

WINTER 2022 ISSUE 11

PROVINCIAL YOUTH NEWSLETTER

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Young adults represent the SEC
on the world stage

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Rachel Walker, Youth Leader and Delegate to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Photo: R Walker

Lambeth - A Steward's View



Following a call for young people (18-35) to be stewards at the latest Lambeth Conference, the Scottish Episcopal Church nominated Lana Woolford (*back row, third from right*). Lana is a researcher at the University of Edinburgh, lay person, and iconographer/People's Warden at Old Saint Paul's, Edinburgh. Here, Lana reflects on her experience.

"I set off as a Steward for the fifteenth Lambeth Conference on 22 July, for a weekend of training before delegates arrived from Monday to Wednesday of the following week. The train journey gave space for very mixed emotions to bubble up. I was excited to have time off work and meet new people – particularly young Anglicans – from around the globe. This excitement was overshadowed by the long-running politics of the Anglican Communion around human sexuality.

The Lambeth "Calls" were published a few days before the Conference – statements that the Bishops discussed, to agree or disagree with as a Communion. The "Call on Human Dignity" included statements on same-sex marriage and was controversially worded. It caused a lot of tension in the run-up to the Conference, similar to in 1998. Several Bishops reflected that they had received the document as they were packing to leave. They didn't have time to reflect prayerfully on any of the Calls, much less the Human Dignity one.

This sense of tension and disorganisation (parish politics on a grand scale?) hung around for much of the first few days of the Conference, although the Stewards were too busy dealing with arrivals, problem solving and wayfinding to reflect on it. There were around 750 Bishops present, many accompanied by their spouses, to a total of around 1400 people including staff. The Stewarding Team was made up of 48 people aged 18-35 from 22 countries, many of whom are very active in their respective Provinces.

Above: Lambeth 2023 stewards, photo L Woolford; next page: the Anglican Communion Youth Network. Lana is on the back row, fourth from left; the ACYN Conveners are Clifton Nedd, front row, first on right and Rev Cathrine Ngangira, front row, second from left. photo C Nedd

Some of us had our differences. But the act of getting to know each other through often strenuous practical service meant that we learned to love each other as human beings before we learned about our different political or theological stances. Maybe we should have asked the Bishops to build picnic tables together! By the end of our time there, I had made a whole family of new stewarding friends, had my horizons broadened, and learned a huge amount about people's lives and experiences as young Anglicans/Episcopalians from Argentina to Australia.

I could probably write several essays about how the Bishops dealt with the Calls, how the Conference was organised, what made it into mainstream news, what worship felt like, and so on. Here, I want to focus on the Anglican Communion Youth Network (ACYN - *pictured*). I attended my first ever ACYN meeting at Lambeth, in the bar on campus. The UK only had one other representative there – one of the founding members, currently a curate in Dover, who has been involved since 2016 and is hoping to hand over soon. As we introduced ourselves and any roles within ACYN, I was struck by how popular the Network is in the global south, and how active its members were in various Conference sessions, representing the voices of young people.



As we were invited to discuss things that troubled young people in each of our Provinces, I was humbled. One Steward, from Myanmar, has been caught up in the military coup there. Another, from Belize, has seen pupils at her own school fall victim to gun violence. Some deal with poverty, political corruption, natural disasters, lack of access to education, or the constant threat of abuse against women and girls.

I reflected with Stewards from the US and Australia afterwards that it can feel difficult to know what to say or do in situations where you are painfully aware of your own privilege. Do we offer to help? Are we just less aware of the needs and issues of young people in our churches?

One thing that united all of us was a sense of both urgency and powerlessness, but also a sense of hope. We were all there together, young people full of energy, for a common purpose – to improve the lives of our brothers and sisters in our own Provinces, and to support each other as a global Communion. The challenges we face in Scotland as a Church might be less obvious, our call less clear – but that doesn't mean we, as young people, have any less work to do.

First, we have the privilege of time, resource and influence to amplify the voices of our brothers and sisters around the world in action for climate justice. I realised at the Lambeth Conference that young Anglicans in the global south are leading the cry of lament for our planet – and that we need to set down our own egos, listen, and ask where we can help.

Second, I think it's crucially important that Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church understands its own hand in colonialism – whatever that may be. We cannot change the past, but we can recognise how it shapes the present. I'm not sure that we can separate the anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes of some Churches within the Anglican Communion from a heritage of oppressive moral codes introduced through British colonial law. We can't expect younger churches to self-reflect, renounce moral pride and enter dialogue if we aren't able to do the same.

“I think the SEC has a special calling to care for the outcast, whether a person is queer, skint, shy, lonely, disabled, different or not from round here.”

Lana Woolford

Third and finally, I think the SEC has a special calling to care for the outcast. It doesn't matter whether that's because a person is queer, skint, shy, lonely, disabled, different or not from round here. We're a small Church in the grand scheme of things, we're geographically sparse, we live in a Western society where loneliness has become a pandemic – and we've been 'on the naughty step' for some of the decisions that we've made. But we also live in a place of welcome and beauty, and I think that is part of the gift we have to offer.

This may all sound like an enormous task, and it is. But we don't bear the burden of good work alone either. God is with us. The energy and faithfulness of ACYN members at the Lambeth Conference showed that they understood this, and I hope that we can live it too.”

If you are interested in learning more about the Anglican Communion Youth Network, see p11 and contact the Provincial Youth Coordinator: ClaireBE@scotland.anglican.org

Youth & Children's Ministry News



Save the date! By popular demand, the Provincial Youth Sleepovers are back! The next event will be held in the Diocese of Brechin, hosted by St Mary & St Peter's Church, Montrose. Full details will be issued shortly, including how to book: for now, anyone who is at High School should look out their tartan, as we will be going for a Burns Night theme!

Contact Claire Benton-Evans youth@brechin.anglican.org and like our [Facebook page](#) for further news.

LEADER APPLICATIONS FOR WEEK 23

Would you like to be a leader at the Provincial Youth Week? We are recruiting new team members for 29 July - 5 August 2023. Join an amazing team of leaders like these four happy souls (*right*). Last year's team ranged from age 19 to 50 plus. Full training will be given: onesies not compulsory! Details and application [here](#) by 5pm on 14 December.



ONLINE PRESENCE GETS A BOOST

Children, young people and families now feature prominently on the home page of the Scottish Episcopal Church's website, in the 'Who we are' dropdown menu. Our website is often the first place that people from outside the SEC look to find out about us, so the [Children, young people and families page](#) gives an overview of what is on offer in our Church, and who to contact for further information. The [Provincial Youth Committee page](#) has been fully revised, with information about what the PYC does, as well as Diocesan and Provincial Youth contacts.

The Ecumenical Forum for European Christian Women

OUR INTERN WRITES

Nicole Grant is a teacher and Provincial youth leader who represented the Scottish Episcopal Church at this European ecumenical gathering of Christian women.

"Back in August, I was lucky enough to represent the Scottish Episcopal Church at the Ecumenical Forum for European Christian Women (EFECW). The forum gathers every 4 years for their General Assembly (GA), hosted in a different European country each year. This year, the Assembly took place in Strasbourg, France where I joined as an intern.

If you're a bit like I was a year ago, you might be thinking "What on Earth is EFECW?" and I must admit, I had no idea quite what to expect when I arrived in Strasbourg. The Forum serves to strengthen relationships between Christian women across countries and denominations and to challenge women into action.

This year, the Forum had introduced a new Interns Programme which gave 15 young women from 11 different countries (speaking what seemed like 100 different languages) the opportunity to share and develop their skills and to contribute to the discussion and overall 'message' of the Assembly. This year's theme: Hope and Responsibility.

As interns, we travelled to Strasbourg a few days before the rest of the delegates, to settle into our roles and get to know our colleagues. I had the role of Internship Leader, which I admit was extremely daunting at first, but nerves were soon settled after being thrown into lots of team building, planning and preparation. There were 6 different intern teams ranging from Social Media to Prayer and Spirituality. My role as one of two internship leaders was challenging but lots of fun: organising intern meetings, keeping interns updated, managing relationships, and keeping spirits high. Though the best part about my role was meeting and spending time with so many amazing young women, all with their own story to tell.



Above: Nicole in Strasbourg, photo by N. Grant

Next page: the General Assembly © EFECW

Following our “soft start” of getting to know the other interns and the Coordinating Committee for EFECW, the delegates arrived, and we were thrown into a jam-packed schedule of business meetings, workshops, trips out and discussions which left me, amongst others, truly exhausted! Looking back, being 10 weeks pregnant may have had something to do with the exhaustion...



WORLD CAFE

A popular event from the forum was the World Café. Each intern was assigned a table with a different topic. We had to facilitate discussions as the delegates moved round the different tables. The topics on the tables this time were: Modern European realities, challenges and hopes; Ecumenism & women’s situation in European countries; EFECW’s National Forum’s news, and Christian Women’s hopes and responsibilities in these turbulent times.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

As part of the GA in Strasbourg, we were invited to visit the Council of Europe. My original degree is in European Politics so I was extremely excited to get this opportunity. It was here we engaged in discussion with Ambassador Marie Fontanel, France’s permanent Representative to the Council of Europe. We were given the opportunity to share opinions and pose questions, most of which centred around the Istanbul Convention - the council of Europe’s convention for preventing and combatting violence against women - which Ambassador Fontanel spoke passionately about.

SISTERHOOD

My biggest “take away” from the GA was the overwhelming sense of sisterhood that enveloped the entire forum. With every debate, discussion and prayer, the common goal and sense of women’s empowerment was present in the atmosphere. This brought forth opportunity to discuss topics that may be seen as ‘difficult’ and to express opinions knowing those listening were also women and would have understanding and empathy.



At the end of each GA, a group of women who attend the forum gather notes and ideas from all workshops and discussions to create an overall “Message” from the assembly, which carries and directs the Forum’s goals and actions for the next 4 years and beyond. Some of the key themes in our ‘Message’ were inclusivity of the Forum, the Forum’s continued stance and action on the global issue of gender-based violence, and interreligious dialogue, amongst many other important issues we hope to address within the coming years. I still have lots to learn about the Forum and how it operates and serves but I am looking forward to seeing how it operates in between Assemblies.

The next GA will be in 2026 - country and venue to be confirmed - and I would encourage all women to find out more and to get involved in this organisation. In particular, any young women who are interested in joining the internship programme should keep their eyes peeled for the Forum’s News in the next few years. I feel truly privileged to have had the opportunity to represent Scotland and the SEC at the forum and can’t wait to see what lies ahead!"

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: [EFECW - Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women](#)

Instagram: [efecw_official](#)

Twitter: [EFECW_UK](#) (UK members) [efecw_official](#) (Forum’s twitter)

Above: Nicole (front row, right) with her fellow interns © EFECW

The World Council of Churches

A DELEGATE WRITES

"I'm Rachel Walker, a primary teacher, lay person and leader of Fife Cluster Youth Fellowship in Holy Trinity, Dunfermline, Fife. I serve on the inter-church relations committee (ICRC) of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) and I was immensely privileged to be one of two delegates (alongside ICRC convenor Rev Prof Charlotte Methuen) representing them at the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Karlsruhe, Germany from 31st August to 8th September, 2022. The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a fellowship of 352 member churches who together represent more than half a billion Christians around the world, whose goal is Christian unity.

The Assembly is the highest governing body of the WCC, and normally meets every eight years. It is the only time when the entire fellowship of member churches comes together in one place for prayer and celebration, with more than 4000 participants from all over the world making it the most diverse Christian gathering of its size in the world. The theme was "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity" in answer to the cries of those who are suffering, to come to Christ in solidarity and to respond and act for justice.

As I'm under 30, I also got to attend the Ecumenical Youth Gathering, a Pre-assembly with around 400 young Christians from all over the world meeting to learn, network and create friendships. We shared worship, fellowship, cultures and stories on a different theme each day: celebrating gifts (mental health, identities and spiritual journeys), visiting wounds (including input on intergenerational, interreligious and youth participation), and transforming injustice (human rights, refugee crisis and climate crisis) through a panel of speakers, discussion, workshops and bible study. We continued our fellowship and to learn from each other in a cultural night.



Pre-assemblies meet to represent the marginalised: women, youth, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples all have their own pre-assembly producing a report to the assembly.

At the main assembly, delegates influence the decisions of the council using consensus; we attended one of over 30 different Ecumenical Conversations. I represented the SEC in the Climate Justice conversation. We also participated in home groups to discuss the informative plenary panels, bible study and worship sessions.

Above: Rachel in her seat at the assembly with the consensus cards for decision-making

Photo credits: R. Walker unless otherwise stated.



The WCC Assembly and EYG was a wonderful, intense opportunity to meet, learn and network with people from all over the world and so many Christian denominations. The theme of "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity" was a true reflection of the joy, fellowship and community I felt in Karlsruhe. I shared food, debate, discussion, hymn sheets, coffee, shortbread and more with Archbishops, lay people, church leaders, ecumenical partners, indigenous people, young Christians and more over the 3 weeks and learned so much about myself, the world, my faith and the ecumenical movement. I really enjoyed sharing about the SEC, including the message "The SEC welcomes you" which was so gratefully received and celebrated. Our faith compels us to love and care for the world and each other - a message threaded through every conversation, meal, session and worship at the assembly and an inspiration, through faith, to live for afterwards."

**"Hearing the word of God together,
we recognize our common calling;
Listening and talking together,
we become closer neighbours;
Lamenting together,
we open ourselves to each other's pain
and suffering;
Working together,
we consent to common action;
Celebrating together,
we delight in each other's joys and hopes;
Praying together,
we discover the richness of our
traditions and the pain of our divisions."**

Top: Official EYG group photo © WCC

Above: the Message Committee were responsible for sharing the theme, work, prayer, and feeling of this 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

Below: the Scottish Ecumenical delegates



Youth Opportunities

ANGLICAN COMMUNION YOUTH NETWORK

Would you like to work with young Christians across the world on one of these projects?

- **Sharing faith with others (working on the Young Anglican Musicians Project)**
- **Helping young people's faith grow**
- **Helping others (getting involved with humanitarian projects)**
- **Social justice, challenging violence, and peace-making**
- **Caring for creation**

Young people (aged 18-35) or youth workers (of any age) are invited to play an active part in the new Anglican Communion Youth Network. The ACYN is asking for nominations to join teams working in each of the areas listed opposite. The work will involve occasional online meetings initially, leading to work on particular projects which will be decided by each team. If you or someone you know would be interested in being nominated for one of these ACYN teams, please get in touch: ClaireBE@scotland.anglican.org

STEWARDS WANTED: CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) will hold its General Assembly from 14 – 20 June 2023 in Tallinn, Estonia (*right*), exploring the theme “Under God’s blessing – shaping the future”. Applications are invited for the Stewards Programme, which promises to “ensure a vibrant participation of young adults at the General Assembly. These participants will not only enrich dialogue at the Assembly from diverse youth perspectives, but will help set directions of the ecumenical future.” Young people aged between 18 and 30 with a strong interest in ecumenical work are eligible to apply! Find out more [here](#) and contact ClaireBE@scotland.anglican.org if you are interested in being nominated by the SEC.



Image by Graham Hobster from Pixabay

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](#) or follow us on [Instagram](#).



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