



Brechin Bulletin

Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Brechin Newsletter. February, 2012 No. 61
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CONVERSATIONS

I read a newspaper feature recently entitled 'What's to love about call centres?' Public opinion of these places is so low that no-one batted an eyelid when a popular insurance brand depicted call centre workers as brainless chickens, a stop-gap while you look for a 'real job'. Of course we have all experienced frustrations trying to resolve problems or complaints with products and services. But we should realise that after some delay the voice at the end of the phone is actually a human being with a brain. Surprisingly perhaps centre workers enjoy their work and many are university educated. The call centre industry is proud of its commitment and performance in successfully making customers' lives better.

As Christians we place a high value on inter-personal relationships and helping people. Ephesians Chapter 4 calls the Church to promote respect and compassion at the heart of its life, building each other up in confidence and faith, until we come 'to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.' I firmly believe that we should not allow ourselves to be blown off course as individuals, as congregations or as a diocese when disputes and unhappiness irritate us. It's important not to over-react and in love to keep conversations open and positive. Call centres report that two thirds of callers' perceptions of the brand improved as a result of the conversation – I am sure we can do even better!

We value enormously the special relationships with our Companion Dioceses of Iowa and Swaziland and are delighted to be welcoming the Rt Revd Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa visiting Brechin Diocese for a week this month. He will be touring the diocese, meeting people and engaging in some important conversations. I hope that every Charge will be represented at Bishop Alan's presentation on **Saturday 25 February at Holy Trinity Monifieth 10am - 2pm. "In mission with Christ through each and all - an Iowa vision."** This will be a great opportunity to think together about our mission and ministry. **Please notify the office of your intention to attend this special occasion.** (Bring a packed lunch on the day.)

The Bishop's Itinerary will be provided later this month for all Charges.

FROM THE BISHOP'S FEBRUARY DIARY

- 1 Glencarse Vestry
- 2 Media meeting, Edinburgh
Candlemass Liturgy at St. Salvador's, Dundee.
- 5 St. John the Baptist, Dundee.
Lay Readers' meeting, Arbroath.
- 6 College of Bishops.
- 8-9 Ecclesiastical Insurance, London.
Church of England General Synod.
Mansion House Dinner.
- 12 St. Andrew's, Brechin.
Cathedral Evensong.
- 16 Broughty Ferry Vestry.
- 19 St. Laurence, Laurencekirk.
- 21 Clergy Study Day, Edzell.
- 22 Ash Wednesday, St. Paul's Cathedral. 7.30pm.
- 24 Dinner at Bishop's House
- 25 Holy Trinity, Monifieth with Bishop Alan.
- 26 Cathedral in Dundee with Bishop Alan.

VACANCIES

The post of Rector of Broughty Ferry and House for Duty, Priest in Charge of Muchalls are advertised now. See: www.scotland.anglican.org

FEBRUARY MEETINGS

Bulletin Deadline - 16th of each month.

Please send news to:

office@brechin.anglican.org

21st Clergy Study Day at Glenesk Hotel, Edzell. 10am – 2pm

25th Diocesan Event with Bishop Alan Scarfe at Holy Trinity, Monifieth. 10am - 2pm. All welcome

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Thank you to Hilary Gibson for her eight years' diligent service as Diocesan Secretary. Hilary resigned on 31st December, and the Administration Board are reviewing the future role.
- The Bishop has appointed Rev. Kirrilee Reid, Rector of Glencarse to be also Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations Adviser. Kirrilee brings considerable Australian experience to the challenge of raising up new and younger vocations in our diocese. Please pray for her in this responsibility.
- Thank you to Mark Zarb, a doctoral student at Dundee University, who relinquishes maintaining our diocesan website as we migrate to a new Scottish Episcopal Church website format for Province, Dioceses, Churches coming on stream shortly. *Brechin Bulletin* will give more information as it becomes available.
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults - A day for vestries, co-ordinators and clergy will take place on Saturday, 24th March, 2012 in the hall of St. John the Baptist which is located at 110 Albert Street, Dundee. DD4 6QN. 10am - 1pm.
- A Burns Supper will be held at St. Ternan, Muchalls on 4th February, 2012 at 7.30pm Tickets £10 include two-course meal, and entertainment. To book phone: 01224-733583. All welcome.

COMPANION DIOCESES LINKS UPDATE

Swaziland

In a recent news letter, friends in Swaziland, Canon Andrew Symonds and his wife Rosemary, who are on a mission placement with USPG, have said that celebrating Christmas in the southern hemisphere still seems strange even after being in Swaziland for six years. They talked of the long hot evenings listening to crickets, frogs and toads against the rumbles of the black thunder and lightning storms that often come at the end of a sweltering day. They say that yet:

'.....the message of the true light that shines in darkness coming into the darkness of this world is still appropriate to a nation which continues to struggle with the darkness of sin, inequality, poverty and sickness.'

Sadly, during their six years, they see little change for the better in the lives of most Swazis and deterioration in the quality of life for many.

While it's true that shopping facilities have improved, broadband is available and extravagant houses are being built by those with influence, it is also true that over 70% of the population still lives on less than \$1 a day. Huge hikes in the price of food world-wide and ever increasing unemployment threaten the wellbeing of the majority.

HIV and AIDS continue to ravage lives and families, and funerals of those still in their prime are a regular occurrence. Life expectancy across the population is officially around 42 years, but is reported to be considerably lower; some suggest as low as 33 years.

Poor governance, corruption and abuse of the constitution and law by those in power have intensified problems for the people. Newspaper stories of abuse are so common that, while shocking, they have ceased to amaze.

In that situation, it was with sadness that Bishop Meshack Mabuza retired officially on 31st December, 2011. He was fearless in speaking out against the abuses within the Swazi nation and he gave a vision to the church that required people to stand for justice and to reveal God's love through neighbourly care of the poor and oppressed within Swaziland. The diocese has now entered an interregnum and Andrew and Rosemary report that, as they seek a new bishop, the people are praying for a leader:

'.....with a clear vision of how God's grace in the light of Jesus Christ can renew and transform their mission and ministry.'

Because of difficulties within the diocese, 2011 was described as a 'year of small things', but 2012 is beginning positively with Archbishop Thabo arriving on 14th January for the ordination of eight candidates - two to the priesthood and six to the diaconate. Only one of these is a woman.

For years it has been hoped that the farm land at Luyengo, which was gifted to the diocese by the last king, would be developed as a diocesan business and resource for the good of the community - and specifically to help provide food for the orphans and the work of the Home Based Care teams.

At the moment, the diocese receives only the rent from that land, but the company that leases the farm is making a real success of the venture and, after only a few months, is already selling a range of baby vegetables at the markets in Johannesburg. This is encouraging and offers employment for a number of local people.

For the purpose of our diocesan intercessions, I should perhaps add that, following Bishop Meshak's official retirement on 31 December, 2011, the Vicar General of the Anglican Diocese of Swaziland is currently the Provost of all Saints Cathedral in Mbabane, the Very Rev. Advent Dlamini.

Pat. Millar

(Further episode next month)

Diocesan Companion Links Officer.