to Congregationalism explore what it means to be part of a Congregational church. This will be offered, in stage 1, as a course that can be run in groups, within individual churches, groups of churches or areas, with video and written resources and a work book to guide participants through the course. Stage 1 is currently being piloted and we are looking towards a launch date in the new year. Stage 2 will include an online course that individuals can complete, and this will be developed later on in 2025 – watch this space.

GIFT, the Level 3 programme, is also being redeveloped to ensure it is relevant to churches and individuals and will include the option to do just a module or the whole programme of 4 modules. On completion of the course and submission of a portfolio of work built up whilst doing the modules, a certificate of completion will be issued. We are hoping this will launch in Q1 of 2025.

See more at www.congregational.org.uk/alumni-association

Don't forget to send us your news, events, stories and photos for the next newsletter:
Contact catherine.booton@congregational.org.uk or madeleine.varley@congregational.org.uk

As you can see there are lots of exciting developments and we hope that the Alumni will be involved in spreading the word about what is going on, and even taking part!

Other matters discussed included how we can best use Alumni funds to support students. It was agreed to continue to support students with diverse and additional needs through the purchase of assistive technology.

We also discussed how the Alumni would like to meet – it was thought that twice a year would be good with one online and one face-to-face meeting. It was suggested that the face-to-face meeting could be us joining together to go on a trip to somewhere interesting, perhaps even in conjunction with the historical society or other group.



L-R: Malcolm Simpkin, Jan Hocking, Nadeem Shafqat, Yonas Beyene, Keziah Taylor, Tony Frost, Josephine Oke

Graduation 2024

The 16th October saw seven students graduate, two with CIPT Foundation Degrees, and five with York St John University validated Foundation Degrees. The ceremony was held at the National Justice Museum in Nottingham, with the address led by Dr Sharon Jagger from YSJU. Celebrations with family and friends continued with canapés, cake and fizz (or a nice cup of tea!)

Congratulations to all our
graduates!

