

GRAPEVINE

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Bishop Nigel's Charge to Diocesan Synod 5 March 2016

LIFE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

"Christ is our cornerstone and on him alone we build. We are a new humanity, no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. In Christ we are joined together and spiritually built up into the life of God." So says the letter to the Ephesians, and its enduring message reverberates down the centuries to the Diocese of Brechin, meeting today in Dundee in Synod.

Our agenda reflects the household character of the diocese: we worship together, we discuss issues of common concern, and as a representative Synod we review the effectiveness of our activities as a significant Christian voluntary sector organisation. We receive and debate reports, we review past achievements, we express our hopes for the future, we elect people and we thank people. We receive honoured guests, not least from our Companion Dioceses of Iowa and Swaziland.

At Synod last March you will recall that I set out a Bishop's headline vision for our diocese: to be Faithful Christians, Serving Others, Transforming Lives. Indeed our diocesan website opening page says that is who we are in our region of Scotland. I suggested then that we should be flourishing in our worship, discipleship and membership. We should be engaging with individuals, communities and issues. We should be resourceful in how we do things.

Since then each agenda of Diocesan Council meetings has treated strategy as a priority. Council members have given much creative thought as to how our vision is enabled, and in particular how we might intentionally create local and diocesan initiatives for mission and ministry hand in hand. Later today Synod members will have an opportunity to say what you think as you engage in a group exercise which is entitled 'Call to Action: Mobilising for the Future'.

Challenge and change are all around us and doing nothing is not really an option. Some realities are uncomfortable. Congregational membership across the diocese is still decreasing (by 4.9% in 2015) while increased financial giving has stalled: a challenging 20% increase in both members and money should be the target to aim for if we are to transform our situation.

For certain, the present number of paid and full time ministry posts will be eroded if we do nothing. We can either continue to manage decline with prudence and pragmatism (and sadness) or we can add an injection of ambition, hope and joy to do better for the

mission and ministry of God's Church.

So there are some nettles to be grasped. Grants for ministry are now devolved from central General Synod funds to Dioceses and because of our previous expansion for mission our share is reducing in the next two years. The amount of stipendiary ministry we can afford into the future is uncertain, while the long term viability of some Charges is doubtful.

As I have often said we need to find creative ways to reinvent local mission and ministry, and to re-deploy resources more effectively. Diocesan Council is now looking to undertake a more proactive approach where the local church is open to help, ensuring a consistent and fair approach in managing challenge and change across the diocese.

At the heart of all this are our spiritual values and outlook. So respect, generosity and trust amongst us are essential. We are all in God's household together, each local Charge sharing its story with the stories of others in the diocese.



The Eucharist at the start of the Diocesan Synod

As Jesus' parable reminds us we are wise to build our house on rock and not sand so that we may withstand the turbulence around us. So take courage, there will be an emerging plan.

The current initiative for developing the diocesan office and St John's Church and Halls in Dundee are a particular example of this, whilst our partnership with the Church Army in the Dundee Centre of Mission has attracted additional ministry funding, generating fresh approaches to ministry at St Luke's and the Cathedral and elsewhere.

As some will already know, St Paul's Cathedral Dundee is embarking on an ambitious project to enable access for all, remodelling the frontage of the building. Many other refurbishments and improvements to the heating, lighting, seating and general facilities are in the pipeline. Large amounts of money are needed to realise our ambition here for a multi-purpose 21st century Cathedral and many sources of funding are being explored.

Tomorrow is Mothering Sunday and we rejoice that the cathedral

is our 'mother church'; our cathedral where we particularly gather as the diocesan household. We need to support the cathedral's public presence in the city and its ministry of worship and hospitality for diocesan gatherings and for its many visitors annually.

In May of this year our Clergy and Readers will be participating in a diocesan ministry conference to be held at Dunkeld, entitled Faithful in Small Things, led by Canon Anne Dyer. The conference programme will help us engage with the issues facing the Scottish Episcopal Church in the coming years, and the spiritual and practical resources we need to harness for mission and ministry.

What ministry do we require in 2020? Will we have the resources? As a diocese we currently have 26 places of worship and some fifty ministers – clergy and Readers – and an emerging team of lay Eucharistic Assistants, worship leaders and pastoral visitors. We run St Margaret's Residential Home in Dundee, we are active in two universities and many local hospitals and care homes, and we

provide chaplains for organisations when invited. It needs to be said that we already do a lot of things well enough. In future it may be more a case of doing fewer things better.

Surrounded by so many challenges the Church at its worst becomes fearful, fractious and uncharitable. But at its best it becomes honest, open by striving to remain faithful. We live therefore within the fragility and the paradoxes of our Church, never losing sight that we are a thoughtful, inclusive human community living within divine realities, a Eucharistic community blessed and broken for the life of the world.

Christ is our cornerstone and on him alone we build. In him we are joined together and spiritually built up into the life of God. I hope that we will be encouraged by today's Synod to work together as a faithful, creative and effective household, as the Diocese of Brechin.



Leading the Atheist Club !

During Remembrance week last year I led a week of assemblies at Baldragon Academy. I gave a very simple message which was, "We are remembering those who have died; Jesus said this is the greatest gift one can give, and Jesus practised what he preached!" In response a leading group of senior atheists began a school-wide conversation.

I was then invited to hold a session of open conversation with the atheists before Christmas. Again they were intrigued by what I had said, and how I responded to their questions and statements. As a response to the sessions we then had lots of atheist pupils coming to the Friday Chaplaincy sessions. They were coming to ask questions, explore, and debate. We ended up having so many atheists coming that the

actual Christian fellowship could no longer take place, so I offered the atheists a group of their own on Thursday afternoons to question, explore, debate, and eventually move into an Alpha style course, they said yes, and we have started by reading R. Dawkins 'The God Delusion', watching the R. Dawkins and J. Lennox debate, reading C.S. Lewis, and the Bible. It has been a fantastic kick off, and I – a Christian Chaplain – am now leading the Baldragon Academy Atheist club!

I suppose the young people have long grown up in a culture where Christianity and really religion in general is now largely rejected. However the young people do not know why they are rejecting it, and now I have come along and through the Holy Spirit I

have used everything from Whiskey to the Simpsons to describe God, and they have seen God in a whole new light, they have begun to see they have automatically rejected something, which they have never understood.

So what a fantastic opportunity in Baldragon, keep this in your prayers, as out of this I hope to pioneer a youth Church. Praise God!

Craig Dowling

"The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful and has nobody to thank."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

From Shore to Shore . . .

The Rev'd Peter Mead has very recently moved with his wife, Linda, to become Rector of St Mary the Virgin, Arbroath and St Peter's, Auchmithie. The Institution took place (as below) on Saturday, 12 March at which some of his former parishioners at St Leonards were present. Here he introduces himself.

Hello and welcome! I have been asked to write a few words about our imminent departure from St Leonards and arrival in Arbroath.

St Leonards-on-Sea is synonymous with 1066 as we are in the heart of 1066 country with Hastings next door and Battle a few miles inland, we are currently situated on the East Sussex coast close to the Norman landing at Norman's Bay and the famous battle which shaped medieval England. However, 1320 maybe more important in Arbroath for it was in that year at Arbroath Abbey that the Scottish Declaration of Independence was signed, although it was called the Declaration of Arbroath and is the most important document in Scottish history. The most famous part of the declaration is 'It is not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.' We could talk at this point of our belief in the freedom we have in Christ, however those at St Leonard's would have heard this over the last 4 years and those in Arbroath have that to look forward

to; so why spoil the anticipation?

From important dates and places to our move 565 miles north (according to Google maps) with a journey time by car of 9 hours and 32 minutes. Google may not be exact with their tax



accounts; however they are fastidious with their journey times. We are following the road north and God's call, for we feel that God has called us to Arbroath with the help of a Bishop, a Vestry, an Archdeacon, an Aunt, prayer partner, Pilgrims Progress and many others that we have spoken to, who have prayed for and with us, on what for us has been a difficult decision. Thanks needs to go to all those that have prayed and supported us in this decision and given us space to seek God and his will for the next part of our journey. Please continue to hold us in your thoughts and prayers as well as the communities of faith that we have and will serve in St Leonard's and Arbroath.

A brief outline of our likes: well, we like curry – although it may be fair to say we like most restaurants. We like to eat,

although neither of us has a sweet tooth; cakes and puddings we would rather leave than take. Except in my case Christmas pudding! I have a small reputation for liking coffee and Linda likes a red wine or three.

We have a married daughter and 3 grandchildren in Yeovil in Somerset. The children are looking forward to coming to Arbroath over the Easter holidays and exploring the Rectory, Arbroath and Lunan Bay with bucket and spade. This counts as notification of their arrival and a disclaimer to any damages caused to Arbroath or Lunan Bay! They are 13, 8 and 5; their dog "Macca Pacca" is considerably younger.

Someone recently said to me I was going back to my spiritual home and I was taken aback for I had no idea that they knew I was born in Arbroath, although I left when I was young moving to Cornwall. Then I returned for a short period when I was still young and, indeed, my first school was Hayshead Primary School, leaving again soon after for Hampshire. They read my puzzled expression and said, "the home of golf." Ah indeed! I have done well to get to nearly the end without mentioning the 'G' word. We have two 'G' words God and Golf and I am sure there will be plenty of many happy hours talking and participating with both in the years ahead in Arbroath. If you have got as far as this we thank you.

All good wishes Pete and Linda.



Procession to main door and font



Welcome and sharing the Peace

DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT

The annual meeting of the Brechin Diocesan Synod took place at Chalmers Ardler Church, Dundee on 5 March. Over 60 people were present. The day began with the Eucharist during which Bishop Nigel delivered his Charge – printed on front page.

Most of the morning session was occupied with the required business of reports, amendments to canons and appointments, though the scrutiny of the accounts and agreement of quota assessments took place in the afternoon, when Allan Duffus, Diocesan Treasurer, informed Synod that for this and next year grants received from the General Synod office would be significantly reduced, making for difficult decisions both in congregations and in the diocese.

Of particular note was the contribution by the Diocesan Archivist, Mr David Bertie. Congregational records and documents had last been fully surveyed in the 1980s; an inspection was now being carried out, which might take up to four years to complete, to make sure nothing had gone astray and to add new material. He informed Synod that Dundee University Archives provided a free archiving service for the Church and it was desirable that documents were lodged with them. Ownership was not transferred and everything was accessible.

In his report on inspecting the registers of congregations the Dean drew attention to the fact

that, though willingness to serve the Church is high, some small congregations have such a high age profile that they could face negative critical mass in the next few years. The Diocesan Council could initiate plans but congregations will have to take bold steps and do courageous things.

She noted that there was a fair degree of consensus. In recent years there had been a seismic shift in the sense of attitude to mission in the Church: there was a need for work on discipleship – to put into practice what we say we believe. Buildings may need to be fewer, but fit for purpose and supporting the Church's mission. Worship needs to be renewed and provision made for the needs of those who currently don't attend. Collective and collaborative leadership was replacing the older model of individual ministry and this should be furthered to see us working together as a diocese and not be overly congregational. To speak of change can engender an attitude of fear in people, but there is no hidden agenda and we do not know what the result will be or what it will look like.

Also after lunch Pat Millar, the Companion Dioceses Officer, spoke about the real crisis due to prolonged drought in Swaziland (the centre pages carry a fuller description) and the forthcoming Youth Adult Pilgrimage to take place in July (an invitation for this is on page 9). Also, emanating from our Companion Dioceses relationship, Synod was delighted to listen to an address from Bishop Alan Scarfe of Iowa. The text of this appears on page 10?.

The meeting closed with a sincere expression of gratitude to Bishop Nigel for all his work, both clearly visible and behind the scenes, throughout the year; and this was followed by Blessing.



Bishop Nigel, Pat Millar & Bishop Alan

Before the lunch break members split into small groups to discuss and give answers to the question, "If the Diocese of Brechin was ultimately successful, what would it look like?" The underlying issue was "What observable and measureable end results would have been achieved?" The responses of the groups were pooled together and posted on the walls after lunch and the Mission Officer, Canon Fay Lamont, spoke to them.

The Leprosy Mission
(Dundee Area Committee)

COFFEE MORNING

to raise funds and awareness

**on Saturday, 23 April
in the Steeple Church,
Nethergate, Dundee**

10 a.m. – 12 midday

Tickets £2 at the door

TLM stall, baking, plants, jewellery,
handbags & scarves, gifts

Come and enjoy your coffee

GLEN '16

at Glenalmond College
Perthshire

Want to do something different this summer? Come & join the fun! The Youth Week is open to anyone in secondary education.

Enjoy a week filled with fun, fellowship, learning, and sharing – not to mention the great activities and workshops!

Scottish Episcopal Church
Youth Week
24 – 30 July

Download an application form, which includes full details, and to read more information:

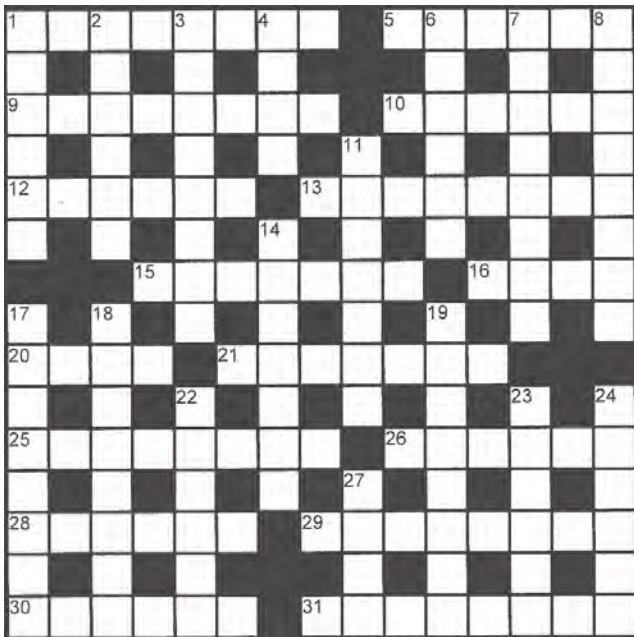
<https://www.facebook.com/secpyc>

Or email The Rev'd Tembu Rongon: <rector@stpj.org.uk>

Final deadline 1st June – for prices, see application form.

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

To give you a little help 16 of the words are in the Eastertide hymn "At the Lamb's high feast we sing". Send your entries to the editor at the address on the back page by Friday, 31 July at the latest, putting your name and address in the box provided.



- | | |
|---|--|
| 26 Holy cedars (6) | 7 A wet iris sports bluish flowers (8) |
| 28 The founder of the RAF (6) | 8 He has set his knife under cover (8) |
| 29 Policemen want left-over food (8) | 11 Beat hen under (7) |
| 30 Nazi ain't this sort (6) | 14 Get it by flier shortly (7) |
| 31 Disciplines as Eric has ten shortcomings (8) | 17 They fire fags in Africa (8) |
- CLUES DOWN:**
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Rode up but sounds as if he was absorbed (6) | 22 Does he have a stripe from flagellation? (6) |
| 2 Make a meal of a spare T-bone steak (6) | 23 I spare admiration eccentrically (6) |
| 3 Suffering from sugar? No, from an acid bite (8) | 24 Nature organisms made from aluminium dust (6) |
| 4 Where to find a plush edifice? (4) | 27 Lofty meeting when the Pope embraces a US soldier (4) |
| 6 Rain is needed to produce a dried grape (6) | |

- CLUES ACROSS:**
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 A despair has no place in such a delightful location (8) | 13 Teen was sorry to drink a pint (8) |
| 5 Overwhelms physicians now (6) | 15 I'd creep to be treated like this (7) |
| 9 Clan Dupe didn't win any money in the horse race (8) | 16 The rise and fall of a diet (4) |
| 10 Suet is a delicate fabric (6) | 20 Doesn't seem to play back melodies for an image (4) |
| 12 The best festival to see art (6) | 21 End dry toes (7) |
| | 25 Foolishly rubs lady up the wrong way (8) |

Name

Address.....

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Mothering Sunday at St James', Stonehaven

As is customary two of the children distributed bunches of daffodils at the end of the Service as a token of affection for parents.

But on this occasion the sense of family care was different from usual. Mrs Wilma Somerville gave an illustrated talk on the Christian organisation *Children for Christ* which she co-founded with her late husband, Harry, and Viorica Jorza, a Romanian.

In 1991 Wilma and her husband met Vio on a humanitarian trip to Romania. They had a vision of taking the Gospel to children in Romania following the fall of Communism and the corrupt government of the day and soon afterwards *Copii Pentru Cristos* (or

Children for Christ) was formed.

The first camp was sited in a small portable building – which curiously enough had been at Portlethen, dismantled and shipped to Romania. This was re-erected in Varfurile in Romania's Arad County. Later a new building was constructed for multi-purpose use. Harry died in May 2013 but the work carries on.

The camp runs in the summer for over two months and is attended by groups of 52 children plus leaders. During the winter there are many weekend training programmes for Sunday School teachers and weekend camps for children are held. From October to May children gather in homes in

and around Arad where these leaders teach them with Bible lessons, songs and learning verses by heart.

The recent building of a children's home (pictured below) is a dream come true. It houses 4 boys and 4 girls and is called appropriately 'Casa Harry'.



National emergency declared in

The current drought in Swaziland actually began in 2014 as a result of the El Niño weather situation. During an El Niño the relationships between winds and ocean currents in the Pacific Ocean alter, have a changing impact on weather conditions around the world.

The worsening of this recent drought has led the government of Swaziland to declare a national emergency.

The Prime Minister reported recently:-

"The negative impact of the drought has led to seriously diminished water availability for crop production, human consumption and livestock sustenance.

"At the present time, we count the loss of around 40,000 head of cattle, and have to report a serious food and water vulnerability currently experienced by approximately 300,000 of our people, which is around 25 per cent of the population."



A single maize plant survives

In Swaziland, the normal planting season for both commercial and subsistence farmers is during November and December. Farmers have their highest-ever debt with South African banks of more than 125 billion rand, caused by the lowest rainfall on record. Because of the already severe drought conditions during those months in 2015 very little was planted.

The rains needed for ploughing didn't come, the rains needed for germination of crops didn't come and the rains needed for growth were sparse and came late. Most farmers, who had been able to

hold back seeds for planting, did not have modern, fast germinating varieties and so their crops will not be ready for harvesting before the season changes and the start of winter.

The UN food agency is already feeding more than 200,000 Swazis as part of its large emergency operation across Southern Africa.



'I watched this cow die yesterday afternoon as I travelled home,' wrote Mandla Mdluli, development officer in the diocese of Swaziland

The Diocese of Swaziland is doing what it can to support its people in this, the latest of many challenges.

Short term interventions are in place to try and help some of the schools around the capital, Mbabane. The water shortage



Pupils from St Bernard's Primary School had to go out and scout for water when the school supply ran out

situation in Mbabane and surrounding areas has seen some of the schools sending pupils home. This means that pupils not only lose out on learning, but they miss out too on what might well be their only daily meal – provided at school at lunchtime.

To try to keep as many schools open as possible, water tankers have been employed by the diocese with agency support to replenish water tanks at the schools, so that pupils and staff have water for drinking, cooking and basic sanitation.

Across the diocese there are 15 Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs), where caregivers and other parish volunteers seek to provide a daily meal for around



This used to be a river

450 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).

This already challenging responsibility has been made more difficult by the increase in food prices. The cost of basic supplies – sacks of mealie meal, rice and beans – has gone up every few days since the drought situation worsened. The diocese struggles to keep up with demands and so the funds we send to support the NCPs in feeding the children are needed more than ever.

One bright note in all this gloom is the news of Olive's Garden at Hlathikhulu.

The members of the diocesan youth group, led by their own horticultural expert Mncedisi (his appointment was mentioned in the last edition of *Grapevine*), have been working very hard to protect that vegetable garden from the ravages of the drought. They have

Swaziland as the drought intensifies

visited regularly and collected grass cuttings from across the area to mulch the vegetable beds, to protect the crops and the soil as much as possible. Although some replanting has had to be done, their efforts have averted what would have been destruction of all the planting in the one acre garden. Their commitment to this vegetable garden project is inspirational and humbling.



Trying to find some water in a dried up river bed

Mncedisi wrote:-

"In as much as the drought and heavy temperatures are hitting hard on us in Hlathikhulu Garden, there is life. We are grateful of your prayers and encouragement. The youth from St. Anthonys is showing interest on the project. Continue praying for rain because we really having a challenge."



Trees loaded and ready for planting as windbreaks, to help provide shelter and reduce soil erosion. The youth group hope to plant 1,000 trees across the diocese. Some as wind breaks and some fruit trees - mainly avocado and mango.

"... from the OVC garden project at Hlathikhulu (St Mary's) more than 1500 seedlings were transplanted over the weekend by this amazing youth group. Many

Thanks to Pat Millar and the Diocese of Brechin for the support. We hope to be doing the same at Luve Parish on the coming weekend."

They enjoyed spending a weekend together, combining their gardening work with worship and conference time to consider environmental issues around climate change and eco-justice – they all aim to be 'Green Anglicans'.

Of their weekend, Mncedisi said:-

"It was a refreshing experience to enjoy the presence of God outdoor in the beauty of nature looking on the planted vegetables. For most of us it was the first time experience of this working together and we wished we could do it more frequently."

Swaziland Environment Authority (SEA) delegates were part of the discussion during that weekend and gave the youth members an assurance that they are ready to listen to their issues on environmental affairs.

The parish sealed its relationship with SEA and their commitment to work or journey together on environmental issues by planting an avocado tree which will be a permanent symbol and reminder of their commitment to be Earth Keepers. This tree will also be a source of food and shade for the church, of shelter for animals and will play a role in reducing the church's carbon footprint in the environment.

To promote all of this, across the diocese, they also plan to set up Eco-Clubs in Anglican Schools.

The Sunday was declared as the day of Love for Creation, where the whole church was involved in the service. Because of the current drought emergency, the readings were:

Genesis 21:8-19 (dependency on water)

Psalms 104:10-17 (recognition of the relationship between water and life and God as the provider)

Revelation 22:1-7 (water as a metaphor for the life that flows from God)

John 4:1-15 (the spiritual meaning of water)

After the service the members



Planting and prayer – the Rev'd Wandile Dlamini blessing the avocado tree in the church garden at St Mary's Church, Hlathikhulu

and Sunday School children were each given an avocado tree to plant as a way of committing themselves to journey with the youth in being Earth Keepers. The youth also planted their own avocado tree, committing themselves to the Young Green Anglicans Ministry.

As good Companions we need to find ways to share in their challenges and to support their efforts.

*Patricia A. Millar
Companion Links Officer*

"Care of creation and justice should be at the centre of work for the Church on climate change. The Bible teaches the wholeness of creation and calls human beings to take care of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). The God of the Bible is a God of Justice who protects, loves and cares for the most vulnerable among his creatures."

Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya, 9 March

Sermon preached at the Candlemas Service at St Salvador's Church, Dundee

by the Rt Rev'd Philip North, Bishop of Burnley

As anyone with small children will confirm, the hardest questions to answer are always the simplest ones. Let me give you an example. This time last year I was moving house. Now I quite fancy myself as a bit of a handyman, useful with the drill and the claw hammer, so when the flat pack bookshelves arrived, I at once threw away the instructions because instructions are for losers. And after not too long, I had knocked up a pretty tidy bookshelf. The uprights were upright, the shelves were shelf-like, and the books sat in there quite happily. In fact it was a great job, so all there was left to do was to show off. I called my mother and said, "Look, your son really is a genius after all." But my mother had no eyes for the bookshelf. Instead she had found an unused bracket which was still in the packaging. And that was when she asked her simple but devastating question. 'What's this for?' At that point the shelf lurched forward and covered us both with cheap paper-backs and we knew what 'this was for.' That bracket was what held the bookshelf to the wall.

'What's this for?' It's a very simple question, but a very good one. Take for example your life. What's it for? What is its purpose? What is the point of you? It's a question people tend to avoid because most of the answers they could give quickly dissolve into nothing. Some people would say that the purpose of life is to be happy, but they seem unclear what happiness is or how to find it. Some people think that their purpose is economic security, plenty of cash, a good pension, a nice house. But of course, the more you have, the more you have to lose and the less secure you actually feel. Some would say that their purpose is the advancement of human knowledge. But to what end? Some people find their purpose in family and relationships, and of course that's vital – we are our

relationships. But relationships are fragile, vulnerable to changing emotions and human mortality. They don't last.

Plenty of answers, but none of them quite convince. And so we are left gazing into an abyss of meaninglessness. We are left with the ultimate human fear, the cold terror that all of us spend most of our lives running away from: That all of this is pointless. That we have no purpose. That we are randomly generated freaks of evolution, destined for annihilation.

What's it for? In the Feast we keep today and in the Gospel we have just heard, we find an answer, demonstrated to us by an old man called Simeon. This is one of the great cameo performances of all time. Simeon totters in, plays his part, and then goes off and dies. He has spent his whole life waiting, waiting for God's salvation to reveal itself, probably half the time barely understanding what the promise even means, let alone what its fulfilment might look like. But then into the Temple walks a young girl, holding a baby. She has come to offer sacrifice for her first born child as Jewish women are bound to do. But for Simeon, this is the moment. He takes the child in his arms and he sings of the light and salvation that the child has brought. At last the old man has found the purpose of his life, for his purpose is to gaze upon Christ.

What's it for? What are we for? Our purpose is to gaze upon Christ. As the bracket was engineered to hold the shelf to the wall, so we are engineered to gaze upon Christ. For in him, human life finds its meaning. In Christ, God has come to share in our life, and as he does so he rescues human life from the absurd and raises us up to the heights of the Godhead. In Christ, humanity and divinity are made one and are caught up in mutual love and fascination with the other. When we gaze upon Christ, we

see our beauty, our purpose, our call to eternity.

Of course Simeon had it easy. Mary walked in with the baby, and with little or no regard for safeguarding processes she handed the baby over to Simeon, and he could do his gazing. For us, it's not quite as simple as that. Where can we find Christ today? If we want to gaze at him and in so doing find the purpose of our lives, where on earth do we start looking?

The following joke may be adjudged tasteless were it not that my home county, Lancashire, has had some of the worst flooding in the country. A man is caught in floods. A rescuer comes along in a canoe and says 'Get in the boat!' He says, 'No, I'm trusting in God to save me.' Then the RNLI comes along and the crewman says 'Get in the boat.' But the man repeats, 'No, I'm trusting in God to save me.' Finally the RAF helicopter comes along and the pilot says, 'Take hold of the rope and we'll winch you up!' But the man says again, 'No, I'm trusting in God to save me.' So of course he drowns. He goes to heaven and says, 'God what were you playing at? I trusted in you to save me and you let me down!' God says to him, 'What's the problem? I sent two boats and a helicopter.' If we want to gaze upon Christ, we need to look with the right eyes, for when we do so we can see him everywhere and gaze upon him.

In my former parish there was an Angolan woman called Antonieta. It was an inner city parish, attended by many people with addiction or complex needs and with many passers by who came to beg or to share problems. Without fail Antonieta was there for them first, ready to listen and serve. She knew that we can see Christ today in the faces of the poor. We live in a nation of growing and shocking inequality. On some estates in Burnley, one in three in-work families will be choosing tonight between food

and fuel. Nationally half a million are dependent on food banks. The fifth richest nation in the world, but we can't even feed our own children. Meanwhile our doors are firmly slammed in the faces of the desperate refugee population of Syria, driven from their homes by appalling violence and cold shouldered by the world's wealthiest people. When we stop and serve, when we listen to need, when we make a stand for justice, when we are generous, then in the faces of the poor we will see the face of Christ. And as we gaze at him, the poor minister Christ to us and we find our purpose.

Or again, a couple of weeks ago I decided to bunk off the dull conference I was booked into and I went for a long and snowy walk in the hills above Lancashire. It was heart-stoppingly and ridiculously beautiful, and I felt utterly alive. The second place we can find Christ is in the beauty of his creation. And yet his world is at

terrible threat, spinning to environmental catastrophe because of our utter addiction to oil-based consumption. We may have cut a deal in Paris, but no one has actually done anything yet. This world is God's. It is completely charged with his beauty and his grandeur. We urgently need to find ways to live alongside it in ways that are respectful and sustainable, for when we do that, we will again and again find Christ present in his world. And as we do so, we find our own place and our purpose.

The faces of the poor. The beauty of creation, And of course the other place we can find Christ is here, in this place, in the worship of the Church. Here in bread and wine we offer ourselves to Christ, and in return, we mere mortals eat the food of heaven, the stuff of eternal life. Here the barrier between this world and the next is torn away and at one and

the same time we see Christ present in his world and glorified in heaven. Here we see our own dignity as those called to share in the banquet of eternal life, mere mortals, raised up from the dust and destined for glory.

Just as Simeon took Christ in his arms and gazed at him, so today you can gaze at Christ in the faces of the poor, in the beauty of creation, in the worship of the Church. And as you gaze at Christ, so you will see who you really are. You will see that you are beautiful, so beautiful that Christ has been born for you, so beautiful that Christ has died to set you free, so beautiful that, just as you gaze at him, so he wants nothing else than to gaze at you for ever and ever. Your life has a meaning that transcends you utterly. You are more precious than you can ever know. This Candlemas, gaze at Jesus Christ. For then you will know what you are for. Amen.

Brechin – Iowa – Swaziland

“Spirit of Discovery”

Young Adults’ Pilgrimage to Diocese of Brechin

Following the Companion Dioceses’ young adults event in Swaziland in December 2014 it was proposed that the next ‘gathering’ should take place in Brechin.

The Spirit of Discovery pilgrimage will be a residential event in Brechin Diocese from 15th to 25th July 2016 and will bring together participants from all three Companion Dioceses. Five young adults from each diocese are invited to participate.

We invite young adults, aged 18 – 35, who are actively involved in church life in our diocese and who might be interested in participating in this event, to get in touch.

A varied programme of events across the diocese is being planned. The group will live together during the pilgrimage based in Dundee.

Funding will be available, but participants should expect some costs to be involved.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you are interested in applying for a place or would like more information.

It will be an amazing experience. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Templeton Prize 2016

Established in 1972 the Templeton Prize each year honours a living person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.

The monetary value of the Prize is set always to exceed the Nobel Prizes to underscore Sir John Templeton’s belief that benefits from discoveries that illuminate spiritual questions can be quantifiably more vast than those from other worthy human endeavours.



This year's laureate is Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth who has spent decades bringing spiritual insight to the public conversation through mass media, popular lectures and more than two dozen books, the latest of which is the bestseller entitled

Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence.

Lord Sacks will give his Templeton Prize lecture on Monday, 9 May at 5.15 p.m. in the Main Physics Lecture Theatre in St Andrews University All are welcome to attend

New Structures for an Eternal Message

The Bishop of Iowa's address to the Brechin Synod, 9 March 2016

This is the first time I have been able to attend the annual gathering of the Diocese in March. I do so both as a companion Bishop and also as a canon of your Cathedral and therefore as one of you. It has been interesting to take a look over your comments and wishes for the Diocese into the future. We are facing similar challenges and opportunities.

We have used a diocesan five year plan for directing ministry and mission during the past decade. This year we are guided by the concept of creating or imagining new structures for this eternal message which has been framed within so many different structures down the centuries. Our congregations, like yours, strive to be self-sustaining and so it is normal to pay attention to membership and financial viability. But it would be a false impression to say that we are not outward looking, involved in community or serving our neighbours. Last year our diocesan theme was "Jesus Big Five" from Matthew 25. People were astonished to find how much congregations were doing beyond the Church walls. In fact, I would hope that anyone seriously following Jesus is led into deeper compassion for their fellow human beings.

And yet, when push comes to shove, and the walls of the Church begin to crumble, what becomes of our sense of identity? We asked this question at the end of our presentation on new structures at the 2015 Convention showing in picture form that what remains standing is in fact the people of God, the incarnate Church or Spiritual Temple. This brings us to consider the topic – new structures for an eternal message.

As I say, we are in year four of our second Diocesan five year plan. The recent plan is called "For a time like this". We have focused on the prophetic witness of the Diocese within Iowa and the opportunities to pursue this today; the need for a new type of collaborative leadership combining

with new ways of communicating the Gospel. Last year we gathered to celebrate and inspire one another in fulfilling the commission of Matthew 25. With fewer people interested in preserving a church organization just for the sake of it, being in mission beyond Church walls is a vital goal. I know you are already doing this as I look forward to attending Café Church at St Luke's tomorrow.

People on both sides of the Atlantic are less and less interested in joining a Church for self-perpetuation. Younger people in particular will come alongside you if they think you are serious about improving human lives or transforming society in the light of God's love. This is a time for new structures for God's eternal message. Or, as Jesus put it, new wineskins for new wine.

As we talk about new structures for an eternal message we have to ask, Do our buildings actually reflect the way we understand the Gospel? Does sitting in fixed rows, for example, reflect the flexibility of ministry of all the baptized? Are they used in between services, and do the community actually know we are open for business, 24/7? Does liturgy only happen in one specific way? Dare we make liturgy beyond church walls, as your bishop did on Maundy Thursday shining shoes in the city square? Must we only use the approved prayer book? What about liturgical processions marking the memories of victims of gun violence; liturgy in pubs, restaurants, pizza parlours, or even someone's living room – these are all ways we are saying "yes" to those questions. Twitter has become the gathering call for worship, just as it was the call to

protest during the Arab Spring, or for gathering people in the streets for Black Lives Matter. And it particularly seems to be the special way for younger members to connect with each other.

I once sat in a restaurant in Iowa with a reporter who had come along to register my reaction to the transformation of an Episcopal Church into a restaurant. "Mixed feelings", I said.

"I only wish we had thought of the idea first." I was not convinced the liturgical space had to be totally taken over. Our companions in Swaziland explore capacity building with their assets – material and human – and encourage us to do the same. Many of us can turn an asset into resources for ministry. We just rarely invite each other to be let loose to use those talents and they struggle to

get heard or invited to offer those gifts for the Church's mission.

New Structures are also about lifestyles, particularly rediscovering the treasures of our tradition. It is not only Muslims who are called to pray four times a day. Our prayer book, available on our I-phones as much as in printed form, invites us to prayer morning, noon and night. One person in Iowa is introducing the prayer book as a tool for discipleship to two others who in turn are hoping to do the same for two others. His wife, a member of the Diocesan staff has started her own group. In ten iterations of this the average Sunday population of Episcopalians would double.

Over recent years, we have grown increasingly dependent on Eucharistic-centred worship. Of course this requires a priest at the centre of worship and to provide one can be a constant problem. I



am experimenting with licensing Eucharistic ministers to administer on Sunday liturgies from sacrament reserved from the previous week. I think you allow this through Lay Readers. It is a way of connecting priests with the ongoing worship life of the people they occasionally serve.

There is another trend and opportunity as non-Episcopalians discover our communal prayer services – especially Evensong and Compline – yet may find Eucharist divisive. I experienced this in a small part while visiting my old Oxford College last week. I came ready to preside at the Eucharist. As we administered communion I noticed half the choir was not communicating. I read that more students are attending Evensong precisely because they are in-betweeners: not ready for the commitment which communion represents, but yet desirous of the slower rhythm, reflective time that Evensong or a Taizé Compline might give them, and so God is drawing them to the Divine self.

New Structures is about wiping the chess board clean so as to be able to see the board more clearly. It is going off the rails, letting church pop up where it will and letting form once again follow function, with function being our baptismal ministry and charge of reconciliation. This intentional focus is what is behind the planned gathering of young adults (our Swazi companions claim “youth” as being between 15 and 40!). I inherited in Iowa a promising youth programme for Junior High and Senior High teens. Controversially we sold the camp and so were able to create a programme bringing together youth scattered across the state from where they may be in their ones or twos. Suddenly they were gathering in a diocesan-wide community of peers. The diocesan budget backed up the programme by providing for a paid missionary. We were losing, however, connection once they left high school. So in another controversial move, we decided to shift the emphasis of our chaplaincy funding to invite the local church to assume this ministry, and as a diocese we chose to deploy

chaplaincy funds for a missionary who would continue to gather our young adults as contemporary leaders, and go after new recruits for Christ. The results include the dozen young people we were able to bring to Swaziland in 2014. An online virtual community of faith called The Well brings together more than 80 adherents on a regular basis for study, fellowship and support. And monthly there have been pop up “churches” in a local bar and restaurant, under a ministry entitled “Breaking Bread” – a take-off of the hit series Breaking Bad.

Finally I want to pay tribute to an Iowa priest who died recently and who had been heading up our Brechin companion group – Barbara Schlachter. Her funeral was my last liturgical act before I came over to you. Barbara retired a couple of years ago. She had been part of history as one of the initial women to seek ordination to the priesthood in the Church catholic. She and her colleagues of the late 60s and 70s opened the way for so many women to enrich the Church through their priestly vocation. Her legacy is priceless. Most of us would find comfort in such a thing and enjoy retirement. But God was already restructuring her. She became concerned about climate change and in her retirement she began to find new structures for the eternal message that “the earth was the Lord’s and all that is within it”. One of her new retirement prospects was to be a more accessible grandmother. And yet as a grannie she found herself founding “the 100 Grannies for a liveable future”, for her grandchildren and everyone else’s. And she began to reshape her life for the sake of the planet.

It is never too late to take God’s call to follow more seriously, and it is never too late to uncover those new adaptive ways to help people reconcile with God and enjoy worshipping the Creator, Redeemer and Holy One in myriad ways and places. Iowa knows I want a pew burning night. I doubt if I will get it. But if we did we would simply be using space in the ancient structure that has been part of Eastern Orthodox tradition for centuries. I applaud

Holy Rood Carnoustie for removing some of your pews and creating a more welcoming and flexible space. The call for new structures is a call for imagination.

Once again thank you for hosting the second young people gathering. I hope that they will dream together for all of us and with us. It is in the end God we are trying to make room for, and God we are trusting to speak through the next generation to their own generation. God’s vision is not narrow. God is One who makes all things new.

Let me finish with this story. As soon as we had decided in Iowa to create new structures for our young adult approach to ministry, as I was driving to my Sunday visitation after Convention, I heard a voice say “and so, what are you going to do for the older adults?”

That was in 2014. Just this past month we have called an Older Adult Ministry Development Team, and in their first meeting they began addressing dementia and training for clergy to work with families and persons suffering from Alzheimer’s. They then began to widen their perspective, and soon were talking about ministry that entails forming people for retirement and its implications; tackling the hard questions of life’s meaning, especially for those who have actually “given it a go” and still feel confused or empty; and who knows what else will follow.

You are taking some bold steps today to address the hopes and opportunities of the future. It is because you love the eternal message of God’s love in Jesus and know it is to be shared. This is a time for reshaping our common life as Church, and for being assured that when – not only if – these external walls fall, what we will find left standing will be the people of God ourselves, praying and working to find God’s new structures for us all in a time like this. Thank you for your attentive hearts, and for this time to share with you. God bless you all.



Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa

JAMES GREGORY LECTURE SERIES

DR JENNIFER WISEMAN

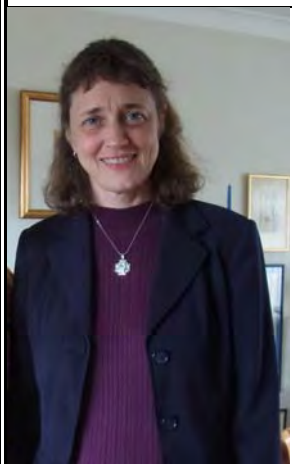
WILL SPEAK ON

**'UNIVERSE OF WONDER,
UNIVERSE OF LIFE'**

ON MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2016 AT 5.15 P.M.

**IN THE MAIN PHYSICS LECTURE THEATRE,
ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY**

Dr Wiseman is an astronomer, author and speaker. She grew up on an Arkansas farm, where she enjoyed late night star-gazing walks with her parents and pets. She discovered a periodic comet while working as an undergraduate research assistant in 1987. She has studied star-forming regions of our galaxy using radio, optical, and infrared telescopes. She is an astrophysicist at NASA, where she is the Senior Project Scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope. She previously served as head of a laboratory exploring Exoplanets and Stellar Astrophysics at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. She is a committed Christian and directs the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) for the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



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Lightning doesn't strike twice ...

But unfortunately it does and it did. They was an error in the last edition's Cryptic Crossword similar to the one before. The compiler can't read his own writing. Many apologies. There is absolutely no such mistake this time!

**The Cathedral of The Isles
and College of The Holy Spirit**

The College of The Holy Spirit on the Isle of Cumbrae was built in 1851 as a Theological College for the SEC and now functions as a retreat house. It is part of the United Diocese of Argyll & The Isles and the Cathedral, which is attached to the College, is one of the Dioceses' two cathedrals. Apparently a remarkable number of people don't know that the College exists!

The College is set in 8 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds. It has 16 bedrooms in a range of sizes, some of which are en-suite. In total it can sleep 30. The main focus of its work is in being a resource to those in the church (and indeed those outside of it) who wish to bring a group somewhere to deepen their relationship with God.



The staff hope that people will come and encounter God in a new way, be transformed and return to their localities better equipped to live the Gospel where they are. They realise that not all people belong to a group which has the resources to organise a visit and so they also offer a programme of open retreats through the year.

All the retreats are fully catered and the costs vary. Bed & Breakfast can also be provided throughout the year from £38 per person per night.

Some of the forthcoming organised retreats are:

16-19 May

"Elemental Spirituality" with Ruth Scott

29-31 July

"Encouraged by God" with Amanda Wright

20-23 September

"A Retreat for Beginners" with Canon Alec Boyd

25-28 November

Advent Weekend

Full details can be obtained online or by contacting direct:

Telephone: 01475 530353

Email: cathedral_cumbrae@btconnect.com

Web: www.island-retreats.org/cumbrae.html

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 28 August 2016.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 9 August 2016.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

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