



June 2014

Scottish Charity SC005375

**Number 57:
June
2014**

News from around the Diocese **SEC Lay Reader's Conference**

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I went to the Conference, held in Tulliallan, Kincardine, in the sunshine and the general experience I remember and enjoyed was the company of good people. The company of Christian people is good in itself. The Conference reminded me that church services are more than liturgy, sermons and Bible readings but about a living Christian body of people. The lesson I learned is to meet with as large a body of Christian people as often as I can for mutual encouragement. This conference was open to all Lay Readers and Lay Readers in Training within the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The main speakers were a guest speaker from the north of England, Cathy Rowland and our Bishop Bob. Bishop Bob had a question and answer session at which he showed a forthright plain speech in response to each question. Listening to the Bishop it struck me that the teaching of Jesus would also have been delivered with a clear firm confident purpose in order to change the world. We, all of us, need to follow that example.

Cathy Rowland dealt over a few sessions with Church Growth or the lack of it. Church of England research was presented and the main points I took away was that if a church is to grow it needs: good leadership, clear purpose, willingness to self-reflect and hence change and adapt, involving lay people and deliberately developing disciples.

The involvement of Lay People seemed to me particularly important. Discussion about entry to theological training with perhaps three years of university type training took place and while useful, for some essential, it is not for everyone and not for most Lay church members.

I was reminded of being asked if I had thought of ordination earlier in the month before going to the Conference. My answer was "yes" but "no" to ordination. The Conference helped me justify my reply. Lay work in the church is essential.

The church needs lay people dedicated in Christian service to those things listed above but particularly leadership, self-reflection and adaptability to change if the church is to grow.

It was a good conference for Lay Readers. The church meets every week and the message I return to give you is that service by all Lay people is essential. Speak plainly whoever you are and grow our church.

Geoff Headden

A Celebration of Lay Ministry—7th June

All those who contribute to the life and worship of our congregations are invited to celebrate discipleship and service. Musicians have very particular gifts but so do those who assist at the altar, read in church, arrange flowers, make coffee etc etc. This is a Diocesan celebration of our lay ministry and of being disciples of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Please let the Office know of your attendance for catering.

Pastoral Assistants - Who? What?

The pastoral assistant programme is moving along well. The service of Celebration of Lay Ministry on June 7th will include the commissioning of a group of pastoral visitors from five of our charges whose call to this ministry has been endorsed by their priest. (Have you told the office how many are coming from your church? If you would like some lunch?))

To put it in the wider context of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the term 'pastoral assistant' is the one adopted by the College of Bishops. This means that if you are a trained and recognised pastoral assistant, your role can be recognised if you should move to another diocese. Development sessions continue to run with the aim of sharing experience, agreeing guidelines and refreshing and updating knowledge.

What are they for?

The main role of the pastoral assistants is to offer a friendly presence and a listening ear, bringing God's love to those who are unable to join in the regular worship. Anyone who has ever delegated a task, be it at work or for a church event, knows that organising a team is more work and not less. Our priests and congregational lay leaders will have their own list of folk they visit and will usually undertake any crisis visiting that arises.

Why is training needed?

Probably the most important answer to that is to say that being a really good listener is a lifelong learning task! When did you last feel really well heard? When did you come away thinking 'I talked too much'? Speaking for myself, I need regular reminders of the importance of setting my own concerns aside to be really *with* another person. Other skills can include communicating with the vulnerable or confused or visiting the bereaved.

The reason for meeting together to learn and support each other is because the pastoral assistants are visiting 'in the name of the church'. They represent not just your priest but your congregation. If you believe you have a vocation to this role, speak to your priest or the Bishop. But of course, all of this doesn't stop any of us popping in on each other in a neighbourly way!

Alison Clark

Gaelic Eucharist at St. Columba's Church, Isle of Skye

Fr. Simon Mackenzie officiated at our recent Gaelic Eucharist.

The ecumenical congregation included visitors and many local Gaelic speakers.

The Scriptures were read by Mr. Myles Campbell and Fr. Simon Mackenzie.

We were blessed to have Morag Henriksen singing the Psalm, and the closing hymn.

Photographs were taken after the service, and needless to say 'Donnie' stole the show



Following the service, we joined together for lunch at the Aros Centre, with the Grace being given by Myles Campbell.

Nan Cleghorn

Bishop's Lent Appeal

Thanks to all those who have already contributed. We have, so far, raised just over £1,800 for FORWARD. Any more contributions would be very welcome. Please make cheques payable to "The Episcopal Diocese of Argyll & The Isles" and send them in to the Diocesan Office (details on back page) as soon as possible.

FORWARD
Safeguarding rights & dignity



Diocesan Clergy have had two training days - the Dean reports.

The day after the Synod, retired and current active clergy met in Oban to discuss retirement, working patterns, working agreements and what God has in store for us all. The diocese has seven stipendiary clergy including the Bishop but well over 30 clergy are involved in ministry in the charges. The day was led by the Bishop, assisted by Alison Clark and the Dean. The clergy did a bible study on the Emmaus Road story, with insights focusing on a shared meal, confusion in isolation and walking alone, then eyes being opened and Jesus being there! It was an unexpected encounter that brought excitement to the disciples. We wondered how open communities are now to recognise Christ. Do we listen to each other to recognise each other's thoughts and minds? The clergy then moved on to reflection on retirement. We thought about dealing with loss, being clear about what you actually want in retirement and building the most rewarding aspects of your working life into the retirement period. Challenges included keeping up to date, responsibility not always clearly worked out, managing support and costs, the need for a working agreement and, for non-stipendiary clergy, when are they actually retired? How to manage retiring into a congregation where one has served could also be tricky. Joys of retirement: joy of time to prepare sermons, joy of sharing ministry, freedom to offer service as a gift rather than a duty. Questions to take away: what are the opportunities for spiritual growth in retirement? What is an appropriate and fulfilling path now? How can I balance my wish to contribute with my wish for a more 'retired' path? The urgent need for some formal working agreements for some of our retired clergy was flagged up as an immediate outcome of this training day.

The stipendiary clergy met, with Bishop Kevin, on Cumbrae a few weeks later and had some very useful discussions. The Dean gave a presentation on conflict transformation, based on a Bridgebuilders course that he had attended the week before. A creative approach to inevitable church conflict can, given careful communication, management and training, result in a positive way forward for a church. Father Simon McKenzie gave a presentation on deliverance ministry, again based on recent training in this area. The clergy discussed progress and initiatives throughout the diocese as they worshipped and spent time together. The clergy meet in this way roughly twice each year, as part of their continuing professional development.

St Kieran's, Campbeltown

On Good Friday, "Campbeltown Churches Together" organised an outdoor service in the town centre at the historic medieval cross which dates back to 1380. This was the second year that there has been a public statement of witness of this kind and the numbers attending have doubled in that period from about 20 to 40. A short service of readings and prayers was followed by a procession, behind a life-sized cross, up the Main Street of the town, finishing at St Kieran's. There, a short organ

St Kieran’s, Campbeltown (cont’d)

recital, which picked out themes of rejection (Walton - Passacaille from Henry V), friendship (Elgar - Nimrod) and maternal grief (Schubert – Ave Maria) acted as a prelude to a Devotional Service which included as many of the represented churches as possible in “Proclaiming the Passion”. Everyone seemed to be of one mind that it had been another useful exercise in working together within a prayerful framework.

David O McEwan

Visit to Skye and Raasay

The Diocesan Treasurer brings the Bishop's greetings to the Raasay congregation (gathered at Rosemary Bungard’s home)



The Congregational Development Officer and Diocesan Treasurer paid a visit to the Skye and Raasay congregations. The trip included pastoral assistant training and a pilot of the Reflection for Action resources.

Argyll and The Isles takes part in “Cascade Conversation – Listening across the Spectrum”

In 2013 the General Synod of the SEC was offered a working group to explore the design of a process to allow discussion same-sex relationship issues in the life of the church. The extension of the definition of marriage by the Scottish government to include same gender ceremonies requires all religious bodies to decide how to respond. The SEC discussion process is intended to allow the differing views within the church to be heard in a safe environment whilst the church determines how and when to respond.

The key output from the process design group has been an event called “A Cascade Conversation – Listening across the Spectrum.” This took place in Pitlochry on 29-30 April. About 60 people were present in Pitlochry for the two day meeting, with the participants meeting in small facilitated groups and input from several external contributors. The delegates and contributors were a diverse range of age, gender, orientation and lay & ordained status. Four members of the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles attended: Toben Lewis (Iona); Marion Mackay (Stornoway); Alan Mole (Dunoon) and Andrew Swift (the Dean).

At the conclusion of the meeting, each small facilitated group (there were six groups in total) offered a short statement they would wish to be communicated that would reflect their experience of the Cascade Conversation. These six statements are on the provincial website at: <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/cascade-conversation-listening-across-spectrum/>

Towards the close of the Cascade Conversation, the participants met in Diocesan groups to consider how the experience of the meeting in Pitlochry might be cascaded more widely. In Argyll, there have already been discussions on these issues over the past few years, and most recently at the 2014 Diocesan Synod. The representatives agreed that there was a need and a duty to continue these discussions, especially as it was stated at the event that a motion was likely to be proposed at the General Synod in 2014 to begin a process of exploring canonical changes that would be required to permit equal marriage in those SEC churches that hold a theological understanding that would allow them to do such a thing.

The state of consensus and the range of views that are held across and within charges should be explored if any sort of synodical process to broaden the definition of marriage in the SEC is likely to start at any point in the future.

The delegates agreed to return to the Diocese and to discuss with the Diocesan Officers the form and timescale of the ongoing discussions. It was important, they felt, not to lose momentum in the process. It was also important to openly communicate what was happening. They also agreed to offer their personal reflections on their personal participation in the Cascade Conversation. These have been placed on the Diocesan website. *The Dean*

Cathedral of The Isles

The programme Guide for Summer Concerts 2014 has now been published and can be found on the Friends website at <http://www.cumbraecathedralfriends.com/index.html>

Concerts take place every Sunday from June 22nd to September 28th at 3pm. Please enjoy and if you can make a visit for any of them you will be most welcome.

Prayer for the Kidnapped Nigerian girls May 2014

O God, we cry out to you
for the lives and the freedom
of the 276 kidnapped girls in Nigeria.
In their time of danger and fear,
pour out your strong Spirit for them.
Make a way home for them in safety.
Make a way back for them
to the education that will lift them up.
Hold them in the knowledge
that they are not captive slaves,
they are not purchased brides,
but they are your beloved daughters,
and precious in your sight.
Change the hearts and minds of their kidnapers
and of all who choose violence against women and girls.
Cast down the mighty from their seat,
and lift up the humble and meek,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Elizabeth Smith from the Diocese of Perth,
Anglican Church of Australia.*

Greening Church Buildings

The public launch of its new "Ideas for Action" booklet on Greening Church Buildings was launched at the recent annual gathering of Eco Congregation Scotland. The guide is designed as an introduction to the issues surrounding the care and management of church buildings and offers guiding principles which all can follow.

Written by Scott Wham, an architect who has worked on a number of church related projects aided by funding from the Scottish Episcopal Church, the booklet is available as a [PDF File](#) (ideal for download and printing) and as a [Web Version](#) (ideal for people who can't cope with PDF files) Printed copies are available on request. See www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Rev Trevor Jamison, a United Reformed Church Minister, is the ECS chaplain and is available to help by preaching or leading worship, speaking to groups or leading discussion or Bible study groups. Contact him at trevor@ecocongregationscotland.org



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Communications

NEWSLETTER

The July Newsletter (Please remember to send information to the Diocesan Office) – material to be received at the Diocesan Office (e-mail above) by Monday **23rd June, 2014.**

WEBSITE www.argyll.anglican.org www.island-retreats.org

TWITTER Hashtag #AaTI

FACEBOOK Please 'Like' the Facebook page for Argyll and The Isles.

THE WIDER CHURCH Find out more about the Scottish Episcopal Church at www.scotland.anglican.org

ONLINE INSPIRES

Sign up for the Scottish Episcopal Church newsletter or the magazine at links from the website as above.

Solas Festival 20th–22nd June

At The Bield, Methven. Further details and tickets from
<http://www.solasfestival.co.uk/>

Diocesan Diary

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| 7th June | Celebration of Lay Leadership |
| 12th -14th June | General Synod, Edinburgh |
| 14th June | Godly Play Discovery Day |
| 24th June | Diocesan Finance Committee |
| 24th June | Diocesan Mission & Ministry Board |
| 30th June | Diocesan Standing Committee |
| 27th-30th October | Diocesan Retreat |

Christ. Redeeming and Returning

Argyll Convention 2014

Launched in Oban in 2013 the **Argyll Convention** focuses on the Bible and on Christ, but with an eye for the worlds around. It's at holiday time—5th—7th August—and children's work is during the morning sessions. Speakers include, Richard Bewes, Hector Morrison, Carine MacKenzie, Scottish Bible Society.

Details on Facebook or the website www.argyllconvention.com