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News from around the Diocese Celebration of Lay Ministry

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Lay and ordained folk from around the Diocese gathered in St John's Cathedral for a Celebration of Lay Ministry. Newly trained Pastoral Assistants were licensed by Bishop Kevin and then all involved in Lay Ministry renewed their vows. The preacher was Canon Anne Tomlinson, newly appointed Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute. (see her sermon below) Lay members of the Diocese read the lessons and Gospel and administered the Chalice.

Following the service, a buffet lunch was enjoyed before participants returned to all parts of the Diocese.



Argyll Ministry Service: Eve of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

EM Forster's wonderful novel *Howard's End* is chiefly known for a catchphrase from Chapter 22: '**Only connect!**' The whole quotation goes as follows:

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted. Live in fragments no longer.

Alas for you, that is *not* the whole of my sermon - but it *is* the substance.

Only connect. Today we have listened to two accounts of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God; two very different descriptions of God's ways of working. Luke's rendering is flamboyant, lengthy; a brilliant picture full of fiery sparks of red, tongues of flame, noise and passion.

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

'Suddenly', 'rush', 'violent', 'filled', 'entire': this is hyperbole at its glorious best.

This is powerful, earthshattering stuff - just as the prophet Joel had foretold. An account full of colour and noise which rises to an explosive crescendo: from the anxious muted hush of the believers as they huddle together in one place, devoting themselves to constant prayer, through the sibilant noise of the wind and the crackling of the flames of fire, on into the noise of the liberated tongues of the believers as they speak in a myriad of languages and the answering babble of the mystified onlookers, and culminating in Peter's shouted sermon. This is a scene from a blockbuster movie, Hollywood style, full of glitz and glory.

This is what lives enthused by the Spirit look and sound like. They don't stay rooted in one place; they don't hide their lights under a bushel. Instead they emerge from their place of concealment, their place of sanctuary and private prayer, and enter the public square, opening themselves up to the threat of ignominy and calumny, offering themselves as agents of God's message. These lives erupt with such a noise that a crowd gathers, eager to know what's causing this explosion of joy.

Questions tumble from the onlookers' lips:

Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? What does this mean?

And that day about 3000 people were added to the number of believers.

Only connect. Only connect the prose and the passion. Yes, today we have also heard some lambent prose; John's concise, quiet, mysterious picture of the bestowal of the Spirit. Five verses, few verbs. Jesus does not shatter the stillness in that upper room, behind those locked doors, amongst that fear. Instead he simply utters a benediction of peace, identifies himself and breathes on them: *Receive the Holy Spirit.*

Outside the window, footsteps fall into the ordinary night; the evening hush is hardly stirred; no-one notices. This is a deeply interior account. And yet for the disciples all has changed, changed utterly - for they have received the power to offer and withhold forgiveness, the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

This is what lives enthused by the Spirit look and sound like. Sustained by close contact with their Lord and Teacher, in touch with his life and his words, filled with his inspiration, alive with a quiet joy. And bearing his promise of forgiveness to a tired and weary world.

To each of us is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. By that same Spirit, all of us are called in different ways to a multitude of ministries, a variety of ways of sharing God's love with this world which is filled with seekers and searchers no less than was Jerusalem on that first Pentecost, filled with people eager to ask questions, to understand the meaning of it all. Oh yes, the sneering and the ridicule continue, the jibes reverberate, but they are often only a veneer masking a deep desire to understand, a vulnerable questing, a thirsty longing for the living water. The world out there is waiting for our sharing of the glorious new wine; waiting to hear the gospel articulated in terms that each can understand: the healing touch of pastoral care for those who are sick or sad, the balm of liturgy well conducted for those whose souls need lifting to the heights, the sacramental signs of music well played or sung, of flowers beautifully arranged, for those whose lives are starved of beauty or order.

Each of us has some gift to offer, something that is uniquely ours; there are to this day *varieties of gifts, varieties of services, varieties of activities* - and you and I are blessed to be part of a Church which recognises this abundance, acknowledges it and affirms it; releases it into the world for the common good. That is what we are here to celebrate today and it is good to be here.

But if we are to serve Christ in the world by these means, if we are truly to recognise Him in the lost and the sad, to meet the longing and the searching of this weary world, then we must **connect the prose and the passion**. Passionate intensity

alone will not do. Above my desk are some words written by the Cistercian religious Thomas Merton in the 1960's; the gendered writing is of that era:

He who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love will not have anything to give others. He will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of his own obsessions, his aggressiveness, his ego-centred ambition, his delusions about ends and means, his doctrinaire prejudices and ideas.

This striking piece of polemic comes at the end of a chapter in a book entitled *Contemplation in a World of Action* in which Merton argues that all Christian action must emanate from the depths of one's relationship with God, must be intimately bound up in contemplation. That dialectical relationship between contemplation and action that must not be broken if we are to be true to the Gospel. If we fail to keep the two in balance, if we separate our action from our listening to God, then all that results is a busy activism which is self-centred, deluded and far from the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

Lay and ordained leadership alike need to be predicated upon the ancient disciplines of prayer and contemplation, of silence and stillness, of scriptural reading and diligent devotion, of Eucharistic celebration. Predicated upon sitting and waiting - as the disciples did in both our readings. We too must find our 'one place', our 'upper room', and retire in there to await inspiration and guidance, surrendering our lives anew to God's service.

Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted. Live in fragments no longer. Join the activist and the reflector in your being together, and serve Christ from that union. The very phrase which underpins this, your Year 4 of the diocesan missional strategy, - Reflection for Action - is symbolic of that unity. Be reflective practitioners. Neither reflectors who simply go round and round the hermeneutical cycle until the cows come home, or practitioners who continue to do as they've always done without review or revision so that nothing changes or improves, but a conjunction of the two: people who align themselves with God's purpose by being attentive and analytical, so that their actions are consciously oriented towards God's will.

Jesus came and found the disciples in fragments; so *He stood among them and said, "Peace be with you". Then he said to them again, "Peace be with you.*

Jesus calms the disciples; he takes time to do so, repeating his blessing of peace. Then he commissions them to be God's agents in the world. Just as he has been the Deacon of God, the one sent by the Father into the world God loves so very much, so he sends them out in mission, into that same ministry of service and evangelism, care and proclamation. And he equips them with that same Spirit which had anointed Him, breathing on them and bequeathing the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon *you*; he has anointed *you* to bring good news to the poor. He has sent *you* to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. *You* are his hands and his feet in Argyll today, sent in the power of the Spirit to be agents of God's love and care, proclaimers of his words of mercy and grace forgiveness. Go then with that passion in your hearts and your souls, but stay connected at all times to Him who is source and final purpose, through prayer and contemplation, silence and stillness, scriptural reading and diligent devotion, that you may be led into all truth and your various ministries be faithful and obedient.

So let us pray for the ministries of each one of us in the body of Christ, whatever that calling to service might be, that we may be passionate agents of God and faithful conduits of his peace to all amongst whom we live and work. Let us pray through a variety of gifts, *the prose and the passion*, word as well as song, joining in with the latter as you feel moved. Let us pray: Loving God we pray that the

ministries of each one of us may be infused by the fire of the Spirit bringing us fully alive and alight with passion for the Gospel. We pray that the ministries of each one of us may be inspired by the still small voice of calm, attentive in the stillness and obedient to your calling. So we pray for the grace of obedience in our ministries singing *'Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do'*.

In the name of God, Creator Redeemer and Sustainer Amen

Canon Anne Tomlinson 7th June, 2104

Pilgrimage to Ensay

When Christ Church, Ensay, was gifted to our Diocese, it was on condition that at least two services a year are held there, and traditionally, one is taken by the Bishop. So on Saturday, 31st May, 25 people from Harris, Lewis, the Uists and Oban arrived at the Leverburgh slip to take the rib across to the tiny offshore island of Ensay – uninhabited, except for sheep.



The small stone chapel – Christ Church, Ensay



Bishop Kevin and Rev Daniel Davies prepare for the service

Some brought wellingtons 'just in case'. However, we didn't need to worry; the thoughtful folk from Sea Trek brought a small dinghy with them on the rib, so that we could transfer to the dinghy and arrive on the island with dry feet. We were dropped off on the beach and in bright sunshine, walked up over the flower-strewn machair to the tiny church. Chris Merlin, longtime warden of the old chapel on the island, Bishop Kevin, and Daniel Davis from Harris set up the chapel in preparation for the service. Our group just filled the small stone building for the beautiful and moving communion service.

David Murray has carved a beautiful cross from the old door of the chapel, which was going rotten, and he has constructed a new door which includes an engraved mouse – the signature of Robert Thompson who made the original door. No-one knows why such a famous carver should have made a door for this wee island chapel.

David Murray (L) with Chris Merlin (Warden, R)

The day passed all too quickly, but I was able to walk across the island to look at the remains of the old 12th century chapel – the 'new' chapel was built because the old chapel was over-subject to wind-erosion of the machair, and old burials surface periodically as the sand is blown off them.



Protection Training



A dozen folk from around the Diocese met in Lochgilphead for a training session provided by Daphne Audsley, Assistant Provincial Officer for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. The attendees were a mixed bunch with varied levels of experience which resulted in lively discussion over case studies.

Attending such courses increases our knowledge and understanding of the subject and underlines our commitment to the care of all vulnerable Congregational members. The next course is on 8th November in Oban. Please contact the Diocesan Office for further information.

General Synod 2014, A Personal Reflection

This year's Synod was not my first, but it was certainly not a question of *déjà vu*. The new venue in beautiful St Paul's and St George's in the centre of Edinburgh brought substantial beneficial change, I thought. Of course the participation of the host church's highly professional musicians enhanced the Synod's worship immensely. But the most important feature for me was the fact that everybody could be seated in groups of six or seven round tables, and this without dispersing to scattered rooms and spaces, as had happened in previous years when, for example, the Indaba process was needed. No, the whole proceedings took place with the members of the Synod at their tables. In this way people got to know and to spend time with other people from outside their usual territory, which meant real communication on a personal level was enhanced. Many are inhibited from speaking before a large audience, but most people feel able to talk more freely and intimately round a table than speaking to a hundred and odd people through a microphone, with a strict time limit! Of course, public debate and presentations and speeches before the whole Synod still took up much of the agenda, but when it came to the consideration of potentially tricky topics such as same sex relations, talking within the group round your table allowed proper discussion of such deeper and highly personal issues without confrontation or hostility. The aim was to emulate the tone of the Cascade Conversation held on the subject at Pitlochry in April, of which we were shown a video. My experience was that the conversation round the tables in Edinburgh proved sensitive, intelligent and above all respectful, whatever people's potentially opposing views might be. In the future, there will be conventional debates, and votes will have to be taken at Synod, but in the meantime the effect of such procedures is to bring people together in respect and understanding, so that the Christian love and unity of the church does not risk being broken, whatever final decisions are taken. Of course many other things took place at Synod, but I wanted to give a personal view of what I found most new and important. I think the Holy Spirit was palpably at work this June in Edinburgh.

John Roberts

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.

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New Diocesan Blog

The Congregational Development Officer has begun blogging on the Diocesan website! Do visit the [page](#) and add your comments.

Alison says: 'The space gives me an opportunity to offer my reflections on the events of our diocese from my perspective, to share any resources I've found useful and, I hope, to start a few conversational hares running. The [newsletter](#) reports on the main diocesan events, so unless I've something in particular to say about them, I won't major on them in this blog.'

Alison Clark

Godly Play Discovery Day

Margaret and Alex from Godly Play Scotland came to Oban to run a Discovery Day. The participants were able to see and experience a Godly Play session and find out a little about what Godly Play is and how it works.

It was a great day, professionally and lovingly presented.



Reflection for Action

The Reflection for Action leaflets are now circulating. If you haven't picked one up yet, ask your rector, leader or vestry member. The April newsletter carried an item on what's on offer and the leaflet can be found on the website. Click resources and links and find it under 'articles etc'.

Our Year of Reflection for Action invites us both individually and as congregations to deepen our spiritual practice to underpin and direct our mission. We can undertake this in a variety of ways – it's up to us. On the leaflet, you will find three possible activities for which the diocese can offer materials and leaders:- Theological Reflection, Quiet Days and Retreats and Spiritual Accompaniment.

Alison Clark

Columbatide in Mid Argyll

*Bound to Colum, while I speak,
may the bright one guard me in the seven heavens;
when I go to the road of fear,
I'm not lordless: I have strength.*

*Colum Cille, Colum who was, Colum who will be,
constant Colum, not he the protection to be lamented.
Colum we sing, until death's tryst, after, before,
by poetry's rule, which gives welcome to him we serve.
I pray a great prayer to Eithne's son - better than treasure -
my soul to his right hand, to heaven, before the world's people.*

So sang Beccán mac Luigdech, saint, poet and hermit, one of Columba's monks who died in 677 on Rum or Iona. And St Columba's, Poltalloch joined him in giving thanks for his patron's entry into heaven this Columbatide. Oban Cathedral Choir came down to Kilmartin to sing Evensong, directed by Norman Nicholson. It was a great delight to see the choir stalls filled and to savour the odour of

sanctity around the Magnificat. The normally small congregation provided a team of crucifer and thurifer, and the Revd Dr Michael Kitchener preached on the text of the saint's nettle soup. That dish was outdone by less austere refreshments, bringing all to a happy and hazy conclusion. The vale of Crinan blessed us with its achingly beautiful aspect.

Fr Simon

Bishop Rings in the Change at St John's Cathedral, Oban



Bishop Kevin with Lucy Gray

The Bishop of Argyll and The Isles, The Rt Revd Kevin Pearson, blessed the new donations box in St. John's Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday. The new eye-catching box, designed and created by sculptress Lucy Gray, was created almost entirely from a pulpit found in the cathedral's storage area.

Lucy said, 'in this commission I have preserved the exquisite craftsmanship of the original structure and echoes of its history while breathing new life into it'.

Part of that new life is the bell that rings out a 'Thank you' on receipt of donations.

Very Rev Nicki McNelly

Bishop's Lent Appeal

Last call for contributions to the Bishop's Lent Appeal. So far we have raised just under £2,800. Please make cheques payable to "The Episcopal Diocese of Argyll & The Isles" and send them to the Diocesan Office asap.

FORWARD
Safeguarding rights & dignity

Request for Prayers

Dear parish priest

My husband is the rector of the Astwick Vale benefice in the Diocese of Peterborough.

One of our young people, Angus Leigh, has today embarked on an epic voyage kayaking from Cardiff to Inverness to raise money for the RNLI.

<https://www.facebook.com/cardifftoinverness?fref=nf>

He is doing this all under his own initiative and will be camping and living on bears and pasta!!!!

I am not sending this out to ask for any donations but hoped that if you have a coastal parish you could pray for him and if you see him maybe you could offer him a drink or a meal etc.

Kind regards

Heather Dommett

CONTACT US

The office is staffed
9.30am-2.30pm
Mon-Thurs

St Moluag's Diocesan Centre,
Croft Avenue Oban PA34 5JJ

Telephone 01631 570870

Fax 01631 570411

Email:
office@argyll.anglican.org

Administrator:
Dr Sue Pollard

Who's who

Bishop: The Rt Rev'd Kevin Pearson
Telephone : 01631 570870 (office) 562617 (home)
bishop@argyll.anglican.org

PA: Audrey Walton

Dean: The Very Rev'd Andrew Swift
Telephone : 01369 702444
dean@argyll.anglican.org

Provost: The Very Rev'd Nicki McNelly
Telephone : 01631 562323
ProvostOban@argyll.anglican.org

Diocesan Secretary: Dr Peter Kemp
Telephone : 01631 570870
secretary@argyll.anglican.org

Diocesan Treasurer: Jean Ainsley
Tel: 01631 567007
jean@ainsleysmith.co.uk

Diocesan Learning & Congregational Development Officer:
Alison Clark
Tel: 07974 744156 or 01700 500489
alisonclark52@gmail.com

Communications

NEWSLETTER

The August Newsletter (Please remember to send information to the Diocesan Office) – material to be received at the Diocesan Office (e-mail above) by Monday **28th July, 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.

Thinking about the Scottish Independence Referendum on 18th September?

The SCOTTISH CHURCHES' PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE (SCPO), which is supported by the Scottish Episcopal Church, has produced Referendum Hustings Guidance which is now available to view on the SCPO website, where it can be downloaded in PDF format.

<http://www.actsparl.org/briefing-papers/referendum-hustings-guidance.aspx>

Diocesan Diary

23rd August	Reflection for Action Visitors' Meeting
25th October	Installation of Rev Hugh Lee as Honorary Canon of Cumbrae
27th-30th October	Diocesan Retreat
8th November	Protection Training
15th November	Lay Leadership Day