

Northern Light

News from the Scottish Episcopal Church - Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



September 2016

Scottish Charity No. SC022180

Issue 94

Autumn Edition



†BOB'S AWAY

On 24th June 2016 we gathered at St Colman's Church in Burravoe on the Island of Yell with Bishop Bob, to officially and formally give thanks for his ministry with us and alongside us. St Colman's happens to be the most northerly Scottish Episcopal Church, and of course the most northerly church in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney.

We welcomed to the service, entitled "Bob's Away", Methodist and Church of Scotland ministers and brother and sisters and we made presentations to Bishop Bob in a reception following the service in the community hall.

It was a joyous celebration of Bob's ministry with us, as well as a celebration of our own shared discipleship and ministry on Yell.

As the picture shows, Bishop Bob called us to worship by ringing the ship's bell which hangs at the church door. He heralded the beginning of what is probably the first of the celebrations marking Bishop Bob's retirement later this year. Perhaps it was symbolic that this began in the most northerly point of the Diocese?

What was also poignant was that the 24th June is also to anniversary of Bishop Bob's ordination as Deacon. This was not known as the service began and Bishop Bob highlighted this personal note during the service at St Colman's. Two days later we also had a service at St Magnus' Church in Lerwick at which we made presentations to Bishop Bob and Liz, and he responded by telling us that that day also happened to be the anniversary of his priesting!

Sad though it is often is to say farewell to people "moving on" we were privileged to be able to hold these services in June heralding what we expect to be a chorus of thanksgiving for Bob's ministry as Bishop of this Diocese.

To Bishop Bob, our thanks, our prayers, and may God Bless.

Rev Neil Brice



To celebrate the Episcopate of The Right Rev'd Dr Robert Gillies

Choral Evensong

Sunday 30th October 2016 - 5pm

at

The Cathedral Church of St Andrew, King Street, Aberdeen

†Bob in Brief....



MONEY FOR ... Your buildings ... or ... ?

There's little doubt that congregations are very successful at raising money to maintain the very beautiful buildings that we have in the Diocese. And what's more many people in the communities around our churches can be motivated to help in the task.

But, and it is a huge but, whilst we have been bequeathed these buildings to care for there is *absolutely nothing in scripture* to say that we should put them before our concern for ministry (serving others) and mission (making God's love known and bringing people to Christ).

Both these are *absolutely there in scripture* and must have our support if we are to be faithful as Christian disciples today in the same way that Peter and Paul were at the start of the Christian Church. Sometimes balancing these priorities isn't easy but if the focus for our energy is the maintaining of property to the denial of ministry and mission, when it is seen to be taking place, then we must ask ourselves serious questions. 'Put not your trust in earthen vessels' are words that ring true it says somewhere in the Bible. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God' also comes towards us in volumes.

The 'earthen vessel' might be several things. It could be a church building. It might well be a bank balance which we reserve for that other 'earthen vessel' that might be variously called the 'fabric fund' or whatever. The Kingdom of God, by contrast, is a hospital visit, time spent with newcomers to the area in their home, an Alpha course or Christian discipleship course. These don't come cheap. Necessary investment in them is crucial in the church of today in them is to be around in just a few years time.

And it must be the living church of today, through its generous giving, that resources this. Relying on a bank balance inherited from yesterday will only result in no funds tomorrow. Generous giving now by each of us will resource ministry and mission now for the church of tomorrow.

That's the way for the church to grow. Both Peter and Paul discovered and said this two thousand years ago. They were right.

My blessings to you, †Bob

AN EPISCOPATE CONSIDERED

(Written for Inspires Magazine Summer 2016 Edition)

The Rt Rev Dr Robert (Bob) Gillies was consecrated Bishop of Aberdeen & Orkney in 2007 and will retire at the end of October 2016, when he will have completed almost 10 years in Office. Here he reflects on these years:

Endings and Beginnings

The other side of the coin from making a new start is that something else has to end. The emotions attached to each are that of excitement for the one and sadness around the other.

Significant discernment is needed for a Bishop to decide that God no longer needs that Bishop to remain in office as a Diocesan Bishop. The decision I came to that this was so for me came neither quickly nor with deep anguish. It was a gradual realisation.

It is necessary, I believe, that all of us in public ministry need to have a weather eye open at all times for that moment when the time arrives to be able to say 'I must move on to create space for another'.

So, for several months, I have been testing that calling to move on and each time I have come to the same conclusion, that from the start of May the clock could start ticking for my retiral to take place at the end of October 2016.

Good Things ...

Churches have been renovated at Kemnay, Auchindoir and Bieldside. Halls have been built at Inverurie and Whiterashes. Mission has begun from scratch where previously things had gone moribund at Inch and Woodhead. New insights into liturgy have flourished at Oldmeldrum and new life all round has begun at Aboyne and Ballater.

The fabulous new church at Westhill is a crowning glory and testament to the faith and integrity of the congregation there. Likewise the new mission, Fresh Expressions plant at Bridge of Don, Cafe, is a witness of sacrificial dedication by those who are leading it. I remain in awe of what is happening there.

At a personal level an evening with the vestry at Westhill in 2011 was one of the most productive ninety minutes I have ever spent. And I remain staggered that the sermon I gave at Peterhead for its 200th Anniversary is still being reflected on eighteen months down the line!

Difficult Bits...

There have been some though, let it be said, very few. In specific terms these cannot be named but in one case rank evil was resisted and thwarted. Otherwise my

greatest anxieties surround those situations (very, very few in fact) where either no development or vision is being put in place and thus no prospect for the future.

I can only recall one disagreeable vestry meeting I attended. There have been a number of difficult ones but each of these creatively worked themselves towards positive outcomes. A sure indication of professional and positive contributions from all those present.

Rewarding Bits...

I've loved the Diocesan Synods, the Clergy and Lay Reader Conferences (quite deliberately in recent times I've mixed clergy and lay readers together for each conference), mission and growth planning and implementation as well as receiving a wonderfully warm welcome wherever I've gone.

The Diocese has generously allowed me time for overseas representation and I dare to think that the Scottish Episcopal Church in general and the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in particular is now mentioned and thought of somewhat agreeably in those areas of the world where I have been invited to preach, or lead retreats or conferences. It is fair to mention these: New York, Connecticut and The Episcopal Church in South Carolina in the USA. In Africa I led pre-ordination conferences and preached at ordinations in North Karamoja, Uganda, as well as conference leading in Mbale, Tanzania.

Links with our companion Diocese of Mthatha in South Africa are warm and strong and what a joy it is to have seen Mthatha spawn two new dioceses as it has grown: Mzimvubu and Mbashe.

Around the Province

The College of Bishops, the various Committees and Boards on which I've served have been a real stimulus and eye-opener for me to the wider church within and beyond my own Diocese.

The administrative skill and total dedication of the staff of the General Synod Office is remarkable. I remain in awe that so much is accomplished with such little resource at their disposal. The Scottish Episcopal Church is astonishingly well served by the General Synod Office and I will forever remain in its debt.

Back in the Diocesan Office, those with whom I have had the privilege to work have been people of unerring commitment and integrity. My Personal Assistants, Sue Pike first of all, then Avril Scott, have with Ian Fraser (Finance) provided a backbone that has enabled me to do whatever I have needed or sought to do. Mary McKinnell has joined us more recently, thankfully doing all the IT for the diocese and, in many cases, for congregations as well.

Links across the Diocese

Bonds with the social institutions in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and the northern islands are strong; be that with universities, the prison, hospitals, Westminster and Holyrood politicians, and so many more.

A weekend as a personal guest of the Royal Family at Balmoral and preaching at Crathie was special in every way.

What has developed?

Seeing dedicated lay people, lay readers and clergy getting on with the task of ministry in those many and various settings where God has called them to be has been very special.

I have witnessed some of the finest examples of pastoral practice one could ever wish to see in the congregations and communities served by the diocese.

My frustration is that I wish we could have done more. But my consolation is that more and more people in the diocese are actually now 'getting' what mission means and are doing it. Sadly the way our statistical return is constructed does not easily enable this to be properly recorded, but it is happening. With a new Bishop in post who is even more mission-minded and church-growth orientated than I am, the future looks set for God's kingdom to be ever more firmly rooted in Scotland's north east and northern islands than it already is.

What I owe the diocese...

A huge amount - more than I could ever recount! First and foremost is the privilege to have served it as Bishop. Yes, I know I've been a meddler and a micromanager, but everyone has been wonderfully forgiving. No one could ask for more than has come to me from so very many people in just about every way imaginable.

I give thanks that, somewhere out there, is someone who, following me, will similarly experience all this and more.

There has been an overwhelming response to our request for material - to all our contributors a big thank you. Some articles that are not time sensitive have been carried over to the next edition. We have included information from our website and from the Province's magazine *Inspires* as their importance is such that they merit a wide audience.

On behalf of all the editorial team, we are most grateful to Bishop Bob for the love, care, insight, enthusiasm, hard work and inspiration with which he has guided us and the Diocese. We wish him joy in his retirement.

Copy dead line for the Winter edition is **17 October 2016**.

The email address is: office@aberdeen.anglican.org or by post to Diocesan Office, St Clements Church House, Mastrick Drive, Aberdeen, AB16 6UF

Reports on the General Synod

This by Nicola Mills, Lay Representative – St Mary's Carden Place

Watching sunny Edinburgh hurry past from the foyer of St. Paul's and St. George's, waiting for Synod to start. Keen, happy faces, name badges claimed, tables found. Old friends greeted, journeys compared. Hall fills up, bishops parade in matching robes, voices raised with gusto for the first hymn. Primus' charge outlines the issues facing us: same-sex marriage, relations with Church of Scotland, relations with Anglican Communion, but we escort our ecumenical guests to Communion with joy. Business starts, housekeeping, elections, then lunch: a sandwich on warm grass outside with new friends from three other dioceses. Everyone relaxed, knowing the stressful times are still to come.



Afternoon business: friendly greetings from the Church of Scotland delegate, worries about how we work together. Many laughs, and a few sighs – surely that delegate isn't up to speak again? The big room is crowded and hot, the round tables heavy with papers. A presentation on work with refugees brings us all back together with interesting group discussions. I see us through new eyes at my tenth synod as I'm chumming the Quaker delegate, wondering what she thinks of us. We seize coffees to combat the soporific heat, and return for the last session. The day finishes with worship, spoken psalms, prayers, a quiet hymn, then off to socialise within our own dioceses, agreeing that things have gone smoothly so far.

Friday: nine o'clock start, worship and more lengthy psalmody. The tone of worship is different every year: this year it's more contemplative. Tension rises as the ballot papers are distributed. Debate starts, encouraged to be respectful. Chair looks anxious as the arguments are rehearsed. Yellow and red lights warn over-wordy speakers. Such pressure and passion on both sides – what a mixed bunch we are! And yet we want so much to stay together. Votes cast, we go for coffee. BBC films the result, but they must have been disappointed at the lack of drama. Received in silence, then prayer – no one cheers, no one walks out.

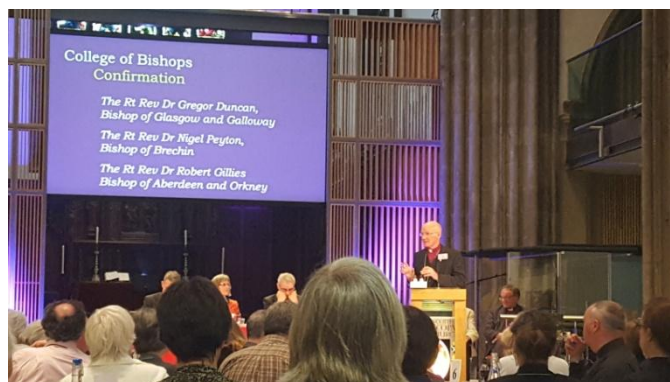
Church in Society and the Institute discussions follow, all important subjects. How do we train a record number of new candidates for ordination? The College of Bishops present their thoughts on Confirmation, an Army Chaplain shows a moving video from Afghanistan, the Pensions Fund people speak, and we break up for the evening. A drinks reception and off to whatever Episcopalians do on Friday night in Edinburgh.

Saturday morning is there before we know it. Delegates tug suitcases into the hall, ready for a quick getaway. Worship then Communications Board, presentation ending in a long silence for contemplation – lovely. Then lively youth delegates talk of Glen and we're into the final stretch with accounts and budgets. Heads buzzing with ideas we frantically find our friends to wish them safe journeys, send love to other churches, exchange email addresses, and suddenly the Primus has dismissed us and the street is full of Episcopalians with suitcases, off to cars and buses and trains, and Synod is over for another year.

.....and this by Rev Alastair MacDonald – Insch and Fyvie

Last year's General Synod was my first experience of participating in the national body and it was a very difficult meeting. So this year I set off early on the Thursday morning (the 6.24am train from Insch) slightly anxious although very happy to be getting to visit Edinburgh. It is a wonderful city to be in, especially when the sun is shining.

The Synod started with the opening Eucharist, during which I had the privilege of serving a chalice. I must confess the worship of this year's Synod was one of my greatest disappointments. It failed to reflect the diverse styles of worship found throughout the Episcopal Church and was uniformly for me a dry traditional style that was rather uninspiring. This was very sad because I think business meetings are always improved by inspiring worship of whatever style.



Having said that, the atmosphere of Synod was for me much improved from the previous year. Even though there were significant debates, with real and passionate disagreements, there was none of the animosity that

seemed to exist the previous year. I suspect this is because the debates were better organized, with more consultation taken before preparing them.

The big debate of the Synod was of course over the issue of same-sex marriage. This was highlighted by the presence of BBC cameras. But thankfully they were not allowed to film the actual debate, so had very little influence on proceedings. Although personally disappointed by the result of the vote on the change to the canon on marriage I was content that a fair debate had taken place and I actually enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know some of those who led the arguments on the opposing side of the debate. I was particularly impressed and moved by Alistair Dinnie's presentation from the Anglican Consultative Council and what he said in the debate to change the canon on marriage.



Among the other debates and presentations that stood out to me was the SEC's response to the Colomba Agreement between the Church of England and Church of Scotland. This was much more positive than I expected and it was great to hear how we as a church are beginning discussions with the Church of Scotland on how we can work more closely together on our shared mission in Scotland. I was also encouraged by Bishop Kevin's presentation on the Scottish Episcopal Institute and very excited that really progress has been made in establishing a new mode of training that will be linked to St Mellitus' in London. Finally, I was surprised but happy that the motion on scrapping Trident was voted down. We live in a very complicated world and there is often no simple answer to the complicated issues we face and I felt this sense of realism was present in many of the discussions at General Synod.

So I left General Synod not pleased with all the decisions that were made but feeling grateful for the opportunity to participate. I was also pleasantly surprised that although the SEC is at times going in a direction that I fundamentally disagree with, I still feel a part of the SEC family and am grateful for the friendships and relationships I have within it.

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES REFLECT ON "BREXIT"

Representatives from seven member churches of ACTS gathered in Edinburgh on Monday 4th July to share initial thoughts, questions and concerns over the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The Rev Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales), travelled especially to participate in the meeting and explain reaction in Wales. Concern was expressed about the uncertainties facing EU citizens in the UK and British Citizens in the rest of the EU. The way much of the debate was conducted, leading to instances of racist and xenophobic abuse and through the use of what has subsequently been acknowledged to be misinformation, was criticised. Looking forward, participants agreed that the values of the Gospel must be upheld and that the priority of all, politicians, churches and wider society alike, must be to promote the necessary conditions for human flourishing, including access to education, health care, family life, justice, security and peace. Participants committed themselves to continuing ecumenical engagement with churches and other organisations across Europe, including the Conference of European Churches, recognising that Scotland remains part of European culture and society irrespective of political decisions. The meeting concluded by resolving to plan for a conference to be held later in 2016 which could explore the role of the churches in addressing the issues facing society which surfaced, explore more deeply the Christian understanding of unity and seek to find ways of offering Gospel insights within the ongoing public debate.

The Meadow

On a bright sunny day, light green,
On a rainy day it is dark green.
No matter what the weather.....always green.
Like a giant green flag,
No matter what the weather
It always stands proud and shows colour,
The flag bearer is the dark brown soil,
The proud supporter is the sky.
Without these two things the flag is nothing,
Without the bearer it cannot stand.
Without the sky it cannot shine.
All these things together equal
One big brown, blue and green stripy flag.
The flag has a name:
The Meadow.

a poem by Montgomery (Isaac) Duncan
aged 12.

Around the Diocese



Jo Bowyer was commissioned as a Church Army Evangelist in Sheffield by Bishop Anne Hollinghurst and Cannon Mark Russell on Tuesday 19th July. Bishop Bob joined Jo and her family for the service and led prayers for Jo in her new ministry here in Aberdeen



The Rev Vittoria Hancock is, as far as we know, the first SEC priest to preach before a reigning monarch at Crathie Church with the only exception of +Bob Gillies.



St James, Holburn Junction bids farewell to organist Tim Gillies as he moves to London



†Bob confirms Katie Willing and commissions the young people of St Mary on the Rock, Ellon, before they leave for the Provincial Youth Camp.



Westhill Holiday Bible Club

Each day about 140 children attended for a morning of singing, Bible stories, games, crafts and lots of fun. They used the Scripture Union material 'Guardians of Ancora'. Thank you to God for the opportunity to bring His light into the community as they shared Bible stories and God's love with the children each day.



The Praise Band at CAF4E, Bridge of Don taking part in a Service led by †Bob recently.



†Bob leading prayers at a service commemorating the Battle of Jutland at Marwick Head, Orkney



The Confirmation of Nicola Stephen recently at St James the Less, Cruden Bay



Recently a group of people from South Africa attended the Service of Morning Prayer in St Ninians, Mar Lodge Braemar including Mr and Mrs Jeremy Lindquist who were married on Deeside and had a Blessing in St Ninians 13 years ago. They were accompanied by members of their family.

TWO REPORTS REGARDING THE VISIT BISHOP SITEMBELE IN MAY 2016

On 18th May, our Bishop drove Bishop Sitembele Mzamane and his wife Tobeka out to St. Mary-on-the-Rock, Ellon, where they were greeted by the Rector, Andrew Tucker.



A celebration of the Eucharist was then held in the church at 10 a.m. with Bishop Sitembele presiding and preaching. The congregation included not only members of St. Marys, but also visitors from other parts of our diocese. After a coffee break in the hall, the gathering reassembled in the church for a session chaired by Bishop Bob. Bishop Sitembele answered a number of questions about life in his diocese, and it was inspiring to hear about the number of people training for ministry as well as amazing growth in the number of parishes. In thanking Bishop Sitembele and Tobeka for their visit, Andrew Tucker presented them with a quach. Finally a very enjoyable buffet lunch was served in the church.

Carole Fox

Bishop Sitembele also visited St Mary's Carden Place. He was a comfortable presence amongst us along with his wife. He answered all our questions about his home diocese easily and with a gentle humour before preaching at our morning service. He gave the blessing in his mother tongue, then laughed and said if we were a bit taken aback, we should blame Bishop Bob who had encouraged him to do it!

Nicola Mills

Words of Acknowledgement.....

Dear Bishop Gillies,

This is to let you know how grateful I am for the service of the archives of your diocese.

I had been in Edinburgh for one year on exchange from Tübingen. In the last months I've been writing my exam thesis on John Forbes of Corse, one of the six 'Aberdeen Doctors'. I found it a very interesting and inspiring theme also for our days. While writing this thesis in Germany, I had good contact to the archives in Aberdeen, especially to Mr. Stewart Donald ('Keeper of the Aberdeen Diocesan Library and Honorary Archivist'), who was so fascinated by a student from abroad writing on John Forbes that he tirelessly engaged in helping to find documents, sending scans etc. This is what a really passionate archivist does.

Mr. Donald mentioned also the good atmosphere in the whole team, so that I will send them a copy of my work to express my gratitude.

Best wishes for you and your service for the diocese,
cand. theol. Benedikt Jetter, Tübingen, Germany

Columba Agreement

Bishop Mark speaking to this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland during the Ecumenical Relations session and following the address from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Assembly.

"I stand here this morning in the company of people who have shared with me this week the love and pride they have for their church, just as I love my church and I am very aware that I am in the company of people with whom I do share and could share, so much more together.

Many years ago I first sat down with my new books in readiness for Henry Sefton's Church history lectures. I discovered the spaghetti map, the lineal map showing all the divisions and reunions of the Scottish Church and there we were: the Scottish Episcopal Church - divided from our brethren by the question of Apostolic Order, and loyalty to a royal dynasty. Our sister Church, the Kirk, and ourselves have remained divided over that and other issues but we still have the same roots, we came through the same reformation.

So this Episcopal limb of the Church of Scotland that survived, despite the political pressures placed on it, begins to make new friends; firstly with the Americans who received the orders of Bishops from us and then as we made friends with the other Episcopally - led churches of the UK and became part of the Anglican Communion. The first non colonial part of that family.

Now all seems sorted. In Scotland we are in company with our sister Church, I myself am a corresponding member of Inverness Presbytery, and in the rest of the UK we share much with our friends in the Anglican Communion. I was trained and ordained in England. So it was a bit difficult when our sister begins to take an interest in our best friend, especially when best friend shows interest back. We just needed a bit of time to go away and sort that one out in our heads, to observe the relationship and to wait for the promised report of the relationship to be published. But oh gosh there is an unexpected announcement and we are hurt.

Now let me ask you, if this happens in your family then surely you try and sort it out when this happens, of course you try to fix it.

And so my Lord Archbishop, I thank you for your words today, acknowledging those difficulties, and the hurt surprise of the announcement.

I am also very aware that the many questions we asked of both Churches have now been answered, or will be answered when we meet to discuss the issues of authority, the place of the local bishop in licensing clergy and other issues I am sure are still to be uncovered. And to my sister church here in Scotland, we see many things differently, that happens when you have lived with a theological divergence for over 300 years, but that doesn't stop us loving one another and finding ways to work together. In Scotland there are

many issues we need to work on with each other, not least the issues of territoriality, and not just in the wonderful wilds of the North but also in those places of urban deprivation and in communities filled with new Scots.

I have heard much that is good this week, the work of Cross Reach, the powerful concerns of the Church in Society programme, and we are already united in our responses to the environment our sharing in our care for this nation we love, and in so much more.

You will now make your own decisions about this deliverance and that is right.

But having now acknowledged our very human responses to this document and heard the concerns from all, having established ways of keeping us talking, through the "Our common calling" initiative, then now is the time to get on with the real task in hand, sharing all we have in the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ."

†Mark – Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness

COMMUNICATING WELL

A series of workshops will be taking place over the next few months for all who are interested in communications. The main focus will be on-line communications, with the opportunity to look at how these tie in with other means of communication, from notice boards to magazines and anything else you do.

The workshops will each follow the same plan and structure, so if you can't make it to the one nearest you, you can join another one. Please let Mary McKinnell know if you are coming so that we can plan for the right numbers attending, email itofficer@aberdeen.anglican.org. More information on each event will be available nearer the time.

Saturday 3 September, 2016, 10:00am to 1:00pm at St Ternan's Church Banchory

Local congregations: Aboyne, Ballater, Banchory, Bielside, Braemar, Kincardine O'Neil, Westhill.

Saturday 5 November, 2016, 2:00pm to 5:00pm at All Saint's Church, Buckie

Local congregations: Banff, Buckie, Cuminstown, New Pitsligo, Portsoy, Strichen.

Saturday 28 January, 2017, 2:00pm to 5:00pm at St Ninian's Church, Aberdeen

Local congregations: Cathedral, CAF4E, St Clement's, St James', St John's, St Margaret's, St Mary's Carden Place

St Mary's Cove, St Ninian's, Bucksburn.

Saturday 18 February, 2017, 10:00am to 1:00pm at St Mary's Church, Inverurie

Local congregations: Alford, Auchindoir, Inch, Inverurie, Kemnay, Oldmeldrum, Turriff, Whiterashes, Woodhead.

Saturday 20 May, 2017, 2:00pm to 5:00pm at St Mary's Church, Ellon

Local congregations: Cruden Bay, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Longside, Old Deer.

Mary McKinnell

MEETING BETWEEN ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL REFUGEE PROJECT, ACVO AND PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEERS

Who was there?

With around 25 people from different faith and community groups, I attended one of the meetings held at The Mission, St Machar's Drive, on Wednesday 27 April to find out more about how we, as individuals or groups, could continue to offer support to the new Syrian Scots families already settling into Aberdeen city and to those who will come in the course of the next few months.

Organised by Faiza Nacef from the Council Refugee Project, the session began with an introduction to volunteering in general from Mike Melvin, a staff member of ACVO (Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations), who heads up the Aberdeen Volunteers Co-ordinators Network. Volunteering, as we know from our church experience, is definitely something to be recommended.

This was followed by an update from Mary Rose Peteranna from the City Council Housing Support Team giving us an overview of the situation so far. There are now 10 households with a mix of families with young children, single people and a number of young couples dispersed across the communities of Hazlehead, Sunnyside and Kittybrewster. They bring a mix of life experience, education, work experience and all are keen to make progress here, particularly initially with learning or improving their English. All have experienced a very warm welcome, particularly in these initial weeks as they put together their new homes and deal with the many basic needs of settling in. Another group will be arriving over the next few months. We also now know that there are already another 30 Syrian families who have made their way here through different routes and might be glad to be involved with the efforts to welcome the newcomers.

However, as one volunteer pointed out – “Charity eases the burden of wealth (*or poverty*) but we are here to teach the new families citizenship.” This means that we, as people with knowledge of Aberdeen and with our own life experience, can enable these new arrivals to find their own place amongst us as valued members of our community. The culture shock is huge and, as someone who has lived in different cultures, one learns very quickly to check our own, often automatic, assumptions. What is absolutely “OK” for one culture can be completely “not on” for another. We need to learn from them. One important way to help their integration is to be careful of our language – we think that being known as a Syrian Scot is better than being known as a refugee.

We then heard from a number of people with experience of volunteering in many different capacities and all were encouraging of its two way value. Volunteers gain just as much if not more than they can offer. The remainder of the session was spent in group discussion about different aspects of volunteering with an opportunity to put our names down for the kind of support which the Syrian Scots would appreciate. Their project workers are still in the process of ascertaining priorities.

So how can we help?

There will be an ongoing need for financial help, food and household goods. However, as some of you will know already, unless there is a specific call for particular items, the easiest way for individuals and faith groups to offer support with all aspects of resettlement is to link into the fund which has now been set up by the Church of Scotland. The Presbytery of Aberdeen has set up a Donations Account with NESCU (the North East Scotland Credit Union) to which individuals and groups can donate. Donations by cheque should be made payable to North East Scotland Credit Union Ltd. and sent to their Head Office, currently at 7 Finnan Place, Aberdeen, AB11 8RG, and quoting Reference 10020/1.

When there is a need for more food, goods or volunteers, then word will be sent out. There is already an existing email list of interested parties. If you would like to add your contact details or can offer support in the areas listed below, please send them to Revd Joan Lyon at joanblyon@gmail.com.

There is a need for:

- Drivers and transport
- Befrienders
- Arts and associated activities
- Sports and walks
- Fund-raising – see info above for Donations Account
- Teaching English
- Interpreting

If you are already part of a group who takes part in these activities, let me know so that perhaps some of the Syrians can be invited along.

continued over/

/continued

This meeting highlighted the level of goodwill around. This will be harnessed; specific needs and links with volunteers will be identified depending on the time availability of the volunteer; more information about practicalities and training will be offered.

You may be able to offer a one-off social gathering in your community or a fundraising event; you may want to spend regular time with the Syrians helping them with English, or finding their way about, going to the swimming pool etc. You will be asked to be realistic about your time commitment. The need will be ongoing as new aspects of life in Scotland arise for these people. It will be wonderful if they can have a friend to whom they can turn – you don't need all the answers, but you can find out who can help. As we heard from the council project workers, the first smile is the most important – keep smiling!

This meeting was just a start and it may take some time to set up contact – please be patient. More information will be on its way.

Revd Joan Lyon



MEET OUR PROVOST

The editor asked the Provost, the Very Rev Dr Isaac Poobalan, some leading questions about his first year in Office.

What is the job?

I am the Rector and Provost St Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen. The title reflects the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church in general and the history of St Andrew's Cathedral in particular. I made it my duty to learn precisely what it is to be a Rector and Provost of a Cathedral in the Scottish Episcopal Church beyond the job description offered at my interview.

I learnt, by reading historical documents, how delicate and sensitive the process had been when this parish church became a Cathedral, the Seat of the Bishop. The Rector part of the job is to serve the gathered community at St Andrew's which is both pastoral and administrative. And the Provost part is to being a diocesan instrument that supports the role of the bishop as an effective focus for unity through liturgical events beginning with Advent Sunday Carols at the beginning to the Celebration of Christ the King at the end of the liturgical year. It gives shape to the life of the Diocese, the congregations and individuals and the shaping is into the likeness of Christ which is the Spiritual temple of God.

How does it differ from having charge of a congregation in an "ordinary" church?

One distinct difference of a cathedral from other churches in the diocese is that the cathedral serves the whole diocese as opposed to being a local church. One comparable distinction would be the difference between various Epistles of Paul to local churches, such as the one in Rome or the one in Ephesus, while the Epistle to the Hebrews has a wider objective and reach. In a sense, the Cathedral does have a distinction of a local church while at the same time embracing the role of being the seat of the Bishop – a symbol of unity. The service of Installation in November last year drew people from all

walks of life who all found the experience of worship at the Cathedral, both joyful and glorious. The civic and the religious representatives found the experience suited for a City event.

What does the term "Provost" mean here in the Scottish Episcopal Church compared with the roles of Provost and of Dean in the Church of England?

The root of 'Provost' in Latin is 'praepositus' which translates 'placed in front' or 'placed in command'. It became Provost through old French and was used in the Church in the middle ages. In the wider Anglican Communion, the Dean heads the cathedral team, in the Scottish Episcopal Church the Provost holds that role. For simplicity, Dean could be seen as assisting the Bishop in the administration of the Diocese, while the Provost would assist with the pastoral and spiritual care of the Diocese. This is why the Dean travels the diocese to visit individual congregations while the Provost gathers the diocese of pastoral and spiritual care and renewal. The Good Friday event this year, led by Canon Lisa Eunson is an example of this role of facilitating.

What are the issues facing a city centre cathedral congregation?

The prophetic vision of St Andrew's Church which began with the upper room of John Skinner's house as St Andrew's Chapel was to be God's presence between the Merchant quarters of wealthy merchants of Aberdeen and the Slum dwellers of the Castlegate. This may have changed in its scale, but the vision remains to this day and the recent appeals to the Cathedral explains how it is seen by the city. We were asked to host Solidarity Sunday to reach out to the needy and the marginalised and our Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration was one befitting the Royal status.

The rest of this interview is held over until the next edition. You will have to wait until Advent to read Provost Isaac's answers to the following questions:

What are your hopes for the future of the post and of the cathedral?
How does the Provost relate to the Board of Trustees, the Chapter, the Dean and the Bishop?
What is the role of the cathedral in the mission of the Diocese?
What are your thoughts on the change this new role has brought to your life?

THE TEA BAG ANGEL-OF-THE NORTH COMMISSIONED BY ALL SAINTS WHITERASHES



The thirteenth century friar Humbert of Romans said, “angels are similar to preachers, seeing that God “sent (them) for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation” (Heb.1:14) The word angel means ‘messenger’. Angels are sent to serve God, to convey God’s instructions.

Angels’ appearances in scripture, such as to Abraham, Jacob, Moses and at the annunciation of Mary and the birth of Jesus, are outnumbered by a great many accounts since by those who believe that they have encountered angels and have been provided with protection, consolation or a warning. This suggests that God’s protective care is present throughout creation, that the messages they bring tell us something about our connection with the world and each other and our relationship with God - if only we would listen.

A big thank you to all those churches and individuals from Shetland to Ballater, who responded magnificently to Bishop Bob’s appeal, to help us collect used, emptied and dried tea bags. We more than doubled of our target of 5,000 bags. We have been inspired by St Saviour’s Church in Bridge of Allan, where a life-sized angel made entirely of recycled tea bags attracted hundreds of visitors and raised £000’s for Syrian refugees. We decided to raise awareness, and hopefully funds, for our selected charity which is Embrace Middle East. Embrace supports projects in the Middle East that help vulnerable and marginalised people, facing poverty and injustice.

We realised we could not replicate the Bridge of Allan angel and therefore decided to commission Alison Simpson, who specialises in using mainly plant-derived material and linen rags.

The Whiterashes angel will utilise some of the tea bags and other materials to make wet sheets, These sheets will be stretched over the framework of the angel figure to form a continuous surface which will allow light to pass through it. The figure will become a kind of ‘luminarium’ by means of internal LED lighting, to create a sense of wonder and beauty through light and colour.

Our Tea Bag Angel will be a representation of God’s messenger; a project with many dimensions. First, it will apply a theology of art that has been a recurring theme from the Early Church, through mediaeval stained glass windows to ‘Romantic’ paintings, providing a vision of God and God’s glory, and the image of God in Christ and in us. The angel will pose questions about the theology of art as a shaper of meaning in today’s culture, particularly warnings and concerns about materialism in our consumerist society.

Second, as an EcoCongregation, we wanted to say something about the process of making tea, the beverage signifying welcome to friend or stranger, reminding us of the good news of the gifts of God in the hillsides of tea plantations, about those who work in the preparation of the land, cultivating the tea bushes and those who pick and process the leaves. When next you drink a cup of tea, we would like you to think about how you can play your part by choosing a fairly traded brand that will ensure producers get a better deal and a way out of poverty. But the story does not end here. Even the humble tea bag at the end of its human-centred usefulness can be recycled and transformed into a thing of beauty.

Lastly, in celebrating the work of Embrace, the Tea Bag Angel conveys that we need to be constantly aware of the social injustice in our world. God has been watching and listening and now wants to stir us towards prayer and action, unite us in our hidden talents to respond to the reminder that each person is created in God’s image and therefore inviolable in mind, body and spirit against injustice; that the most vulnerable have a right to an equal share in the living space of life.

The angel will be open to view on the Scottish Civic Trust Doors Open Day on Saturday 17 September from 10.00am to 5.00pm but will also be present at our usual Sunday afternoon service on 4 September at 3.00pm; and our weekly Thursday Midday Prayer services during the month at 11.30am; culminating with a Eucharist on Thursday 29 September to celebrate the Feast Day of St Michael and all Angels. Thereafter the angel will be available for travel throughout the diocese since our specification includes the need to dismantle it into parts small enough be transported in the back of a car and not too heavy for mortals to lift. Please contact me for details.

Richard Murray

Robert Machray (1831-1904)



An Aberdeen Boy—Primate of All Canada

In 2008 a small oil painting was bequeathed to the Diocese of what appeared to be an unknown hirsute bearded clergyman. Research discovered that he was a famous ecclesiastical son of Aberdeen.

Robert Machray, born in Aberdeen on 17 May 1831, of highland ancestry, was son of Presbyterian parents, Robert Machray, advocate in Aberdeen, and his wife, Christian Macallum. After early education at Nairn he enrolled at Aberdeen Grammar school under Dr Melvin, and entered King's College Aberdeen in November 1847 as a bejan aged

17, where he graduated MA in 1851, being head of his year and winning the Simpson and Hutton prizes. A brilliant mathematician, he then entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1855 as thirty-fourth wrangler. In 1858 he was elected to a fellowship and dean of his college.

Despite the fact that he had been reared a Presbyterian in the East Parish Church, in his teenage years he secretly wished to take orders in the Episcopal Church: he told his mother he was intending to become a clergyman in the Anglican Church and occasionally attended services in St Paul's Episcopal Church Aberdeen.

At Cambridge he joined the Church of England whereupon he was confirmed in All Saint's Parish Church. Before long, his presentation to the Bishop of Ely as an ordinand took place and he was seconded to the curacy of a Parish Church in the Winchester Diocese and then transferred as Vicar of Madingley from where his ascent was meteoric. The See of Rupert's Land, the cradle of European settlement and the site of the first Anglican service in western Canada in 1820, was offered to Machray in 1864 by Queen Victoria. Machray was consecrated in the Chapel at Lambeth Palace by Charles Thomas Langley, Archbishop of Canterbury along with other consecrating bishops including, Bishop Suther of Aberdeen. Machray, at a little over 34 years of age was the youngest Bishop in the Anglican See at that date. In an illustrious career in Canada, Machray built up the province from small beginnings; instituted a disused college as a seminary and founded boys schools and a ladies College, teaching the students himself where necessary. He became Chancellor of Manitoba University when that institution was founded.

In 1875 Machray became metropolitan of Canada, and on the union of the Canadian



Anglican churches in 1893 he was created archbishop of Rupert's Land and Primate of all Canada. He arranged the formation of the general synod of the province which met in that year. Machray also played an important role in the establishment of the Lambeth Conferences which he attended in 1878 and 1888.

He died unmarried at Winnipeg on 9th March 1904 in the thirty-ninth year of his episcopate and the seventy-third of his life after a severe attack of pleurisy. He was given a state funeral and was buried in the cemetery of St John's Cathedral—not bad for an Aberdeen boy who was born a Presbyterian?

Stuart Donald



The pictures are (clockwise) Most Revd Robert Machray; the memorial window in the south light of the east window depicting the work of (in ascending order) Robert Machray, archbishop of Rupert's Land 1865-1904; Robert McDonald missionary to the Yukon; Walter Barfoot, archbishop of Rupert's Land 1961-1970; Hon Colin Inkster, Sheriff of Rupert's Land and Warden of St John's College 1871-1933; and the exterior of St John's Cathedral, Winnipeg showing the grave yard where Robert Machray is interred.

contact us: archives@aberdeen.anglican.org