



action of churches together in scotland

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Spring edition 2009

TOGETHER

ACTS Reviews its Networks

A group of about 40 Network members and ACTS staff recently gathered in Dunblane to consider how the present 4 Networks of ACTS are currently working, and to consider if and where changes could be made to effect better working practice.

This follows the Network Review which was carried out by Rev John Wylie and Mrs Charmian Paterson who carefully tracked the work of the networks over the previous year.

Much of the feedback from members' experience of working within the networks was pleasingly positive with great value placed on meeting, sharing ecumenically and worshipping together, while establishing relationships between members of different denominations.

On the other hand, of the many observations from the review, there were one or two areas of common concern which provoked discussion about how we currently communicate

communications between ACTS, the networks and the member churches of ACTS.

It also became clear that there was a need for greater clarity on the expected role of representatives coming from the denominations to the networks.

During the cross-network meeting many other topics were discussed including:

- Task Groups & Working Groups
- Resources/study material
- Website and Email use
- Network attendance and priority
- Meeting patterns and timings
- Representation to the networks
- Sharing of minutes and agendas
- Church at the local level
- Original vision
- Working effectively in-between meetings

The report from this conference is in progress and all network members and member churches will receive a copy for their consideration and information in due course.

ACTS Members Meeting and Trustees will then discern and implement any desired changes to the ACTS Networks

News from the Networks

ACTS Mission Network have been engaged in work which hopes to achieve consideration of worship space in areas of new development. However, talks with the Scottish Government revealed that the churches are not always seen as 'good value' to many communities, and to receive such consideration in local and national planning, it is vital that this changes. A small research study has been carried out among the 'unchurched' across Scotland to assess just what the secular society think about today's church and the value they place on it in today's communities. The initial findings have proven to be interesting and may offer a challenge to the churches. Processing is still in the early stages but it is hoped to offer the findings to the group who will take on the next task in the mission of 'Being Church in areas of new development' and to the churches for their further information, interest and action.

Scottish Churches' Rural Group is an Associated Ecumenical Group which relates to the Mission Network. The two main topics on their agenda at the moment are the issue of Church hosted post offices in areas where this service has been axed. A conference held in Edinburgh last December brought together a spokesman from **The Post Office** and two people who currently run **Church Hosted Services**. A copy of the report is available from the ACTS website www.acts-scotland.org Planning is now well under way for the next Churches Stand at the **Royal Highland Show** which takes place this year from Thursday 25 June to Sunday 28th June. This year many of Scotland's Church Leaders will unite in their support of the show and will enjoy a guided tour on opening morning. Leaflets from the denominations, with a rural flavour, must be delivered to Sheila Reeves at Church of Scotland offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN before 1 May.

ACTS Church and Society Network representatives have met with representatives of the Scottish Trades' Union Congress to discuss jointly organising a conference in the Autumn. The conference would focus on the Scottish economy and the mutual interests which Unions and Churches have in how it operates.

Scottish Churches' Education Group, an Associated Ecumenical Group relating to Church and Society Network have recently published 'A Christian Vision for Education in Scottish Schools' which is being launched this month (February). A copy is being sent to each congregation of ACTS' Member Churches; to each MSP; to each Church representative on Education Committees; and to each Director of Education. Members of the Group are to meet with Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, at the end of the month to discuss the principles set out in the booklet. The booklet will be available to download free from the ACTS website in the near future.

Faith Studies Network: A Task Group set up at the request of the Church of Scotland has recently completed work on a booklet which examines the language used to speak about the Holy Trinity. Entitled 'Talking of the The Trinity' the booklet contains four 'dramatic conversations' set in four different denominational situations. The conversations explore the issues which surround the use of language other than the traditional to speak about the Trinity.

The booklet will be placed on the ACTS web site and will be freely downloadable. The members of the Network hope that it will be used by ecumenical and other groups to explore the issues and to improve their understanding of the place which the Trinity holds in their Churches' worship and doctrine.

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For more news, information, resources, developments and events please visit the ACTS website www.acts-scotland.org Local churches together groups are invited to send, information, news and suggestions to enable us to develop a dedicated web space .

Conferences

Poverty Truth Commission: From listening to action 21 March 2009 2pm – 5pm

Ms Tricia McConalogue, Chair, Rt Rev David Lunan, Host at Glasgow City Chambers, George Street, Glasgow G1 1RX.
Sponsored by Faith in Community Scotland

Moving toward the goal of ending poverty, this programme is inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and by the Truth Commission of Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Fellowship of Reconciliation Scotland: What can I do for Peace? 29-31 May 2009

St Drostan's Lodge, Tarfside, Glenesk, Angus DD9 7YX
in the heart of the most beautiful of the Angus glens
Programme runs from 4pm Friday to 12.30pm Sunday

Costs per weekend £65 - Students half price – accompanied children (0-16) are free
Registrations to: Rev David Mumford, 9 Castle Street, Brechin, Angus DD9 6JW or
telephone 01356 622708

Carers Conference 10 June 2009 West Park Conference Centre, Dundee

Are you an unpaid carer or do you know someone who is? On Wednesday 10 June 2009 Crossreach (Church of Scotland Social Care) is holding a Carers Conference with the theme 'Caring Costs' to support unpaid carers involved with both its own services and those who increasingly play that role within the wider church and communities in Scotland.

The aim of the conference, which will be hosted in partnership with Carers Scotland, is intended to give those acting as unpaid carers information, advice and support which they may not even know is available. Many people who look after others would not recognise themselves as carers, but CrossReach realises that the care they offer can come at a real cost, not just financially but also physically, emotionally and in terms of the time spent caring for a friend or loved one.

One of the keynote speakers, Isobel Allen MBR, who is both a carer and elder of the Kirk, has expressed her delight that CrossReach is running this conference which she feels is much needed to help resource churches and communities for the future.

The conference is free.

For more information and/or to reserve a place contact Maggie Hunt on 0131 657 2000 or visit www.crossreach.org.uk to register online.

News from the Networks

(continued from page 2)

Working with Children in the Church Community Core Group

(an Associated Ecumenical Group of Faith Studies Network), took up a suggestion from the Scripture Union for a research project designed to detect where good work with children of primary school age was being done within the churches. Currently the information gathered from the questionnaires which were sent out is being collated and analysed. At the end of that process, those who were asked to complete the questionnaires will be offered an opportunity to meet to discuss what the results appear to show. Then, in November, the Group plans to mount a major conference to explore the implications of the results for the churches' work with young children.

'Old Age – Wasteland or Harvest Field?'

Plans are afoot to mount a re-run of the very successful conference which was held in the Gillis Centre during October of last year, under the umbrella of ACTS Church and Society Network. The Episcopal Cathedral in Inverness is taking a lead in planning for this and has provisionally booked the Eden Court Theatre for a date in May. Once decisions on funding have been made it will be possible to develop the plans further.

ACTS Church Life Network's Task Group, QDS (A Quiet Day for Scotland)

were delighted with the successful uptake of events around St Andrew's Day last year to mark the weekend nearest to that day as a time for quiet reflection and/or prayer. Many events, in a variety of ways, from pilgrimages to poetry were offered across Scotland. Plans are already underway to prepare for this year's event. A Gathering for all interested parties is to take place at St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth on Thursday 14 May from 10am to 2pm where all will gather to share ideas, experiences and fellowship. This event is free and includes coffee/lunch. Registration for seating and catering purposes is essential. If you would like to join in please call Shona Paterson on 01259 222362.

Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland

Nurturing our children in faith: dialogue and conversation led by people of different faiths

Rabbi Nancy Morris (Jewish)
Dr Salah Beltangi (Muslim)
Nancy Adams (Christian)
Representative of Sikh Community
Chaired by Andrew Sarle (CAIRS)

Thursday 5 March 10.30am – 4.00pm
Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane

Cost £20 inclusive of morning coffee,
lunch and afternoon tea

Co-sponsored by CAIRS and Scottish
Churches' House.

To book your place please call
01786 823588

Visit to Sikh Gurudwara An opportunity to meet with members of the Sikh community in Scotland, and observe their form of worship

Sunday 15 March 2009
12.30am to about 2.30pm

Furu Nanak Gurdwara
27 Otago Street
Kelvinbridge
Glasgow G12 8JJ

All visitors (men and women) will need to cover their heads and it would be preferable if women wear either a long skirt or trousers. Note that much of the time will be spent sitting on the floor. Services are very free and easy and people can come and go as they like.

Register by 5 March to Andrew Sarle
01259 222364 or andrew@cairs.org.uk

Resources

Easter 2009: One of the Crowd is this year's Easter Resource, prepared by Rachel Dobie a Church of Scotland representative from ACTS Church Life Network. This excellent resource examines how it must have felt to have been one of the crowd who set off for Jerusalem that year. Ordinary people, from all over Palestine and beyond who would be caught up in the cheering and in the jeering of some later. Could you imagine being part of that crowd? What might your reactions have been? Rachel takes us from Sunday with 'The Disciple Band' using Mark 11:1-11 through to Easter Sunday and 'Peter' using Mark 16:1-7 in this interesting and thought provoking resource. Available free to download from the ACTS website or in paper copy from ACTS office (costs will vary depending on postage costs) Please call Shona 01259 222362 if you would like some sent by post.

Put a Little Grace and Hope in Your Pocket. With economic recession looming large and severe weather conditions causing chaos, some may feel that 2009 has got off to a rather gloomy start. But the Methodist Church is offering a little bit of hope and grace with their hugely popular 'In Your Pocket' booklet series. Inspired by a sermon given by the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Stephen Poxon at the 2008 Methodist Conference. He described grace as being 'loved completely .. and there are no conditions ... only this overwhelming sense of being loved.'

The booklets are ideal for mission-related activities and public events. Some of the contributions have been specially written, while others have been drawn from well-known authors such as Martin Luther King, Jane Austen and Superman star Christopher Reeve.

Copies of these booklets are available from:

Methodist Publishing House, in packs of 50 at £5.00 per pack including p&p.

The booklets are available in pdf or Powerpoint from the Methodist website www.methodist.org.uk

Soul Marks Workshops Lent 2009

Art and Prayer Days 'Growing Up'

...and living through the liturgical year lies in remembering the extra-ordinariness of the time that simply unfolds day after day. because it is the time in which we are constantly called and enabled to move and grown, in whatever circumstances face us.

(from: Silence and Honey cakes
by Rowan Williams)

This workshop offers a day of quiet reflection, combined with practical artwork for the season of Lent, through word, image, music and touch.

No artistic experience is needed.

Each worship will be led by Carol Marples of 'Soul Marks'

'Soul Marks' is dedicated to encouraging the use of visual arts as tools for prayer, worship and community.

Dates and Locations

Saturday 28 February
Leith School of Art
25 North Junction Street, Edinburgh
EH6 6HW 9.30am to 4.30pm

Cost: £35 which includes all art materials, coffee and biscuits (bring your own lunch)
Many café's near by,

Contact Therese Christie on 0131 554 5761
Email: enquiries@LeithSchoolofArt.co.uk

Monday 2 March
Lochiehead, Auchtermuchty, Fife
KY14 7EH 10am to 4pm

Cost £30 which includes all art materials, lunch (soup and bread), coffee and biscuits.

Further information from:
admin@soulmarks.co.uk
or phone 0131 669 2431

Have you heard about.....

....The Scotland Trust? At the heart of the Scotland Trust is a desire to see revival in our nation and to encourage churches in our land to become all that God has destined them to be! Their core belief is that not only can they see this happen but they can dare to believe that it is imminent and that we are the generation who are going to see it and live it. The vision is to encourage a grassroots movement in Scotland that will bring about a radical spiritual and social transformation of this nation. Their aim is to raise up the people of Scotland to believe in their gifts and calling and to use them to reach the nation today. This will happen by Community Transformation, planting creative music and sports mission teams across the nation in partnership with local churches and other ministries; Training, creating a training centre of excellence to equip people who are called to reach this nation and new and creative ways; Culturally Relevant Outreach, offering mission resources and consultancy for churches and ministries across the country; Inspiring the Church, bringing the church in the nation together for days of worship and prayer; Equipping the church, providing books, cds, worship albums – all birthed in the Scottish Church with Scotland's new sound and fragrance.

If you would like to know more about The Scotland Trust please write to: The Scotland Trust, 68 Hammerman Drive, Aberdeen AB24 4SH Tel: 01224 484332 or email enquiries@scotland-trust.org.uk or visit the website www.scotland-trust.org.uk

.... The Anglican Centre in Rome?

Friendly and informed relations are developing between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Centre in Rome is a permanent Anglican diplomatic presence in Rome and is the base for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See. It provides a ministry of prayer and hospitality, offering educational opportunities, courses and a library. The Centre also gives advice on pilgrimages and visits to Rome, contributing to conversations and building friendships between Anglicans and Roman Catholics at every level. It encourages and resources working and growing together in unity and mission.

"The Centre has made an immense contribution to the growth of understanding and dialogue between our two Communion. I hope you will support it by your prayers, your gifts and by your visits to Rome to participate in its life of worship and study." +Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

"Its library and facilities have become a valued resource and place of ecumenical exchange. Its Director provides an important Anglican presence in Rome. It is important that the ecumenical relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church should continue and deepen, and the Centre has an important part to play in this." +Walter Card. Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

The centre is looking for donations to continue its valuable work. If you would like to donate please contact Rev Bill Snelson, 1 Tansur Court, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1RA

For more information about the centre visit www.anglicancentreinrome.org

Scottish Churches and Racial Justice

A number of resources are available to download from the ACTS website at www.acts-scotland.org including *Scottish Churches and Contemporary Migration* – the report from the October 2008 conference; *Asylum in Britain: A question of conscience* by Anthony Harvey; *Asylum Principles – a Statement for Churches Working on Asylum Issues*; Unison published *Asylum Myths* and you can read a copy of *Rethinking Racism in the Church*, a paper by Joe Aldred. For other information or queries about racial justice contact Nelu Balaj on 01259 222365 or email racialjustice@acts-scotland.org

Romanian Orthodox Church establishes parish in Scotland.

On Sun 18 Jan, the Romanian Orthodox Church established its first parish in Scotland. The inauguration service took place in Shettleston Old Church of Scotland Parish, Glasgow, and was attended by national and local church leaders. The Romanian parish will be based in Shettleston Old parish and have worship centres in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. We welcome the Romanian Orthodox community as the latest addition to the interesting spectrum of churches active here in Scotland. We encourage people to reach out the hand of friendship and to encourage our new fellow pilgrims to engage in our ecumenical endeavours.

Edinburgh 2010 International Mission Conference – ‘Witnessing to Christ Today’

Preparations continue for the Edinburgh 2010 International Mission Conference. The programme and worship committees are beavering away. Information is going out to the bodies who will be sending delegates. SCoT (Scottish Co-ordinating Team) is working away quietly looking at how we might support the conference and enable local churches up and down the country to best engage with the conference aims and themes.

‘Receptive Ecumenism’ – a Fresh Approach to Ecumenical Development

On behalf of ACTS, Stephen and Lindsey recently attended a major international ecumenical conference in Durham. The ‘big idea’ of the conference is the concept of ‘Receptive Ecumenism’. Here, the challenge for churches is to recognise the gifts that are present in other traditions and to ‘receive’ them into their own tradition. The encouragement is to move away from a mindset of ‘what do they have to learn from us?’ towards ‘what might we have to learn from them?’ The process of mutual enrichment should bring us all closer together.

The four day conference brought together over 200 academics, theologians, church leaders and ecumenical practitioners. Our current ecumenical context is quite complex. There is no doubt that enthusiasm seems to have diminished in recent years. The aim of ‘full visible unity’ seems quite out of our reach. Many significant structural and doctrinal questions remain unresolved. At the same time, there has been real progress in relationships, respect and practical cooperation among our churches.

The conference programme was packed and enriching. Along with all the stimulating conference papers and far-ranging plenary discussions there were many opportunities for workshops and reflective sharing. The small Scripture based sharing groups were particularly appreciated and encouraging.

Details of the conference, including papers and speakers are available on:

http://www.centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk/?page_id=224

Receptive Ecumenism and small Scripture based sharing groups? Worth thinking about.

Welcoming Carol Stobie – the new Director of Scottish Churches' House

On Wed 21 January, ACTS joined Scottish Churches House IMG, staff, Friends, supporters and the Dunblane Council of Churches to welcome Carol Stobie as new Director of Scottish Churches House. Carol's welcome took place during a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service. Danus Skene, Rev Alex Mitchell and Rev Sheilagh Kesting led the prayers of welcome for Carol and Stephen Smyth gave the homily. It was a wonderful evening of ecumenical prayer, fellowship and celebration. We wish Carol every success in her new role. We also encourage ACTS contacts to make more use of the Scottish Churches House programme and facilities.

For details visit:

<http://www.scottishchurcheshouse.org>

Casting the Net: Growing Faith Communities in the Diocese of St Andrews

The diocese wishes to appoint three Development Officers who will assist the diocese to carry forward the Casting the Net programme of mission and growth.

- **The Casting the Net Officer (0.5)**
- **The Ministry and Training Officer (0.5)**
- **The Children, Parents and Young People Officer (0.35)**

The Diocese will consider applications for each post individually – or applications which link together two posts. Applicants may be either clergy or lay. The posts will involve travel around the diocese and evening work. Applications close on 13 March. For Job Description etc Contact: 01738 443173 or email: office@standrews.anglican.org

Back to Church Sunday 2009

Back to Church Sunday is the 28th September 2009. The idea behind the Sunday is that people invite a friend to join them in worship. The initiative began in the Church of England in 2004 and has now spread across denominations and continents. Last year a pilot was held in Scotland and in 2009 more congregations are being encouraged to use this opportunity to welcome people into their worshipping community.

The theme for 2009 is 'Come as You Are' and posters and invitations with this branding are available for order via the ACTS office. There is also a training DVD introducing Back to Church Sunday and offering advice on how to Welcome people to church. Further information on resources and the background to Back to Church Sunday can be found at www.backtochurch.co.uk

ACTS has created an electronic network of people interested in Back to Church Sunday and to join this simply email: lindseysanderson@acts-scotland.org

Sunday morning radio broadcasts during Lent.

As part of the CTBI/BBC Lent series for 2009, 'Sense Making Faith' there will be a series of services broadcast on Radio 4 at 8am on Sunday mornings. The services will come from the different nations within Britain and Ireland. The service from Scotland will be broadcast on 29th March with the theme of 'Taste'. The preacher will be Kevin Franz, former General Secretary of ACTS and will be led by Lindsey Sanderson, the present Assistant General Secretary at ACTS. For further information on the Lent series visit www.ctbi.org.uk