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Diocesan Synod Eucharist

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Rev Canon Sr Clare and Bishop Kevin

Bishop Kevin's Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen

From that gospel of Matthew which we have just read:

Jesus said "Follow me"

Jesus said "Follow me"

"Follow me" the call of the disciple but to what – well, I will show you.

The mirror of faith. When we hold up the mirror of faith to our own lives then that mirror of faith allows us to see our own life in Jesus life.

But more than that, much more than that, when we hold up the mirror of faith we see Jesus life in ours.

Are you tempted, are you lonely, are you disappointed, are you frustrated, are your friends a disappointment. Jesus speaks and speaks very clearly, as you hold up the mirror of faith Jesus says

"Follow me"

That is what it is to see Jesus, when we begin to see our own story in Jesus story then we hold the mirror of faith to our own lives and we begin to understand how, where, when, to enter more deeply into God's life, and we begin: Living our Vision of love which helps us make sense of who and what we are because God is love. Love which helps us make sense of the world in which we live, of our experience of inequality, injustice, prejudice. That is what living the vision of God's love and building that Kingdom of Love in Argyll and The Isles is all about. We need to feel, experience God's love even if that feeling that experience is of absence, longing,

intellectual doubt and emotional confusion.

That is what the great Shema of the book of Deuteronomy is all about – You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul.

Hold up the mirror of faith, indeed hold up the mirror every morning and repeat those words and see Our Lord Jesus Christ in the story of your day as it unfolds, hear Jesus words "Follow me", as you attempt Living our Vision of love which we feel and know in affection and warmth or its absence. And yet love, which speaks to us in peace, fulfilment, understanding and acceptance, that is what it is for the disciple to hear Jesus call , "follow me "and then in the glorious words of Philippians to enter the "same mind as was in Christ Jesus". But beware because the disciple who hears "Follow me" the disciple who finds the fact, the fact that Jesus Christ was born as we are to show God is with us, the mirror of faith allows us to see our story in His but beware because members of any congregation, may recognise their story in Jesus story, a member may hear Jesus "follow me" - and they may think – this could be good.

But the disciple , the disciple has the courage to turn the mirror of faith over to the magnifying side and the pimples and the wrinkles and the spots and the scars are all there magnified in the reflection, living our vision of God's love acceptance, understanding, fulfilment , we see in the mirror of faith the reflection of our lives and what by tradition, those spots and wrinkles, we would rather be without, what by tradition is known as sin, we see very clearly in the mirror of faith – we have to come to terms with those bits of ourselves we would rather be without.

Isn't that what Lent is all about for the disciple living the vision by holding up the mirror of faith and seeing the temptations, the wilderness experience, all deep, deep, deep within ourselves. Through which, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit allows us to see and to accept, living our vision – that the same mind is in me as was in Christ Jesus.

That glorious epistle read every Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, those days in which we see Jesus exalted and then tired, confident on entry into Jerusalem and doubt, doubt, doubt, questions, questions, questions in Gethsemane, living our vision. The mirror of faith, we look and we see, see so many of our doubts, questions. Remember Jesus said "Follow me" to Peter and Peter followed and he was going to conquer the world. Until his fear, his fear that looking in the mirror of faith it was not as he thought life with God should be and he denied Jesus. And Jesus turned and looked at him.

The disciple holds up the mirror of faith to their life in this season of lent and we are rarely impressed at what we see but when we hear "follow me" remember Peter who denied, Jesus really made something of him.

And yet, how did Peter feel when he heard from the women, the women remember, showed no fear on Calvary, the women laid him in the tomb. The tomb of absence, the absence of God is something we all face, the tomb of loneliness, depression, misunderstanding but hold up the mirror of faith and we see in all those things God is with us that is the importance of the tomb, that is how God made something of Peter. That is what living our vision is all about.

More people intuitively understand the mirror of faith than we realise. What they intuitively understand is, there are no easy answers. And in the dark and damp of the tomb, it requires too much commitment, thought, love – that is self-giving, what the psalmist called Holiness, the Holiness of integrity which comes in the light and life of the story of Jesus resurrection.

Resurrection which the disciple sees, knows, feels, even if only by its absence. Sees, knows, feels every day and in every way as you, hold up the mirror of faith, feel Jesus beside in the tomb, hear the words of Jesus life and death – God is with us – feel the peace, fulfilment, understanding, acceptance that is God's grace – God's love, in our lives, living our vision as disciples – Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets for us to share the good news.

+Kevin, Argyll & The Isles

Diocesan Conference and Synod—A Lay Perspective

“What are you doing here?” “Thought you weren’t a member of Synod any more ...” But I was there, in Oban once again, for the pre-Synod day and the Synod itself, and I knew fine what had brought me. Meeting like that over two days reminds me of what an extraordinary diocese this is, as friends we only see once a year appear from far-flung islands and down difficult roads and embrace each other with a warmth you’d be pushed to find in other business-orientated gatherings.

And in a way that was the theme that carried this table-leader through the two days. We were looking forward to the start of the next 5-year plan, a process through which we will all explore how membership of the church can deepen so that we can more fully take up our role as disciples of Christ. How do we make the journey from membership to discipleship?

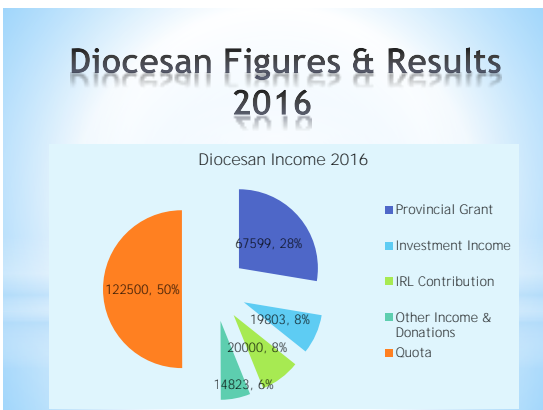
What struck me yet again was how much we actually rely on one another in our search for growth and depth. Many of us realised, not for the first time, that experiences from outwith the diocese can present problems to people whose churches are not in urban or densely populated areas - can in fact seem irrelevant, if one is brave enough to reach that conclusion instead of becoming dispirited. It was certainly in discussion - and I mean real discussion, not idle gossip - that I personally felt that real progress was made, that the Holy Spirit found a way between the words and illuminated the thinking of people who were engaging with one another. It became apparent to me that if the right questions were asked, people became lit up - a good starting point, surely, for discipleship?



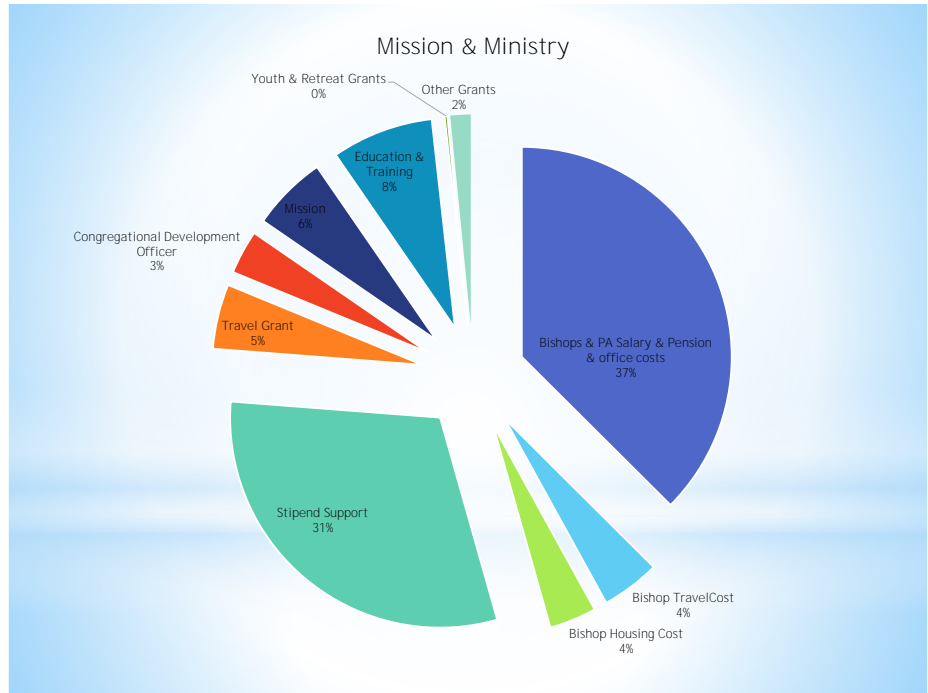
Rev Jane Ross, keynote speaker “Living Our Vision — Membership to Discipleship”

Between the Tuesday discussions and the actual Synod on Wednesday, we had the joy of seeing Sr Clare Lockhart made a Canon of the Cathedral during the Eucharist, and the evening together over dinner. The same table as won the vanishing Easter Egg at last year’s quiz secured another victory, thanks to the insatiable telly-watching habits of one or two of its members; this year there was to be no doubt as to where the chocolate prize ended up as it was ceremonially smashed and eaten by the victors...

And then there was Synod. Most of the reports were taken as having been read; the Treasurer Jean Ainsley did her usual job of making finances accessible even to the numerically challenged;



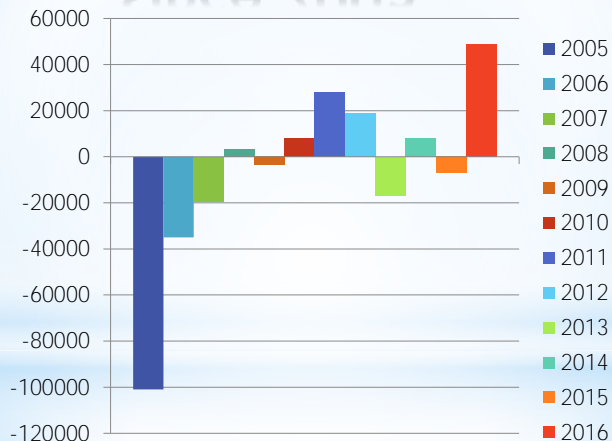
A Lay Perspective



Reasons to be cheerful in Argyll & The Isles

- * The Diocese is solvent and within budget allowing for extra money to go to Mission & Ministry and to ensure that quota does not rise further than inflation.
- * We are stronger together as a Diocese supporting each other, we do not have to struggle alone as individual charges.
- * Island Retreats Ltd has turned the best profit ever and continues to contribute to the Diocese and to mission outreach.
- * We have the tools to help ourselves we just have to make them work.
- * **And remember we are lucky to live here and be part of Argyll & The Isles**

Island Retreats results since 2005



Island Retreats & The Diocese

- * There are over 1500 visitors staying at Iona and Cumbrae each year.
- * Mission every day at the retreat houses.
- * Contribution of £20,000 every year to Diocese towards mission & ministry.
- * But a heavy and potentially dangerous burden on a small Diocese, must always be vigilant.

the bishop was on sparkling form and we heard from Alison Clark about the experience of refugees living on Bute. (See article following)



The afternoon session was taken up by discussion of the proposed changes to Canon 31, the marriage canon. Bishop and Dean did a fine job of setting the tone for the discussion, which then took place round the tables. Each table reported back on the results of their discussion before voting took place. The results overall resulted in a 2/3 majority in favour of the new wording of the canon, which one group described as "a well-crafted gift to the Anglican Communion". (All the results from the tables are available on the Diocesan Website (www.argyll.anglican.org)).

It was then that I realised just how many of us were there because we wanted to be, as opposed to attending out of duty - and noted how enthusiastically and carefully the non-voters had contributed to the discussion. It's a demanding occasion for many participants - in terms of travel, cost, energy, emotion - and I find it encouraging that so many people take that on.

Canon 31 will now proceed to its second reading at General Synod in June.

And as for us? Here's to the new stretch of our journey to full discipleship...

C.M.M.

Diocesan Conference

Living Our Vision: Called From Membership to Discipleship



The keynote speaker for the Diocesan Conference was Rev Jane Ross, Rector of St Ninian's, Prestwick, Convenor of Missional Leadership Team (Glasgow and Galloway Diocese) and Convenor of the Provincial Mission Board. Isobel MacNaughtan assisted by facilitating discussions.

Following presentations from Rev Jane Ross, within their table groups, attendees were asked to define "Discipleship" as opposed to membership and then in slightly different groups to suggest how to become disciples. The results are shown overleaf.

What is Discipleship?

- Open to God and the World
- Apprenticed to the teachings and life of Jesus—learning & living by injunction to love God & others.
- Influence by example

Thrown Obedience to God in whatever situation you find yourself in.

Following Christ together as his apprentices (not on our own)

—cf. Dukas and Mickey Mouse)

Discipleship is discovering one's inner awareness guided by the Holy Spirit which radiates out to others

Discipleship:
Keeping on
Keeping on,
Focused, in step with God
And never really arriving..

A disciple is someone who knows she hasn't yet arrived;
A pilgrim on the journey with Christ, Lover of our soul.

" A disciple is someone who lets the clergy say what a disciple is!"

A person who is abiding in, and expressing, the love, power & presence of God
Through using their * gifts in the service of others, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.*
* where the rubber hits the road!
* producing the fruits of the Spirit!

How do we become Disciples?

HOW??

Just do it! Believe it! Live it!
Encourage—project fear never works
Small steps
By example
Confidence—do it in twos
Go to pubs (with your dog)

- Getting the community into the church
- Doing things which are not church related
- Wear a badge in church or during social activities to identify ourselves as church members
- Be known in activities outwith church as a person who is a church member
- Get people into church through other group activities such as ecumenical services, allowing groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, to use the church during the week

As individuals & in the Church Community

- Pray
- Learn/Bible Study
- Encourage, support & respect each other
- Have confidence it's possible (faith & hope)
And responsive to/connected to the community—relationship

Continuing Ministerial Development for All

- 'Walking in God's love and giving it away'
- ⇒ Growing in Christ
 - ⇒ Taking the Gospel out of our buildings and into our Communities
 - ⇒ Working and learning together to grow as a Community.

Spending time in order to listen to & get to know each other being alert to needs & listening to the Holy Spirit

turn up
keep it small
leave them alone
(sometimes)

Be prepared to step out of your comfort zone

Becoming a disciple is learning to be and become fully human as Christ is.



Isobel MacNaughtan facilitates discussion

Booklist

Cray, Graham. *Disciples & Citizens; A Vision for Distinctive Living*, Inter-Varsity Press UK 2007

Cray, Graham. *Making Disciples in Fresh Expressions of Church*, Fresh Expressions Ltd UK 2013

Croft, Steven. *Jesus People; What the Church Should Do Next*, Church House Publishing UK 2012

Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways; Reactivating the Missional Church*, Brazos Press USA 2006

Ireland, Mark & Booker, Mike. *Making New Disciples; Exploring the Paradoxes of Evangelism*, SPCK UK 2015

Morgan, Alison. *Following Jesus: The Plural of Disciple is Church*, ReSource UK 2015

Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship; Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, IVP Books 2016 Rainer, Thom S. *I am*

a Church Member; Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference, B&H Publishing USA 2013

Watson, David. *Discipleship*, Hodder & Stoughton UK 1981

Williams, Rowan. *Being Disciples; Essentials of the Christian Life*, SPCK UK 2016

The Church of England, Renewal & Reform GS2056, *Setting God's People Free*, 2017

ACC, *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*, 2016

Diocesan Synod

Bishop Kevin's Report to Synod

After dinner, last night we had a quiz and in thinking of how to present my report at this Synod, I thought I would use my 3 Ms presentation – Mission: Ministry: Money

But as I introduce each section I will give you a quiz question of a quotation from English literature, which helps to focus our thoughts.

And so, I begin with Mission – of which novel is this the opening sentence?

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven , we were all going direct the other way'

Thus, begins *A Tale of Two Cities*, by Dickens. The next sentence ends

'In other words, things in general were settled forever' which is the complete opposite of what Mission is all about

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times – think about it and most of us can resonate with that statement and that statement surely applies to any of our congregations meeting for worship on any Sunday morning. For some people, it is the best of times, for others it is the worst of times, and yet both are part of an experience of the living God.

And when you recognise that fact, when you hold up the mirror of faith to your own life and experience, then you begin to understand who what and why Jesus Christ is, was and will be. To see your own reflection, to see your own story in the story of Jesus Christ then faith helps you make sense of the best of times and the worst of times.

Another way of putting it is to say faith gives you an interpretative framework for your own life and experience.

Jesus life showed us that love can never be torn from us, taken from us, it will always be the power and the force which brings Heaven to earth. That's what Jesus life, death and resurrection is all about, that is our experience of the living God, that is 'Living our Vision' of building God's kingdom in our Diocese.

'**Living our Vision**' – it remains my great ambition that in the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, every member of every congregation if asked in the Post Office on Monday morning – why do you go to that cold, dilapidated, damp, funny old Church on a

Sunday morning – my ambition and hope is that every member of our Diocese will say ‘because there, I have an experience of the living God’ that is the response of the disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, there we **are** living our vision.

It sounds so simple and yet the simple, real, statements about our faith; we are only able to make those statements when we are fed and nourished by God’s Word in scripture and receiving God’s grace in the sacrament of Holy Communion. We have such a Vision of God’s love and understanding and care in Word and Sacrament.

In our Liturgy – think of it – we act out the fact that it is the best of times, it is the worst of times. When we feel, feel, the fact that in Word and Sacrament we encounter the living God then numbers, buildings, money cease to worry us so much. And when in living our vision, **we** feel God’s presence then mysteriously, wonderfully, many of the practical issues cease to have a stranglehold over us, we communicate a sense of excitement, enthusiasm, of Living our Vision in God’s presence and the other issues resolve themselves or we see them in a different perspective and they cease to be so important.

Mission is an attitude of mind, that’s why the strap line of the ‘Living our Vision’ programme is ‘from membership to discipleship’. We are not just members of a club who meet in expensive buildings on a Sunday morning. We are disciples of Jesus Christ, who experience God’s grace. Grace which means we can grow as people in the power of the Holy Spirit and we expect, expect, things to happen because we are Living our Vision.

In the last year we have had two ordinations to the priesthood in our Diocese, Rosemary Bungard on Skye and Elaine Garman on Bute. They were both spectacular occasions but on both occasions, there were small incidents which showed: Here are congregations who can say we are ‘Living the Vision’ because the incidents I’m recounting couldn’t, wouldn’t just happen.

On Skye, which has more denominations that I have fingers and toes and to be honest, woman’s ministry isn’t even acknowledged in most of them. For the ordination, most of the churches in Portree were represented, well I can have this effect But in a packed church almost all of the congregation received Holy Communion and in talking to one of the leaders of an evangelical community centre congregation afterwards – he said ‘there was such a sense of God’s presence, it was so exciting I literally couldn’t stay in my seat.

Now 50 years ago, I couldn’t have told you that story because it was against Canon Law. **But** on an occasion of a Bishop celebrating women’s ministry, a woman priest, wonderfully, Living our vision is a reality.

On Bute for Elaine’s ordination the deal was that the ordination on Saturday was in Bute and on Sunday morning she would celebrate the Eucharist for the first time in Dunoon, so I said I would stay on Bute and I thought it will never work because Dunoon will come to Bute on Saturday and Bute will go to Dunoon on Sunday. But they didn’t. Two congregations working together know who they are and are mature in saying we are living **our** vision.

On the Sunday morning, I thought, it’ll be like the Sunday after Christmas, because it’s only really the season ticket holders you expect – but they were all there and in the quietness and afterglow there was an experience of God which remains with me.

And there were some visitors, one of whom said to me as he left – I wasn’t here yesterday but I feel the joy and the hope today – ‘Living Our Vision’ as disciples of Jesus Christ we can lift the veil between Heaven and earth.

And so, **to Ministry** and the quiz question

‘The past is a foreign country – they do things differently there’

L P Hartley’s the Go Between

In terms of the Scottish Episcopal Church – the past is a foreign country where the difference is – more people came to **my** church, **they** gave more money and

they brought **their** very quiet children to sit and listen and learn from **the** leader who was a clergy man. And Bishops were treated like citizens of the USA and all those who do not speak proper English. They are of limited intelligence and if you just speak more slowly and more loudly, then when He say No **you** will teach him that He meant: Yes.

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there because memory, memory is a long way from what the disciples of Jesus mean by using the word 'Remembrance.' Remembrance is part of the experience of the living God. Because in the narrative, the past memory becomes the present reality and that gives us future hope.

Past memory. Present reality. Future Hope. In the Eucharist Jesus says 'Do this in remembrance of me'. So there in the narrative is the memory. Jesus promised – I am with you always – so that narrative becomes in bread and wine a present reality and it is that reality which gives us future hope. Gives us an experience of the living God but also lifts the veil between heaven and earth.

That is what the Hebrew concept of Remembrance is all about. One of my favourite examples is the Exultet, the Easter proclamation which by tradition ushers in Eastertide. In that proclamation, the Deacon sings, 'This is the night when first **you** brought **your** people dry shod through the Red Sea.'

Last Holy Week and Easter I was with the congregation of the West Highland region. On Easter day Duror Church was packed in way it hadn't been for years, there were visitors, there were children. We began with a very simple vigil and the Easter proclamation. There are three reasons to tell you this story

The WHR is basically one congregation with 6 buildings but by meeting and worshiping together, they are growing, spiritually and indeed numerically. They experience the living God, not just as a memory of how things were in the past.

Easter 2016 in WHR actually proved that our liturgy of Word and Sacrament really does speak for itself. It really is an opportunity to offer visitors an experience of the living God and show how disciples of Jesus are living our vision. This is what we have to offer. And

You don't have to have vast numbers of people, or be the Cathedral, to offer in the liturgy of Word and Sacrament an experience of the living God that so many people crave. What you need is a group of disciples who understand that liturgy and scripture they seek to offer to others. Disciples who are prepared to meet to share scripture and to build up a relationship of trust which shares feelings and experience of God in the group.

The inter regnum in WHR is now approaching the end of its second year. We expect to interview two candidates at the end of the month having already interviewed and not appointed. And what that shows is God's time is not our time and that a period of inter regnum may encourage good things to happen, which is what has happened in WHR.

The WHR has taken a lot of my time which has limited the time I have had to visit other places, which I hope will change this year as we make an appointment so I can travel to other places.

One of the things we all live with in the Diocese is the challenge of geography. From the Butt of Lewis via Fort William to Dunoon is a lot of miles and even more water. It always amuses me that even those in the Central Belt, never mind further south. People look at the mileage and then calculate timing based on driving along the M8. We all know the facts and the vagaries of living with single track roads, ferries, storm warnings Which give another dimension to travel.

That is a prelude to explaining that I do also have significant Provincial responsibilities as Bishop, which someone asked me about recently and told me that I should say more in the Diocese about the Provincial aspect of life. One of the things I would say at this point is that my contribution as Diocesan Bishop, is made on behalf of the whole Diocese and because of some of the things I am involved in, it does help the Diocesan voice in the Province. And what is true for me, is also true for clergy and laity who serve on Provincial Boards and committees and together

Argyll and the Isles makes a significant contribution to Provincial life.

From my own perspective, I am the convenor of the Scottish Episcopal Institute Council, which is responsible for the theological and practical training of clergy and Lay readers throughout the Province. The Council has made an incredible impact on selection and training in the last 3 years. We now have a student cohort of 24, there are 8 ordinands training for full time ministry and we will have a glut of curates next year.

I am also a member of the Provincial Standing Committee which is responsible for the work of General Synod between meetings. It is the executive committee of the Synod, and handles a lot of business. At the moment, we're looking for a way forward for the Province to become more fit for purpose in the 21st Century, which is very exciting if somewhat exhausting. I mention this because our Diocese has a significant contribution to make and significant insights to offer.

All our Bishops have representative roles and among mine this year will be to represent SEC at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Elspeth and I also represented the SEC at the joyous occasion of the Consecration of the first woman Bishop in Wales. I also attended a 3 day meeting in Oxford of all the Bishops of the UK.

Looking ahead – the Bishop of St Andrews will soon retire which will be the second Episcopal vacancy in the Province. I will be handling the St Andrews vacancy. Loch Tay and the roads through rural Perthshire are not my favourite. In fact, I always think that they make the road for Oban to Lochgilphead look like a dual carriageway. However

Our Diocesan life is nurtured by disciples, lay and ordained, who exercise leadership which in turn is nourished by continuous reflection, learning and development. There are at least 2 Lay Leadership days a year are particularly stimulating for me. The last one and the next one focus on group work equipping individuals and congregations for living the vision and sharing that vision as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Clergy who are members of the Pension Fund meet twice a year to reflect and study together and we are richly blessed in having Canon Anne Dyer of Edinburgh Diocese as our companion during those times.

One aspect of Lay leadership which is often over looked is community involvement; Living the vision as a disciple in a community. Last December Alistair Chisholm was given a BEM and I thank Alistair for all his work on Cumbrae. In my support for the award I highlighted how Alistair had opened up the Cathedral and college to the whole community through his music programme. Andrew our Dean was made Deputy Lieutenant in recognition of this work in the community. Alistair's and Andrew's awards are for living the vision in their communities.

Fr Peter Rice and Fiona will shortly be leaving the Diocese to move nearer family in the South. I would like to thank Peter for his significant contribution to the life of the Diocese and also to thank all the retired clergy who help the Diocese not only live but to flourish.

Talking of flourishing and so to Money

And the third quiz question

Who wrote the novel – The Way We Live Now?

The answer is of course, Anthony Trollope more famous for the Barsetshire Chronicles. But the Way We Live Now has always been one of my favourites, because it explores how love of money may corrupt, which is always an interesting concept for disciples of Jesus – to whom money has to be the sacrament of seriousness.

The sacrament, the outward and visible sign of seriously Living the Vision of building God's Kingdom **and** paying for it, as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In all the literature on helping Churches grow, making new disciples, helping people have an experience of the living God. All church growth material will tell you that the membership church is one in which people will give enough to keep things going and if a roof repair is necessary they will miraculously find enough money to do it.

The Church of disciples will give at a level which actually allows more to be done that simply maintain things as they are. In small congregations that may mean giving so members may attend Diocesan and Provincial events. Congregations may realise their ancient bathroom facilities are holding them back. Bigger congregations realise with a big push they might employ a youth worker, pay for full time ordained leadership. We have examples in this Diocese.

Obviously, I stand here as your Bishop, fully aware of the fact that to have a Bishop is an expensive business but we are a Diocese and an Episcopal Church and I personally take giving and stewardship very seriously. And I am talking about money because the mission and ministry of the church cannot go forward without it. It is the cost of discipleship.

Yes, there must be accountability. Yes, structures can be changed to be more efficient. One of the things that the Scottish Episcopal Church needs to consider is that if the whole of Scotland is to be served, then perhaps a more efficient way of paying the Bishops might be that they are paid centrally. But the actual money used to pay will still have to be raised locally.

Still Elspeth and I visit congregations where there are no gift aid envelopes. Still Charges do not make quinquennial reports an agenda item of importance at vestry meetings. Still Vestries do not explore grant aid from the Province and other sources. This is poor stewardship and especially as we are only trustees of historical resources in the form of buildings.

To paraphrase the Victorian saying: You should leave this world a better place than it was when you entered it. Well, we should leave the buildings we inherit in a better condition than they were when we inherited them.

And we are all responsible because we are the Body of Christ and if one limb is weak, we are all weak.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is the most exciting way of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ invites us to look at the works through God's eyes of love in the best of times and in the worst of times, which is now, because the past is foreign county and love is about the way we live now.

+Kevin, Argyll & The Isles

Syrian Families in Rothesay

At Diocesan Synod I was interviewed by the Dean about my experience of volunteering to support the Syrian families in Rothesay. As there was considerable interest, I'm contributing a blog piece I was invited to write by Justice and Peace Scotland, updated to take account of recent developments.

The first 10 families arrived in early December 2015. These were followed in February 2016 by 5 more families and recently some relatives have been able to join their families. Their joy at being reunited after a long separation is lovely to see, some meeting grandchildren for the first time.

Working with our new residents has been a fascinating and challenging experience.

Argyll & Bute Council asked volunteers to staff a pop-up community centre where the families could meet each other and be contacted by the various supporting agencies. St Andrews RC church here in Rothesay offered the use of their hall. This proved invaluable as a meeting place and for the distribution of the generous donations which flooded in.

The experience has been and continues to be a big learning curve for everyone. Intent on



Living the Vision Displays Syrian Refugees

preparing as best we could by learning about the culture of the Syrians, we quickly realised - what is obvious when you think about it - that our new arrivals did not constitute a homogeneous group. Encouraged not to offer a handshake to the men for example, we found that some cheerfully offered their hand. On matters religious, some are more secular, some more observing.

A few arrived with good English, some with a little, most with none at all. What a challenge when you need to learn even the alphabet! I found it hard to see someone who had run a business in his own country struggling to write his name in an unfamiliar alphabet and working across the page from left to right. Communication is an ongoing challenge, even with improving language skills. After the drop-in centre closed, some of us have continued working with the families, particularly in the area of language support and befriending.

We could only surmise what horrors they might have experienced. Some have spoken about it, some not. What we can know both from the news and from their own accounts is that they live with constant worry about the fate of those left behind. But already four babies have been born to the families, a wonderful sign of new life. One father proudly declared that his baby daughter was a Scottish Syrian.

Most are settling remarkably well, some planning to start businesses, some in training and some volunteering for community projects. A few families have moved south where their particular needs can be met but they left Rothesay very appreciative of the start they had made in the more protected environment where they were known personally to many.

The local community has been welcoming on the whole but there have been some instances of hostility. It is easy to criticise those we may be tempted to label as racist or xenophobic. What this experience has taught me is that so-called 'liberal' attitudes and indeed a Christian theology of inclusiveness should not preclude an honest acknowledgement of the challenges that being 'inclusive' brings. If we are not able to say 'this is difficult' or 'I don't agree with such and such a cultural practice', then either we retreat from debate or we speak in bland terms that slide over the real challenges of cultural diversity.

The SEC is one of a number of denominations and faiths under the umbrella of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees www.sfar.org.uk

Alison Clark St Paul's Rothesay

Living the Vision—Displays by the Charges



Mid Argyll & Arran



St Margaret's Whiting Bay, Arran



Isle of Lewis



St Kieran's, Campbeltown



St Andrew's Congregation, Millport



St John's Cathedral, Oban



St Columba's, Islay

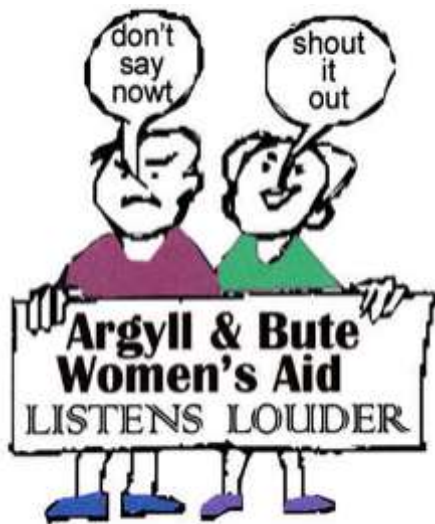


Diocesan Youth Work



Holy Trinity, Dunoon

Bishop's Lent Appeal



One in five women experience physical, mental and/or sexual abuse by someone with whom she is or has been in a relationship. The abuse can impact directly or indirectly on children living in the house and there are links between domestic abuse and all forms of child abuse.

Argyll & Bute Women's Aid and their Children and Young People's Service provides help for women and children. The organisation provides a free and confidential service offering information, support for women and their children (if any) and, if needed, a safe place to stay. The charity operates telephone helplines and have workers located throughout the area. They also have outreach

workers and specialist support workers for children and young people. Their workers will listen, help women to find out where they stand legally and are non-judgemental.

Current projects which Argyll & Bute Women's Aid are raising funds for include the upgrading of their refuge in Rothesay and their website.

Please support Bishop Kevin in his Lent Appeal by saving your loose change (or notes) in a jar throughout Lent (1st March – 16th April) and then bring your donations in to your church on Easter Day, or as soon as possible thereafter. (Cheques made payable to "The Episcopal Diocese of Argyll & The Isles" can be posted to the Diocesan Office.)

Coming home to God

Argyll & The Isles Diocesan Retreat
October 2017

Monday 23—Thursday 26 October 2017

Led by Alison Clark

What does 'home' mean to you? The psalmist says... 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'. During our time together we will explore through scripture and reflection what it is to dwell with God and for God to make a home in our hearts.

Jesus said, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.' John 14:23

This will be a silent retreat punctuated by short talks, a daily celebration of the Eucharist and the opportunity to join in the Cathedral's offices of morning and evening prayer. If you would like more information or if you are making a retreat for the first time and would like to discuss it, do get in touch with Alison or with Bishop Kevin, through the diocesan office 01631 570870.



Alison Clark was formerly congregational development officer of the diocese. She will be available during the three days for individual conversation for anyone who

THE COLLEGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

At The Cathedral of The Isles, Cumbrae

REGISTRATION

The cost of the retreat is £195 per person full board. A deposit of £50 is required on booking. Rooms are allocated on a first come first served basis. En-suite facilities are limited so please only request this if you need it. If you have any special dietary or other needs please include a note to this effect. Thank you.

To Register for the retreat please either:

1. Register online at cathedraloftheisles.org/aatiretreat,
2. Call the College on 01475 530353 with your card details, or
3. Request a form, complete and send it, with a cheque for £50 payable to Island Retreats Ltd, to: Diocesan Retreat, College of The Holy Spirit, College Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae KA28 0HE

GLEN '17



**at Glenalmond College,
Perthshire
Sunday 23rd July—Saturday 29th
July**

Fantastical Beasts

**“Fearfully and wonderfully
made”**

Contact Mary Swift, Diocesan Youth
Officer mary@familyswift.org.uk

Financial help available

Primus Announces Retirement

The Most Rev David Chillingworth has announced that he will retire as Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and as Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church at the end of July this year.

Bishop David was consecrated Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane in 2005 and was elected Primus in 2009.

In his leadership roles in Scotland, Bishop David has consistently encouraged the church to become more missional. In his diocese, he has developed the Casting the Net initiative. In the wider life of the Scottish Episcopal Church, he encouraged the establishment of the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy. He believes that mission is rooted in faith commitment and in a deep understanding of history and context. He has worked to sustain the unity of the church as it addressed human sexuality issues.

Bishop David has also been deeply involved in the life of the Anglican Communion, serving as a member of the Anglican Communion Standing Committee. He has exercised leadership in Continuing Indaba, a movement which attempts to establish 'honest conversation across difference in the cause of mission' across the Anglican Communion. He also serves as the Anglican Co-Chair of the International Dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. His work in the Anglican Communion was recognised by the award of an Honorary Degree from the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee

Ordained in 1976, Bishop David spent the next 29 years in the ministry of the Church of Ireland within Northern Ireland. Much of that time was spent in places which were deeply affected by the Northern Ireland conflict. Throughout that period, particularly as Rector of Seagoe Parish Church in Portadown, he attempted to develop ways in which churches could challenge the sectarianism which powerfully influenced communities and churches in Northern Ireland. During that time, he also served successively as Dean and Archdeacon of Dromore.

Throughout his ministry, Bishop David has given a high priority to communication. He is a regular broadcaster and for over ten years has written a blog at www.bishopdavid.net

In announcing his retirement, Bishop David said "it has been an immense privilege for me to exercise the interwoven ministries of bishop and Primus. The Scottish Episcopal Church has with increasing confidence been developing its mission and taking its place in the evolving story of Scotland.

"As the process for the election of my successor begins – and as God's unfolding future for our church is revealed – I shall continue to hold this church and its leadership in my prayers."

Details of the processes for election of a new bishop and appointment of a Primus can be read at <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/bishops-and-their-dioceses/>

(copied from SEC website)

CONTACT US

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

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Diocesan Diary

Saturday, 3rd June Lay Leadership Day
Thursday, 8th June - Saturday, 10th June General Synod, Edinburgh
Monday, 19th June Island Retreats Board Meeting
Tuesday, 20th June Diocesan Standing Committee and Finance and Property Board Meeting
Diocesan Mission & Ministry Board
Monday, 23rd October -Thursday 26th October Diocesan Retreat at College of the Holy Spirit, Cumbrae

Communications

NEWSLETTER

The March Newsletter (Please remember to send information to the Diocesan Office) – material to be received at the Diocesan Office (e-mail above) by **Friday, 24th February 2017.**

WEBSITES 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.

Department of Culture Media and Sport of Heritage Lottery Funding Review

The review invites submissions via an online questionnaire but seems to presuppose that respondents will themselves have received heritage lottery funding. In the light of that the SEC Buildings Committee felt it would be helpful to alert any congregations which might have received heritage lottery funding in the course of the last few years to the review and encourage them to respond. It is the case that if the Fund continues not to be wholly spent the size of the fund might be reduced in future and therefore the greater the number of respondents to the consultation advocating the need for the fund the better.

The online questionnaire form can be accessed at:-

https://dcms.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe3/form/SV_2isRhaoX4ZsZNqF

A little more information is also available at:-

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/news-features/review-nhmf-and-hlf-launched>

We understand that the review closes on 6 April.