

Dioceesan News

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Readers' talks broaden horizons

Turning the Page was the first ever SEC national Readers' conference. Chris Brett reports on the event, which took place over 7-9 May.

THIS had never happened before: Episcopal Church Readers from all over Scotland gathered for a weekend conference.

We became aware, as the weekend progressed, that we had so much to share and learn from each other. Our horizons were suddenly broadened to give us a Scotland-wide perspective of the ministry of Readers in the SEC. Many of us had never met before, and for most of us our knowledge was confined mainly to our own diocese.

There were 52 Readers present, about half the total. We were blessed by the presence of the Primus, Rt Revd David Chillingworth, and Rt Revd Bob Gillies, Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, plus also several clergy who act as Wardens of Readers in their dioceses. We all became aware of the major resource for ministry represented by the Readers, with their combination of theological training and lay perspective and experience. Readers as a body are able to give valuable input into the development and decision-making of the SEC, and this gathering was able to begin that process.

The conference included many valuable workshops on different aspects of Readers' ministry.

I learnt much about ministry to older people and about bereavement and funeral ministry, both relatively new topics for me. We also had reports on Readers' ministry in other denominations and in the Church of England. The highlights for me, though, were the address from the Primus and the Bible teaching from Dr Christina Baxter. The Primus spoke of the opportunities for growth that go with being a numerically small denomination, and the opportunity for Readers to model the ministry of the laity. The church grows on its margins, and Readers are well placed to work there.

Christina Baxter gave us many insights from Luke 24, and here are three of them. The story that the travellers to Emmaus told Jesus turned out to be his story; we need to be serious about understanding Jesus in the light of the whole Bible; and we need to accept the hospitality of strangers, so we can extend the hospitality of Christ to them.

Chris Brett is a Lay Reader of many years' standing at St Silas in Glasgow. In recent years his day job has been as volunteers manager with Scripture Union.

Cathedral bike blessing first for Scotland

FOR the first time in Scotland cyclists presented their bikes for a blessing at a service last month.

The blessing, at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, on the morning of Saturday 19 June, was given by the Provost, Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth, as part of the Glasgow Cycling Festival. The event was inspired by the Blessing of the Bikes that has been taking place in New York for the past 12 years.

Cyclists lined up in the Cathedral with their bikes for a special liturgy created in the USA. The congregation also remembered cyclists who have died on the roads. The service ended with a great ringing of bicycle bells to fill the Cathedral space.

Kelvin said: "The bicycle is one of the most efficient

machines ever invented by human beings. We will be celebrating the delight that cycling gives people and remembering the fragility of the world which needs ecological means of transport."

Also in this issue . . .

Young peacemakers visit Scotland from the Holy Land

Pilgrim Buddies say it with flowers

Suffering in silence—abuse at home

Silence and tolerance hinder tackling domestic abuse

SOME progress, but an end to toleration and silence are required to make a real difference!

The above statement summarises the 10th year report on Scotland's Domestic Abuse Strategy as discussed at a conference in Edinburgh at the end of April, *ANN GLENESK reports*.

Since the introduction of the strategy, both the reporting and detection of abuse has improved, although police caution that domestic abuse is still vastly under reported. The extent of the problem is illustrated by the statistics for the 2008-2009. There were 53,681 incidents of domestic abuse reported in Scotland. More than half of those – 27,616 – were reported to Strathclyde Police and included 11 homicides, 28 attempted murders, 241 serious assaults, 41 rapes and many incidents of threats, stalking, harassment, extortion and abduction.

The strategy has resulted in a change of approach by the police who have moved from treating incidents in isolation to an intelligence-led approach and by identifying times of greatest risk. This proactive approach prevents abuse

taking place, protects the innocent and has resulted in more offenders being brought to justice.

The introduction of Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court with its two full-time courts, Specialist Sheriffs, Specialist Clerks of Court and Victim Advocacy Project, has proved a success along with the introduction of Assist which coordinates a multi-agency approach that protects and places the abused person at the centre of the process.

TOLERATED

Despite these successes, domestic abuse is still tolerated today. The fact is one in five women in Scotland will experience abuse in her lifetime. The rape conviction rate is at a 25-year low; and 25% of girls reported physical partner violence in a recent NSPCC survey. Although women are at the greatest risk of domestic abuse, men and members of the LGBT community are also victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Witnessing abuse of one's parent (usually the mother) is abusive to children, but domestic abuse also carries with it the risk of actual

child abuse. The barriers to children disclosing abuse mirror those of adults – fear of not being believed, not wanting to worry people, fear of repercussions for themselves or the non-abusing parent, and concern about unwanted interventions.

A representative from the faith communities quoted a survivor of abuse who expressed the view that 'the church seemed almost the last place for honest sharing of pain and vulnerability – the violence is IN the silence'. The silence in the place that should offer sanctuary was causing destruction to her soul. There was a call for people in authority to correct bad theology and teachings which can be used to justify abuse. There was also a call for faith communities to show willingness to work with other agencies involved in domestic abuse and to walk alongside victims, survivors and perpetrators so that the needs of all are placed before the grace and healing power of God's transforming love.

Ann Glenesk is president of Glasgow & Galloway Mothers' Union.

Young peacemakers visit from Holy Land

A CHANCE for young people to meet teenage peacemakers from Israel and Palestine is offered in Scotland by Windows for Peace (UK).

The organisation works with Windows – Channels for Communication in Israel and Palestine to promote dialogue and understanding amongst Jewish, Muslim and Christian young people.

The young people (aged 13-15) work together with media and art to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation between the two communities. They run a media programme for young people; publish Windows magazine in Arabic and Hebrew, written by and for 12-14-year-olds; and mount art exhibitions which present the visions of Israeli and Palestinian children on war and peace and dreams for the future.

Sixteen young people from Jenin, Tel Aviv and Nazareth are visiting Edinburgh in July.

If you know any 13-15-year-olds who might be interested in meeting them (around 13-16 July) and learning how they try to build bridges of reconciliation through communication, contact Nancy Adams (nancy@newbigging.org). To see Windows in English visit: www.windowsforpeaceuk.org/Magazine.htm.

YOUTH QUIZ

The Diocesan Youth Network is organising a quiz afternoon for all our young people aged 11-17.

St Bride's Hyndland, Sunday 4 July, 1.30-5pm

Light food will be provided.

Contact: Youth Chaplain Revd Christian Okeke
[0774 859 0407 bishopc7@yahoo.com](mailto:07748590407bishopc7@yahoo.com).

Floral celebration for Buddies' new building

A Festival of Flowers at Paisley's Holy Trinity & St Barnabas takes place this August, as part of celebrations to mark the completion of its new building.

From 27 to 29 August, enthusiasts from all over Scotland are expected to visit the exhibition which is inspired by the river that runs through the heart of Paisley town centre.

The River Cart was once the lifeblood of Paisley and a source of water for the weavers, factories and breweries. It continues to play an important role even today, just like the congregations of Holy Trinity & St Barnabas who have supported the less fortunate people within Paisley and the surrounding area for the last 190 years.

In 2002, however, it became clear that the well-utilised church halls, constructed in 1823, were in a very poor state of repair. It was also clear that they were not large enough to accommodate the demands from the community. Furthermore, the town-centre location had always meant that there was a much higher demand for their use than they could actually support.

So the congregation took action and launched a project to raise £750,000 to help replace the existing church halls with bigger and better facilities. The plan

was to include more flexible and up-to-date meeting spaces for the range of community groups that already relied on Holy Trinity & St Barnabas. But the congregation also wanted to make sure they had extra space so they could help some of those groups that had been turned away in the past due to limited resources.

The project was called Pilgrim Buddies; 'Pilgrim' because it speaks of a journey that people make together towards a common goal, and 'Buddies' because it identifies with the Paisley people. Saint James is also the patron of Paisley and his symbol, the shell, is the symbol of pilgrimage.

The new halls – named Bishop Court – opened in April and are already serving the community. Their design has drawn on history, the environment and natural materials to make the spaces as comfortable and uplifting as possible.

The congregation have already been able to extend the use of the facilities and are looking forward to holding a series of events at Bishop Court in the months ahead. Top of the bill is the Flower Festival which should extend the reach of Holy Trinity & St Barnabas even further, beyond the local community and into the heart of Scotland.

'Amazing' World Missionary Conference

This year the world church celebrated the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh in 1910 with another conference: 'Edinburgh 2010'.

SANDY MONTGOMERIE reports on the closing celebration on 6 June in the Church of Scotland's Assembly Halls on the Mound.

The place was filled with delegates from around the world and we experienced an amazing celebration of the world church gathered here in Scotland. It certainly was a much broader and colourful church than had been at the previous

missionary conference in Edinburgh 100 ago.

As the people gathered a choir from several African congregations in Edinburgh sang in full national dress colouring the hall and drawing us to the celebration that was before us.

Experiencing this African music inspired the gathering to stand up at one point and join in the celebration by following the movements and singing of the choir.

Revd John Bell, from the Iona Community, led us in a musical extravaganza singing as God's global family with songs from Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Pacific and Africa.

ISLAND BREAKS

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
CATHEDRAL OF THE ISLES
MILLPORT

12-15 July

Art for Absolute Beginners

Led by Anthea Clarke, this is a practical course teaching some simple techniques in a relaxed, uncritical and fun environment – all materials provided. £165 (£50 non-residential). Contact: cathedral_cumbrae@btconnect.com

July – September

Music for a Summer Afternoon.

Concerts every Sunday afternoon at 3pm in the Cathedral of the Isles.

Visit www.island-retreats.org.

NO E-MAIL

We listened to a dialogue of how the conference 100 years ago would have reflected on the present day; one thought was how they could have organised a conference without email. Descendants and representatives of people who attended the conference in 1910 spoke warmly of how that opportunity had inspired and allowed them to see mission as a domestic responsibility rather than being imposed by colonial powers which subsequently had freed them as Christian leaders in their witness and mission within their own countries.

Then a song from the gathering that had been sung 100 years ago paid tribute to the work started by those people a century before: *Through midnight gloom from Macedon.*

A young Indian dance group graced us with some beautiful worship through dance and using this medium danced out the gospel reading for us from John 4.1-30 ('A Samaritan woman came to draw water...').

We were given time to share with our neighbour in what we had heard and sung and how the church should be wit-

MORE ►

nessing today and what resources and insights are needed to carry out that witness.

The Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, based his address on 'the valley of the dry bones' from Ezekiel 37.1-14. 'Can these bones live?'

HOSPITALITY

He offered encouragement to exercise loving hospitality towards others and humility in Christian outreach and his voice echoed with an evangelising passion that recalled preachers of the past who spoke in the same space.

The Common Call to Mission which had been achieved through the study groups was offered by the representative bodies of the conference affirmed the Common Call to the Churches to witness to Christ today in which delegates ex-

pressed 'full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.'

For the full text of the Common Call, visit the Edinburgh 2010 web site: www.edinburgh2010.org.

We concluded with the Peace from Scotland, each person putting their hand on their neighbour's shoulder and then the Blessing and sending out of the delegates.

It was a day filled with sharing, with joy and celebration and the power of the Holy Spirit was among us.

For Scotland we have an opportunity to build on this experience, knowing that our mission has not just local but has global significance and support.

Sandy Montgomerie is Diocesan Ecumenical Relations Coordinator

News and events in brief

A SUMMER Fair takes place at St Bride's Church, 69, Hyndland Road, Glasgow G12 9QP, on Saturday 21 August 2-4pm. Stalls include books and DVDs, cake and candy, plants, bricabrac and a tombola. Tickets priced £2 (which includes tea and cakes) will be available on the door.

THE next Poverty & Homelessness Action Week will run from 29 January to 6 February 2011.

The theme will be 'Who Counts?'. The 2011 census will try to list all of the people who live in the country – but chances are there are many it won't include, such as the 'hidden homeless' and destitute asylum-seekers.

God's own son was born into poverty in a stable, in the year of a great census. Scripture tells us that in God's kingdom, 'the least shall be the first'.

Does the way we live bear witness to this truth?

Are we living in true solidarity with people who are poor, homeless and excluded?

For details of the Action Week and resources from Scottish Churches Housing Action, Church Action on Poverty and Housing Justice, the three bodies that organise it, visit church-poverty.org.uk.

WHERE the Cart rins rowin to the sea by mony a flower and spreading tree'...

A Festival of Flowers will be held at Holy Trinity Church & St Barnabas, St James Street, Paisley, on Friday 27 August (11am-4pm), Saturday 28th (10am-4pm) and Sunday 29th (1pm – 4pm). Entrance costs £5 which

includes refreshments (see full article elsewhere in Diocesan News about the church's achievement in developing new buildings to share with the community).

REPORTS and recordings from this year's Synod in Edinburgh can be read and heard on <http://inspires.org.uk>.

Two reports of Rural Commission conferences this year are available to download from the Scottish Episcopal Church website: www.scotland.anglican.org.

A COMPLETE and continuous reading of the Gospel according to St John from the King James Bible was given by Episcopalian students and staff at the University of Glasgow as part of the city's West End Festival in June.

THE bishop-elect for our Companion Diocese of Kentucky is the Very Revd Terry Allen White.

He is currently the Dean of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, in the Diocese of West Missouri, where he has served since 2004.

He was born in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in 1959. He received his MDiv from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1985 and a BA in Religion and Philosophy from Iowa Wesleyan College in 1982. He was ordained priest in 1986.

He is married to Linda Sue White. They have two children.

Please continue to pray for the Diocese of Kentucky and its new bishop.

NO TO NEW COAL

A COALITION of charities and human rights groups is appealing for like-minded individuals to lodge formal objections to a new coal-fired power station at Hunterston, on the North Ayrshire Coast.

Ayrshire Power has now submitted a planning application for the plant. But environmentalists say it will make tens of thousands of climate refugees in the coming four decades if it's allowed to go ahead without full Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) instead of just 15%. This fledgling technology may be a decade away from being affordable on a commercial scale.

Wildlife groups, including RSPB, are opposed to the plant. So are human rights campaigners because much of the coal will be imported from countries such as Colombia where miners and communities suffer human rights abuses and exploitation.

For information and guidance on how to lodge a valid objection in time, visit: www.conchcampaign.org.

Next issue . . .

ITEMS for the September issue may be submitted up to **Monday 16 August** as ordinary prose (not leaflets, adverts, posters or PDFs, please) to editor Susi Cormack Brown, c/o Diocesan Centre, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH, or dns@episcopalglasgow.co.uk.

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