



action of churches together in scotland
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Charity number: SC000295

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Summer edition 2008

TOGETHER

'Being Church' in areas of new development

The Task Group, set up from ACTS Mission Network have been looking at ways in which the churches may engage with new planning legislation to ensure worship space is available in areas of new development.

At a recent conference, held in Edinburgh participants heard from a number of speakers from Scottish Government, Local Government, Housing Agency and those engaged in Planning. Case studies were heard from Granton Waterfront and Inverness Expansion. Feedback from the conference suggests that those attending found the day both 'fascinating and informative' if not a lot to 'take in'.

A further meeting of the Task Group, to be held in late June, will examine the conclusions to the conference and consider the best ways in which the Group can take this forward to the next stage through the churches.

Papers from the conference may be ordered from Shona Paterson, ACTS, (address at the top of the page)

Photographs of the Being Church conference

ACTS at the National Gathering, Ingliston

The National Gathering, Ingliston, 3-4 May was the latest big event in the Church of Scotland's *'Church Without Walls'* initiative. Invitations were extended to other churches and charities to participate fully and it was an impressive occasion, especially for the innovative tented village and the quality of the big worship events.

ACTS had a stall in the Lowland Hall and enjoyed a gentle stream of visitors over the two days. It was good to see so many 'kent faces' and meet so many friends.

On display were new ACTS and CAIRS banners, a table-top ACTS 'map', and a selection of information leaflets. There was a continuous projection of slides showing the work of ACTS and our networks. This generated lot of positive comments and can be viewed and downloaded from the website: www.acts-scotland.org.

Back to Church Sunday ***Sunday 28 September*** ***“Because it’s you, I’ll come”***

Back to Church Sunday is about making a personal invitation to someone in order to welcome them ‘Back to Church’. The idea began in the Church of England and is being extended throughout other denominations and nations. It is estimated that during the four years Back to Sunday has been running, 30,000 people have come back to church. 2008’s Back to Church Sunday is being piloted in Scotland and is being facilitated this time by ACTS.

To order resources or to learn more about the initiative please contact Rev Lindsey Sanderson on 01259 222361 or email:

lindseysanderson@acts-scotland.org

‘Welcome Home Week/Sunday’

Annandale Churches Together have already experienced running a week/Sunday around the theme of ‘Back to Church Sunday’.

Annan: St Andrew’s celebrated a ‘Welcome Home Week’ a way of building up to ‘Welcome Home Sunday’ which all the member churches celebrated, but in different ways.

At Brydekirk, the minister greeted the congregation before passing the Service to Sandy who enjoyed a time of coffee and chat after worship, browsing through old records and photos which had been supplied for the purpose.

At Annan, refreshments were served in the Hall after the Service, where some of the previous week’s displays were on

So many people came together to make the event a success and great thanks were given to all for their tireless efforts and time, given freely and willingly.

Here are a few of the selection of comments about the event which were given on ‘post it’ notes on a ‘Talking Wall’ and as remarks in the Visitors Book:

- *‘A warm and welcoming community’*
- *‘The prayer room is lovely and the stalls are ‘brill.’*
- *‘Fascinating to see all that has been happening over the years and all that is going on now.’*
- *‘The Pram Service was a great idea.’*
- *‘I think the church should be open during the day, now and again.’*
- *‘Brought back lots of happy memories of people no longer with us.’*
- *‘A church on the move’*

There were some very moving encounters from visitors with stories of faith or faith on the fringes and it offered the opportunity to talk and share in prayer and reflection with others. Exhibitors enjoyed the chance to mix and meet and share in each other’s Church’s history and vision.

During the course of the week we welcomed about 140 people, among those more than 20 who hadn’t been to church for a while.

Plans are in hand now to start a Toddler’s Group and an Open Doors team is about to be formed and charged with exploring opportunities for opening up the church more often mid –week.

Rev George Lind (edited version)
(Photo on back page)

News from ACTS Associated Ecumenical Groups

NEWS: The Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland has produced worship material suitable for use on *International Peace Day* which is Tuesday 3 September in 2008. The material will be available for free download from ACTS' website. A copiable paper version will be available from the ACTS office. Call Tom Moyes on 01259 216980.

Scottish Churches' Education Group: The Education Group plans to send a copy of its newly published paper '*A Christian Vision for Education in Scottish Schools*' to every congregation belonging to ACTS' Member Churches. The Group hopes that it will stimulate local discussions in congregations and ecumenical groups about education in their localities.

Working with Children in the Church: After the summer break a research project initiated by the Working with Children in the Church Community Core Group will get under way. The Group hopes that the information gained from the project questionnaire will give a clearer picture of the place children are given in the lives of our churches today. The information will be used to inform discussion at a series of meetings to be held in different parts of the country in 2009. Please encourage those responsible for work with children in your congregations to complete and return the questionnaire when it arrives.

News from ACTS Networks

Church Life: Members of the Task Group have now completed the '*Calendar of Commemorations*' designed for use by the churches. The 12 page booklet marks significant dates associated with those who have contributed greatly to the life and health of the Church and nation in Scotland over the centuries, being both representative of our common heritage and of all the Christian communities which share in ACTS.

The Task Group working on introducing a '*Quiet Day for Scotland*' around St Andrew's day, will hold a Gathering in Perth Cathedral on 13 August to discuss the ways in which such a day may take place. The idea is to offer an opportunity for quiet, in the midst of busy lives, to stop in quiet reflection and/or prayer. Many suggestions ranging from short pilgrimages and country walks, to coffee/chat/prayer and reflection have been suggested. A web site is being created to help with ideas, providing resources and a place for feedback after the event. Resource material will be available to all who register for the conference, by 30 June. Please contact Shona Paterson on 01259 216980 to register your place.

Church & Society: The Network, in collaboration with the Church & Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Faith in Older People Project, has arranged for a conference entitled '*Old Age – Wasteland or Harvest Field*' to be held in Edinburgh on October 29 this year. An enrolment form for the conference is available from the ACTS website or please call Tom Moyes 01259 216980

Thinking Rurally.....

Royal Highland Show and the Churches' in Rural Scotland Stand 19 – 20 June 2008

The Church of Scotland Rural Strategy Team and the Scottish Churches' Rural Group collaborate in organising the churches' ecumenical presence at the Royal Highland Show. Please encourage your members to visit the stand, on Avenue O at Ingliston Showground, which will be staffed by people with experience of rural life and ministry, and will feature an exhibition and relevant literature. There will be entertainment for children and young people on the Saturday and Sunday, traditionally the 'family days'. Further information from Sheila Reeves on 0131 225 5722 or sreeves@cofscotland.org.uk

Value Added Church: the role of the church in rural community life

is the title of the (CofS) Mission and Discipleship Council Rural Church Conference, which will consider how rural congregations can impact on their communities and also provide an occasion to share together, which previous attendees have found extremely useful. The keynote speaker will be Mr Sandy Cumming, Chief Executive of Highlands and Island Enterprise and a Church of Scotland elder. Also taking part will be Rev Ivor MacDonald, author of 'Land of the Living: Christian Reflections on the Countryside' and Mr Dale London, Regional Development Officer with a rural remit. In addition, there will be a choice of workshops, with Regional Development Officers leading worship and providing chaplaincy. Further information from Sheila Reeves (details above)

'God's Own Country: a new, practical resource for rural churches' is now available. Prepared by the Church of Scotland for use by all Christian denominations in Scotland, the aim is to affirm, encourage and inspire rural Christian congregations to feel confident in their role as faith-sharers in the local community. The easy-to-use resource pack – designed by rural people for rural people – contains a Community Value Toolkit with a wide range of supporting discussion material and project ideas. Price £6.99, including postage. For further information and to order (payment can be made by credit card or cheque), contact Sheila Reeves (details opposite) ←

Racial Justice Sunday 14 September 2008

'A banquet for all peoples'
Isaiah 25:6-9

"The Lord Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world – a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine"

Biblical reflections, questions for discussion, worship suggestions, activities for young people, suggestions for community events, links to topical challenges. This year with additional resources for Black History Month, Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, Mental Health Week, Refugee Week, the 'summer holiday' season

Resources for the churches – available from June 2008: Order forms only – available from ACTS resource material from CTBI publications, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Garden, London SE1 8ND or see: www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday

Father John Fitzsimmons

Across all Scotland's Churches, our members were deeply saddened to hear of John Fitzsimmons' death on 17th May at the age of 68. John touched the lives of so many – through his commitment as a parish priest, through his constancy as a biblical scholar, through his compassion as an outstanding human being. He was a big man with a big heart. He was also a communicator *par excellence* – he told us so himself!

His mother had been brought up as a Protestant and had converted to Catholicism when she married a Roman Catholic from Ulster. He sang the metrical psalms at his mother's knee – and was on song the rest of his days.

Born in Paisley, John's vision looked beyond his own land and the limits set by those in power, whether in Church or in State. His vision was of God's Kingdom on this earth. He was grateful for the opportunity of transmitting that vision to the students in his care at St. Peter's College in Cardross. But he had fallen in love with the city of Rome. I remember a wonderful panorama of that city on the wall of his study at Erskine. He was in Rome as an ordinand at the Scots College, as a student at the Gregorian University and, later on in the '80s, as Rector of the Scots College. Perhaps the most creative period of his training was when Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council in 1962 .

John was summoned to join the secretarial staff for the Council and was aware, at first hand, of the deeply radical hopes which that Council engendered. His own outspoken radicalism took root at that historic time.

Certainly, throughout his ministry, John Fitzsimmons sought to stand by the line which John XXIII had espoused for the Roman Catholic Church. When I was General Secretary of ACTS in the '90s, we were looking for someone to chair our Unity, Faith and Order Commission. I went over to Erskine, knowing that John already had a very full schedule. He agreed to our proposal at once and led that Commission for the next three years. The Commission produced an excellent report on intercommunion, which looked forward to the possibility of all the Churches' members being able to share at the Lord's Table. That hasn't happened yet, much to his sadness, but in due time it will.

I had the privilege of attending his funeral service at St. Ninian's R.C. Church in Gourrock and saw for myself the love, yes, and the laughter which he had inspired in all who knew him.

Too radical for the hierarchy, John Fitzsimmons was one of God's special people. We mourn his loss, but are confident that the trumpets have sounded for him on the other side.

Maxwell Craig

Bible Study Opportunity: *At the Church Without Walls Gathering, we met Pete & Helen Jane Peters from the USA. They are Area Representatives in Scotland for Community Bible Study International and come across to Scotland regularly to help organise interdenominational community Bible study programmes. In the last few years they have established courses in Leith/Edinburgh, Buckie, Glasgow, West Kilbride and Dunblane. They are looking for invitations to organise future programmes tailored to local needs. Details: www.communitybiblestudy.org*

Resources

Edinburgh 2010: The volumes of the papers presented to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 have now been digitised by the University of Michigan in preparation for the Centenary celebrations in 2010 and can be downloaded at

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu> Daryl Balia has been appointed as Coordinator to the 2010 conference. Further information from www.edinburgh2010.org

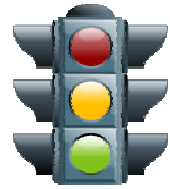
‘In War and Peace – the story of Corrymeela’ by Alf McCreary: (publ.Brehon Press 2007) commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Irish ecumenical community that was founded by Rev Ray Davey, OBE and continues to make a significant contribution in witnessing to the ongoing ministry of Christian recognition in divided communities on this island and further afield. (*Irish Ecumenical News*)

Journey into Growth – the seven core values of a Mission Church (CTBI publ cost £7.99) Edited by Terry Tennens, this is a workbook for local churches looking to grow in mission with accompaniment from a skilled outsider. Order on-line at www.mph.org.uk

And finally....

Visit www.Rejesus.co.uk who won the ‘most successful evangelistic blog’ at a recent awards ceremony.

Ten Commandments for Road Users



Last year the Vatican issued ‘Ten Commandments’ for motorists to help them avoid road rage, to make sure their vehicles are safe, and to ensure that they do not put other road users’ lives at risk. In ‘Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road’ people are encouraged to ‘courteously give way to pedestrians, not be offended when overtaken, allow someone who wishes to drive faster to pass and not to seek revenge on other discourteous drivers.

The Vatican’s ‘Ten Commandments’ for motorists are:

1. Thou shall not kill
2. The road shall be for you, a means of communion between people and not mortal harm
3. Courtesy, uprightness and prudence will help you deal with unforeseen events
4. Be charitable and help your neighbour in need
5. Cars shall not be for you, an expression of power and domination, and an occasion of sin
6. Charitably convince the young and not so young, not to drive when they are not in a fitting condition to do so
7. Support the families of accident victims
8. Bring guilty motorists and their victims together, at the appropriate time, so that they can undergo the liberating experience of forgiveness
9. On the road, protect the more vulnerable party
10. Feel responsible towards other.

(edited version from original source: ENI July 07)

These are rules, I am sure we should all live by whatever our denomination but I wonder how many of us would think of alternatives to those offered by the Vatican?

If any of you have suggestions I will print them in the next edition of ‘Together’

Kirchentag '09 A celebratory gathering – impressive, informative and affirming

If you were impressed by the numbers at the Church Without Walls National Gathering at Ingliston last month, you'll be blown away by the Kirchentag experience.

Over 100,000 Christians, young and old, from all over Germany and some 5000 international visitors virtually take over a German city every two years for worship, fellowship, Bible Study, drama, music, dance, discussions, keynote speakers, including senior political and religious figures from Germany and the rest of the world, in 2007 included Desmond Tutu, Sam Kobia and Kathy Galloway. In the intervening years an equivalent number of folk attend the Katholikentag, and a new development is to have ecumenical gatherings every 7 years, with the next of these being scheduled for May 2010 in Munich.

Don't be put off if you know little or no German, lots happens in English, and music and dance are internationally understood. Whether you go as part of a group or on your own, you can be assured of a fantastic time.

The next Kirchentag takes place from 20 – 24 May 2009 in Bremen, with an overall theme based on "Mortal, where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)

Visit: www.kirchentag.net for details in English. or
Visit: www.kirchentag.org.uk for information from the British Committee

Scottish Co-ordinator is John Lindsay
email: johnlindsay@bigfoot.com

Ecumenical Group on Domestic Abuse

This group was convened in order to respond nationally to the issue of domestic abuse from a faith based context under the auspices of the RC National Commission for Pastoral and Social Care. The Commission felt strongly, following an event in Paisley on the subject, that the Church was required to continue to respond to the veil of abuse in the home and to make it clear that no one must ever feel imprisoned in a violent relationship. In May 2007 an ecumenical statement was endorsed by the churches and groups, as a measure of support for the church community in Scotland. A national conference was held in September 2002 attracting 120 delegates and was followed by a study day the following year. To assist in training and awareness a pack was prepared with help from Women's Aid '*No Exceptions.. A Faith Perspective on the myths and realities of domestic abuse – It's time to fact the facts and speak the truth*' This brought a workshop for primary school children in 2004 and now the group are planning a day event in Perth 'Sharing Experience – Sharing Concern' and again this will include working closely with Women's Aid.

There's no fee for this event to be held on Thursday 2 October 2008 at National Christian Outreach Centre, Riggs Road, Perth PH1 1PR.

Further details from:

Tel: 0141 8846137 or

Email:
nacsoca.admin@btconnect.com

News from

Action of Churches Together in St Andrews

When the Moderator (CofS), Rt Rev Sheilagh Kesting visited St Andrew's in January 2008, the Convener of the ACTSA Worship Committee, the Rt Rev Dr Alan McDonald suggested that the ACTSA Ecumenical Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 20 be combined with the Presbytery Service to be led by the Moderator that evening.

The service was held in Hope Park Church. Representatives from all the member churches took part in the service and there was a good attendance of members of the churches in the area.

The Moderator also attended the lunch for the WPCU arranged by ACTSA and held in St James' Roman Catholic Church Hall on January 14 and spoke briefly to those in present. It was a great joy for Christians in St Andrews to be able to share with the Moderator in these ecumenical events.

Strathkinness Christians Fellowship Evening

A small group of Christians living in Strathkinnes, a village just outside St Andrews, began to think that it would be great if the Christians living in the village and attending different churches in and around the village could meet to affirm their unity in Christ, and to have a time of fellowship together. Despite discouraging noises from some who prophesied that no one would come, the village hall, as a neutral venue, was booked in faith, prayers were said, invitations were put through every letterbox and posters put up.

Strathkinnes continued

On the night, 36 people from at least 5 denominations came. Food was shared and people moved round the hall introducing themselves to people they hadn't met before – quite surprising in a small compact village – and there was a happy buzz of what can only be described as Christian fun. Questionnaires returned by those who were present were positive and most suggested meeting again. It is hoped to organise a barbecue in August and possibly go carol singing at Christmas. Two from the group are prayerfully considering organising a children's activity on a weekday evening. This isn't an alternative to our own churches, just a reaching out to other Christians and a chance to share in our kinship of Christ Jesus.

Articles used with thanks from ACTSA

The Seafarers Centre New initiative by Montrose Churches Together

The inspiration for this project came from Peter Donald, the maritime chaplain for the Tayside ports of Dundee and Montrose, when he preached at a MCT service, identifying the needs of the many foreign sailors who spend time in the town when their ships are in port. A small committee was formed by MCT, which explored possible venues and a suitable building was found. Funding for the considerable work required for upgrading came from various charities, with MCT's support.

The churches in Montrose and district publicised the project among their members, and asked for volunteers to staff the centre on a regular basis in the evenings. The response from Christians throughout the town was heartening, and sufficient numbers to form a rota were found with no difficulty.

The centre opened in February 2008, providing computers to give a free broadband connection to the internet, plus telephones with phone cards available for purchase, a well as teas and coffees, a games room and lounge for relaxation, and friendly contact with local people. After a slow start, the centre has been well used, with 118 sailors visiting in March alone. The main nationalities of sailors using the centre have been Eastern Europeans, from Russia and the Baltic states and Filipinos. Response from the volunteers has been enthusiastic, with many commenting how good it is to get to know other Christians in the town, as well as the contact with the seafarers.

The way ahead – this project is still developing, and various needs are being identified. It is run by its own committee, which reports to MCT council on a regular basis. It is a reassuring example of how Christ's message of caring for the travellers in our midst can be carried out in a small way using local resources; and how Peter Donald's sermon has had far reaching effects.

With thanks to Montrose Churches Together for this interesting contribution

An encouraging update from Scottish Churches' House

The last issue of 'Together' invited you all to make donations to the Jubilee Appeal for Scottish Churches' House. Those engaged in managing the future of the House have been hugely encouraged that so many individual donations were received, not only from Scotland but from a growing band of supporters from overseas.

Donations already received, together with those from Trusts and Foundations will go towards the conversion of bedrooms in the main House to en-suite provision which will, they hope, attract a wider base of clients while offering a more comfortable stay for all. The Appeal will now run until the end of March 2009 and the Interim Management Group ask for continued support in a variety of ways such as:

- Considering to use the House for a day visit, conference, residential or a reunion with friends and family.
- Letting them know of any smaller Trusts or Foundations which might be amenable to supporting an application for funding
- Helping as a volunteer for specific tasks in and around the House, or on a regular time basis, even for a few hours a fortnight.
- Help by collection old coins and jewellery and drop them into the House the next time you are passing.

For more information about the Appeal please call 01786 823588

Scottish Friends of Ecumenism: supporting Scottish Churches' House and ACTS

AGM and Spring Gathering: Saturday 14 June in Holmehill Annexe, Scottish Churches House, Dunblane from 10am to 4pm. After a short business meeting, the Gathering, which is open to all, will be led by Maggie Lunan on the theme of 'Trafficking'. Maggie was a contributor to the resource pack 'Trafficking: to be silent is to be unfaithful' produced for the Church of Scotland Guild, Church and Society Council and World Mission Council, based on the report to the General Assembly of 2007. Details and booking through Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane (01786 823588)

Autumn Conference: Wednesday 17 September at Scottish Churches' House from 10.30am. The day's event will look at 'Climate Change' and the morning's session will be led by Gavin McLellan of Christian Aid Scotland with a consideration of campaign issues. Details and booking through Scottish Churches' House
tel: 01786 823588 or email: reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org

Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living October 2008 – April 2009

- For those who want a closer relationship with God
- For those who struggle with prayer
- For those who want to make choices in their lives which are in tune with God's hopes and desires for the world

This course is offered to help people to pray and to live reflectively. It is offered as an opportunity to explore faith, discover meaning, and to come to a deeper, closer relationship with God.

Facilitated by:

The Epiphany Group
Garden Cottage Spirituality Centre,
Kilgraston, Bridge of Earn

Course Fee: £310

(concessions available)

(Various dates) Mondays 7pm – 9pm

Contact: Carmel Byrne 01738 813618
Email: adminorchard@btconnect.com

Scottish Churches and Contemporary Migration Conference

Wednesday 8th October 2008
from
9.30am to 4.15pm
at the

Scottish Storytelling Centre, 43-45
High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1SR.

This Conference will explore many of the issues around the new migration which Scotland is witnessing. It aims to identify key themes and challenges to which the Churches in Scotland can make a positive contribution. The afternoon session offers a choice of six workshops.

You can download a booking form from the ACTS website
www.acts-scotland.org

or
'phone Nelu Balaj 01259 222365

The Scottish Peace Covenant

We desire that Scotland should be known for its contribution to peace and justice rather than for waging

war. Scotland's for Peace is a broadly based organisation which seeks to project Scotland as a catalyst for peace in the world, rather than a launch-pad for war. It comprises churches, trade unions and peace organisations; it is about the kind of Scotland we would like to be part of.

If you would like to know more about this initiative please contact www.scotland4peace.org www.peaceandjustice.org.uk

Occasional Seminars on the Ecumenical Movement Autumn 2008

“Beauty and Salvation” – The Russian Orthodox Church
Thursday 11 September 10.30am to 4.00pm

In a second seminar on Orthodoxy, Fr Alexander Williams of the Orthodox Community of St Nicholas in Dunblane will introduce the tradition, liturgy and iconography of the Russian Orthodox Church in Western Europe. During the course of the day, participants will accompany him to the Dunblane Orthodox Church and join in a service there.

Cost £20

Meet the Member Churches of ACTS: The Religious Society of Friends *Thursday 2 October 10.30am – 4.00pm*

At this seminar, the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers will present their community, its worship and traditions.

Cost £20

Bookings to The Customer Service Manager, Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane FK15 0AJ tel: 01786 823588
Email: reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org



Churches
Agency for
Inter Faith
Relations in
Scotland

Jesus and Other Faiths

What can we learn from reflecting on Jesus as a rabbi, prophet, guru and brother of the Buddha?

25 September 2008
Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane
10.30am – 3.00pm

Please register by 18 September to
Tel: 01786 823588

Cost: £20

With thanks to everyone who contributed articles to this newsletter. It has turned out to be something like the ACTS 'Summer Special'!

If anyone would like more copies, or if you have any changes to your mailing or email address please don't forget to let us know.

You can email me at shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org or please call my direct line on 01259 222362 - a message may be left 24/7