

SUMMER 2023 | ISSUE 12

PROVINCIAL YOUTH NEWSLETTER

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH



*The SEC's Amie Byers (third from left) with other representatives of the Anglican Communion Youth Network and youth reps in Ghana with Archbishop Justin Welby.
Photo: Neil Turner*



This is the Provincial Youth logo. It represents the coming together of young people from the seven dioceses of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Welcome to the Provincial Youth Newsletter, here to share good news about young people in the Scottish Episcopal Church. They are active in dioceses across the Province and beyond - read and be inspired!

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- 10 things young people (still) want you to know
- Yeek! The deadline's coming!

Youth Pilgrimage News

This year sees exciting opportunities for young people in the Scottish Episcopal Church to try for themselves the ancient practices of pilgrimage and retreat, in two very different places.

Provincial Youth Pilgrimage to Iona

In October 2023, young pilgrims from every diocese will be making their way to the island of Iona together for a retreat led by Rev Tembu Rongong and Provincial Youth leaders. This pilgrimage begins in cars, on trains or buses, on ferries and on foot!



The first half of the week will be a retreat for 12-18 year olds, and the second half will be for those aged 18-25(ish). **Please encourage applications**, even if a young person doesn't know exactly what their availability might be. Those in the 18-25 age bracket may be unsure about their university or work commitments, but they can apply anyway: there is no firm commitment on either side until pilgrims are selected after the deadline of 11 August. Details of both pilgrimages and how to apply are now online: 12-18s [here](#) and 18-25s [here](#).

Image by [Fiemetta](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Iowa

In August 2023, young adults from the Diocese of Brechin will be joining the third leg of a youth pilgrimage between Brechin's companion Dioceses of Iowa in the USA and Swaziland (Eswatini) in southern Africa. In 2023 young people from each Diocese will meet together in Iowa.

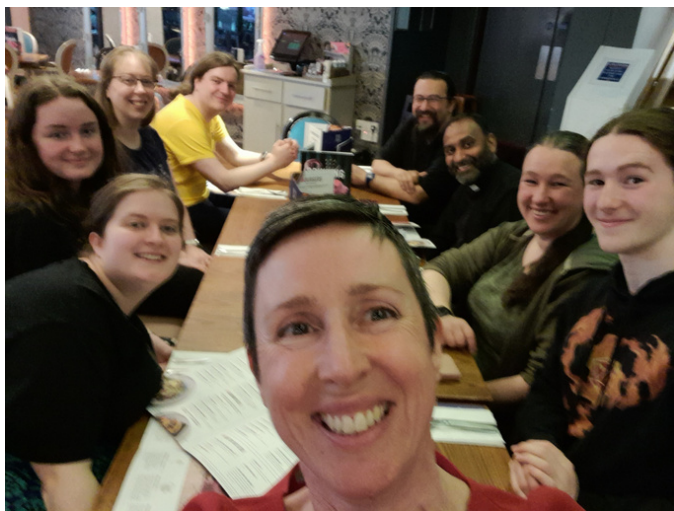
This pilgrimage is about fellowship and strengthening our connections with companion dioceses across the world. It will also begin with a short retreat, to a beautiful [Franciscan ecospirituality retreat centre](#). There will also be opportunities for pilgrims to experience diverse aspects of local culture, from the Meskwaki Nation's Annual Powwow to the Iowa State Fair, taking in an all-American diner and American Episcopal churches on the way. This pilgrimage group is now complete, so watch this space for a report in the next newsletter.



Des Moines, Iowa: Image by [Tony Walker](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Young people at General Synod

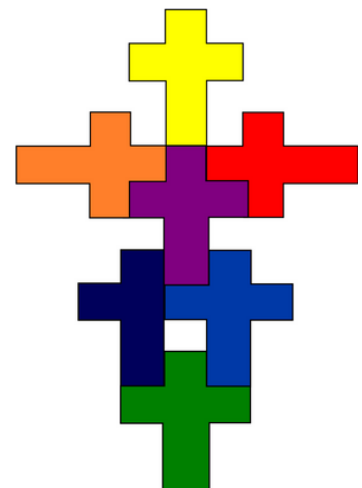
Three youth reps from the Provincial Youth Committee brought General Synod to a rousing conclusion on its final day of business. Each spoke about an issue close to their heart. Under-18 rep Jadon (Moray, Ross & Caithness) spoke about actions in his local community to support asylum seekers and refugees. Over-18 reps Elizabeth (Aberdeen & Orkney) and Olivia (Edinburgh) spoke about the cost of living crisis and how it is affecting students, with a particular



impact on their mental health. Both urged churches to find ways of supporting students in their area both practically and spiritually; Olivia made an impassioned plea for young people to be able to enjoy "life in all its fulness", as Jesus promised. Rev Tembu Rongong, PYC Convener, spoke with excitement of the upcoming Youth Week and Provincial Youth Pilgrimage. Provincial Youth Coordinator, Claire Benton-Evans, spoke about the PYC's global reach, and asked Synod to show its appreciation of everyone involved in youth and children's ministry in their local churches. You can read a full report of the PYC's address to General Synod [here](#).

PYC membership

Members of the Provincial Youth Committee, plus supporters, gathered for lunch together after General Synod (*above*). This was a valuable opportunity to meet together in person: since the pandemic, most of our meetings have been online, which suits our geographically scattered members. Youth reps have fitted online meetings around dinner, revision, rehearsals and choral evensong! We are still looking for new 12-18 and 18-25 members from each diocese: please contact your youth officer if you are interested, or know someone who might be. Contact details [here](#).



Youth Rep in Ghana for the SEC

"Hi, I am Amie Byers, (*right*) Provincial Youth Leader - representing the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway. From the 11 February until the 19 February 2023, I attended the 18th plenary of the Anglican Consultative Council – ACC18 – in Ghana, the host Province of West Africa. This was my second ACC meeting after attending as the youth rep in 2019 at ACC17 in Hong Kong.

ACC allows 10 youth members to attend the plenary from across all regions of the Communion. The decision evolved from a resolution passed at ACC16 in Lusaka to improve youth representation at ACC meetings. As a result I was nominated to be the youth representative of the Europe region of the Anglican Communion as well as representing the Scottish Episcopal Church.

At ACC, youth members are full voting members and can be elected to the Standing Committee of the ACC and sub-committees such as the Anglican Communion Youth Network (ACYN), ACC Resolution Committee (*see right*) and many more.



A resolution is a request from a network, group or person that asks the ACC to do something or work towards something: for example, at ACC16 a resolution was passed that there be better youth representation at ACC17; at ACC17 there were 8 youth reps instead of 2 that were at the previous plenary.



The theme of this ACC was around the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission - **Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure**. Each session, we looked at a different mark of mission through daily bible studies, network presentations and resolutions; we discussed how we can apply each one to our life in the church and how our different churches display these marks of mission.

*Representatives of ACYN and youth reps with Archbishop Justin - in partnership with his reconciliation team.
Photos: Neil Turner*

“We pray to God for the hurt that still remains there and for healing of the unseen wounds and pain”

Amie Byers

On our non-business day we all travelled to the Cape Coast. We visited Cape Coast castle, which was one of the main slave castles that were part of the transatlantic slave trade. We were taken on a tour of the castle and told the stories of the millions of women and men tortured, enslaved, sold, sexually assaulted, killed and shipped out to cross the Atlantic to America. Within the walls of the castle you could feel the pain that took place where we stood. The experience was like no other and not one I will have again. I wanted to cry but I could not. I could feel my heart beating in my chest, full of raw emotion and anger.

No one asked the guide any questions, we all just stood, in silence. But the silence spoke many words that day. We were led down to the male slave dungeon: it was dark, cramped and the air was thick and hard to breathe. As we walked around, we saw that on top of the male slave dungeon they built a chapel, supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Outside of the door was a hole to the 2500 male prisoners below. At times the only source of light they received was through that hole. How were the acts happening around the worshippers loving thy neighbour? Could they not hear the cries of the prisoners as they prayed? These are just some of the questions that I wanted to ask.

After the tour we attended a reconciliation service at Christ Church Cathedral. We were asked where do we go from here to begin to reconcile with the horrific events we have just learned about? We know none of this should ever have happened and I hope it will never happen again. We pray to God for the hurt that still remains there and for healing of the unseen wounds and pain.

Throughout the week we discussed many ways we can unite as a Communion. At my table (*below*) was Archbishop Jackson of Kenya, Bishop William of the Congo, Bishop Stephen of South Africa, the Rev Marnie from Canada, lay rep Joaquin from Argentina and myself - many differing opinions, practices and views. Coming from a country that is becoming more secular, it was eye-opening to see how easy it is for growth in countries from Africa compared to Scotland and Canada.



Photo: Neil Turner

The Anglican Communion is a communion of diverse churches across the world, working together as one, sharing God's love across the world and sharing bread and wine at God's table. At times we may have different or conflicting views, and we understand God's church can be messy, confusing and argumentative, but ultimately it is God's Church and we are all the children of God. Though we are many, we are one body, for we all share in one bread."

Anglican Communion Youth Network



YOUTH LEADERS REPRESENT THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON GLOBAL COUNCIL

Left to right: Ley-Anne Forsyth and Rachel Walker meet with Claire Benton-Evans to discuss their new roles representing the ACYN's Europe Region.

The Anglican Communion Youth Network (ACYN) is a newly-formed global network under the umbrella of the Anglican Communion. The ACYN is intended to be a gathering platform for young Anglicans across the world, to encourage connection and collaboration. Over the last few months, elections have been held for key roles in each of the seven regions of the Anglican Communion. The Scottish Episcopal Church is punching above its weight: in the Europe region, it is the Province that is most engaged with the ACYN, and two of our Provincial Youth Leaders, Rachel Walker and Ley-Anne Forsyth, have been elected as Regional Co-chair and Secretary respectively. They will sit on the ACYN's Global Council. They were nominated for these roles, and will be supported in them, by the Provincial Youth Coordinator, Claire Benton-Evans. They both bring a wealth of experience when it comes to

representing the SEC on the global stage. Ley-Anne Forsyth works as a Housing Officer and is also Youth Officer for Moray, Ross and Caithness. She represented the SEC at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, where she was part of the youth delegation. In 2019 she went to New York as part of the Anglican Communion Delegation to the 63rd UN Commission on the Status of Women. Rachel Walker is a primary school teacher who also leads youth fellowship at Holy Trinity Dunfermline. She serves as a member on the Provincial Inter-Church Relations Committee, recently representing them in Germany as a delegate at the Ecumenical Youth Gathering and World Council of Churches 11th Assembly.

We wish both Ley-Anne and Rachel well as they explore the way forward in their challenging new roles.

10 THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE

still

This list was first shared by Holy Trinity Dunfermline's Youth Fellowship in 2019 - it's still true today!

- We like pizza - any food will do!
- We like to be involved in choices - ask our opinion because we will soon tell you.
- We are not the snowflake generation - we are not fragile or addicted to social media
- We're intelligent
- We are not all the same
- Climate justice is so important to us - we want churches to reduce, reuse, recycle... why not consider screens or downloading the pew sheet over printing so many sheets every week?
- All churches should have WiFi - how can we tell people we are at church if we can't access them?
- Don't just ask us about exams, school or future careers, as sometimes we haven't figured it out yet and sometimes church is our place to escape and pray about our worries
- Ask us about the stuff you ask each other: the weather, sport, news, (dare we say) politics...
- We want to be learning in churches, not simply told what to think.

How churches can be welcoming and affirming

AN IDEA FROM THE
PROVINCIAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

A simple name and pronouns badge is recommended by Olivia Smith, youth rep for Edinburgh Diocese. Badges like this are used in the NHS and increasingly in education and youth work settings, and Olivia recommends them because they show that the wearer is supportive of LGBTQ+ people and affirming



of their gender identity. It tells everyone - especially young people, who are very engaged with this issue - that the church you represent is a safe and welcoming place where a person can be themselves.

YEEK! Time's nearly up!

BOOK FOR THE PROVINCIAL YOUTH WEEK BY 1 JULY



Do you know a young person connected to your church who is still searching for something to do this summer? Check out Yeek – an adventure for young people like no other. If they are just finishing S1-S6, they can sign up before 1 July! Visit www.yeek.scot for full information and registration details.

The Yeek leaders meet early each summer for their Training Weekend in the Highlands: training includes safeguarding, health and safety, listening skills and how to support neurodiverse delegates. This year we were delighted to be joined by the new Provincial Safeguarding Officer, John Wyllie (second from right, light blue shirt) who delivered bespoke safeguarding training for this enthusiastic bunch of Provincial Youth leaders.



Stay in touch...

Do you have a contribution from your Diocese for the next newsletter? Please get in touch below. Follow Provincial Youth news on our Facebook page: [Scottish Episcopal Church - Provincial Youth Committee](#).

This newsletter has been produced by the Provincial Youth Coordinator, Claire Benton-Evans. Contact: ClaireBE@scotland.anglican.org