

WINTER 2023 ISSUE 13

PROVINCIAL YOUTH NEWSLETTER

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Provincial Youth
pilgrimage
to Iona

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Young adults on the ferry to Iona for the 18+ Youth Pilgrimage. Photo: C Benton-Evans

A SEASON OF PILGRIMAGE

PROVINCIAL YOUTH PILGRIMAGE TO IONA



PROVINCIAL YOUTH COORDINATOR CLAIRE BENTON-EVANS WRITES...

Bishop's House on Iona was occupied for a week in October by two Youth Pilgrimages, back-to-back, which brought together young Episcopalians from all over the SEC. First came the teenagers, and they were followed by the young adults: there was a lively crossover at the ferry terminal in Oban, as the incoming group was greeted by the outgoing group and we all held up the queue with hugging!

Both groups were welcomed in turn at Oban Cathedral by Dean Margi, who led a short creative act of worship to send the pilgrims off. It was a lovely way to begin, and we also appreciated the refreshments with which cathedral volunteers greeted us.

On Iona, there was a rhythm to our days: we worshipped together, talked together, shared meals and explored the island. We enjoyed the simplicity of moving in time with the weather: when it was dry and not too stormy, we walked across the island to St Columba's Bay and up the rocky hill of Dun I, or explored the Abbey. When the weather was wild, we stayed indoors and read, talked and painted the stones we'd picked up on the beach.



Above: the young adults on their second ferry home, heading for Oban. Right: the fireplace in the cosy library of Bishop's House. Photos: C Benton-Evans.

It was a very special experience, and for those of us who were leading the groups, it was a joy to see these varied individuals come together in this holy place and get to know each other, while sharing their faith. We talked and listened a lot: as Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' pilgrims discovered, walking together is a wonderful way to hear each other's stories.



It was a privilege for us leaders to help pilgrims have 'God conversations'. We used house group materials similar to those we use at Yeek, which offer a structure for a small group to study the Bible together and explore their own faith through open discussion and creative responses.



A vital part of the experience was spending time on Iona as a group, rather than solo travellers, since living in community was central to Celtic Christianity. This was evident in our worship, but also in the shared meals and in the small acts of service that followed them, when we all cleared the tables and laid them for the next meal.



Top: The under-18 pilgrims visiting Iona Abbey. Middle: a walk to White Beach. Bottom: Rev Tembu Rongong, in orange, points pilgrims towards St Columba's Bay. Photos: C Benton-Evans

One of the highlights for many of us on the young adult pilgrimage was the night we joined the Iona Community for their evening worship. We created quite a stir when our party of 17 young adults arrived all at once in the candlelit Abbey! Some of us were familiar with the Wild Goose liturgies, but had never experienced one in situ before. We were transfixed by the simple, reflective act of worship and the way that voices, piano and cello wove music throughout the service. As we walked home under clear skies and the Milky Way, many of us commented on how welcomed we felt when the worship leader told us: “You don’t need books or a service sheet – simply follow my lead.” As worshippers in an unfamiliar place, we all relaxed and breathed more easily.

After the storm: Iona Abbey in the sunshine that followed Storm Babet. Photo C Benton-Evans

It wouldn’t be a pilgrimage without some challenges along the way. Storm Babet brought ferry disruption, a power cut on the island and some tricky journeys home for those who live on the East Coast. But our pilgrims were cheerful and undaunted: as the famous hymn says, “There’s no discouragement shall make him once relent/ his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.”

Huge thanks to the staff at Bishop’s House; to all our pilgrims and those who helped with their funding and travel; to Oban Cathedral and Dean Margi for hospitality and sending us off with prayer; to Helen and staff at the Hebridean Lodge on Mull, who provided a wonderful feast for hungry pilgrims; to GSO for financial support, and to all the leaders and organisers, especially Rev Tembu Rongong, who carried the plans for this pilgrimage through the pandemic and beyond.



News from St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

YOUTH OFFICER JAMES GARDNER WRITES...

A new partnership between St Saviour's Bridge of Allan, St Mary's Dunblane and Holy Trinity Stirling has been formed to create a group for young adults who live and work in the area.

St Saviour's and Holy Trinity Churches have always had a good number of students who study at the nearby University of Stirling. During the pandemic student numbers declined as students studied away from campus with remote learning.



In April the three churches recognised that there was an opportunity for a Young Adults Group to help develop relationships between the churches and the students who came along to worship as congregation members. The group are also looking at organising visits to other cities and landmarks in Scotland, as several of the group haven't had the opportunity to explore beyond Stirling.

The Young Adults Group meets weekly during term time on a Tuesday evening in St Saviour's Church Hall between 19:30-21:30 and have a varied programme of social and faith activities each week. Each week the group finish whatever the evening's programme has been with Compline. This was new to several of the group and has become a significant part of the fellowship with each other. The opportunity to have a calm moment in a busy week to stop and be present has been an important part of what the group offers, as well as the laughter and refreshments provided by the group facilitators.

Some of the activities the group have enjoyed include a trip to Dundee to visit the Tartan Exhibition at the V&A, a discussion on the SEC journey to Net Zero and many board game nights (see above). The young adults' group has also recently made miniature prayer gardens. (see right) These Prayer gardens were designed and created by the group to take home at the end of the evening.

If you are in the central belt and would like to join the group, you can contact them by emailing youngadultsgroup021@gmail.com



Bishop-Bagging is back!



By popular demand, the Provincial Youth Committee is running its Bishop-Bagging Competition again in 2024! The challenge is for young people to take a selfie with as many bishops as possible. Share them on our social media with the hashtag *bishopbagging*, and compete for a special prize! Here's Mia Shanks, youth rep for Brechin Diocese, who set the record by bagging bishops from three continents at once – pictured here with Bishop Andrew of Brechin, Bishop Betsey of Iowa and Bishop Dalcy of Eswatini. Go Mia! **#bishopbagging**

INVERNESS CATHEDRAL: VACANCY FOR A NEW CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORKER

Inverness Cathedral is seeking a passionate and organised individual to fill the role of Children and Families Worker. It is a part-time/flexible post for 20 hours per week. This is a great opportunity for the right person to contribute to this vital area of ministry! **Closing date 8 December: full details [here](#).**



A SEASON OF PILGRIMAGE: IOWA

BRECHIN DIOCESE'S COMPANIONSHIP YOUNG ADULT PILGRIMAGE

Claire Benton-Evans, Diocesan Children and Youth Officer, writes...

Cornfields, presidential candidates and the Butter Cow: these were the main things I knew about Iowa before spending a memorable 10 days there with our Young Adult Pilgrimage this summer. It was the third leg of our Companionship Pilgrimage for young adults, who were accompanied by their leaders and by Bishops Andrew (Brechin) Betsey (Iowa) and Dalcy (Eswatini).



We enjoyed what our hosts described as “typical American fun”, including a baseball game and the Iowa State Fair (featuring the Butter Cow). There was shared worship and fellowship, especially at Prairiewoods, a Franciscan ecospirituality retreat and conference centre. Our hosts had planned the pilgrimage activities to help us reflect on some of the Calls to Mission that had come out of the 2022 Lambeth Conference: these included Creation Care, Racial Reconciliation, Mission & Evangelism and Anglican Identity.

It was a privilege to accompany these young adults from three different continents. I appreciated their positive energy, their openness to faith and new experiences, and their readiness to find connections with one another. Who knew that something as simple as a game of “Rock, Paper, Scissors” could become such a bonding experience?



We all appreciated the opportunity to talk together and hear about each other’s lives and journeys of faith. This felt like the heart of pilgrimage. Sometimes, too, pilgrims have experiences that are hard to explain. There was one quiet morning at Prairiewoods when I sat in leafy shade and talked with one of our pilgrims. Time seemed to stretch, as it does during good conversation. We checked our watches and talked on until our fellow pilgrims came and found us: to our surprise, we were very late for our next activity and everyone was waiting for us. It turned out that *both our watches had stopped...*

BEING THE CHANGE...

We had memorable encounters with people who are making a real difference: faithful individuals who are working hard to 'be the change they want to see in the world'. There were the energetic volunteers of the Agape Café, providing free, freshly cooked breakfasts every week for anyone experiencing food insecurity. There was Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott, a Democratic State Senator and Lutheran Pastor who is engaged with interfaith work and Des Moines' largest food pantry network. She showed us around the Capitol building and spoke powerfully of her work on the Iowa Senate. There was Rev. Nora Boerner, who leads the Beloved Community Initiative, a mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa which works for racial justice and "equips people for the lifelong work of growing as a community of reconcilers, justice-makers, and healers." In the largely white state of Iowa, it is work she is helping churches to do.



*Photos:
Previous page: Pilgrims in the sweltering heat at the Meskwaki Nation's Powwow and exploring the labyrinth in the grounds at Prairiewoods Retreat Centre (C Benton-Evans)*

Left: Senator Sarah Trone Garriott (foreground) with the pilgrims at the Iowa State Capitol. Bishop Betsey and Bishop Dalcy are in the front row and Bishop Andrew is at the top right. (S Trone Garriot/A Mellies)

At the end of our visit, pilgrims reflected on what difference the Companionship Pilgrimage made to them. You can read reflections from one of our pilgrims, Edward, [here](#). Leaders from the dioceses of Brechin and Iowa collaborated on a short film, which features interviews with pilgrims plus slideshows to showcase the different elements of this pilgrimage. The film is about 7 minutes long and subtitled throughout, and with the sound up you'll hear plenty of joyful singing. **You can view the film [here](#).**



YOUTH EVENTS 2024

MORAY, ROSS &
CAITHNESS

FEB
24-25

LOCHGELLY

JUN
22-23

YOUTH WEEK

28 JUL-
3 AUG

EDINBURGH

OCT
26-27



←← SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We are delighted to announce next year's programme! Three dioceses are hosting 2024's Provincial Youth Events: venues and timings to be confirmed. These events are in addition to diocesan youth events, which are organised locally. Contact details on the next page...

Youth Ministry information and Contacts

Contacts for 2024 Provincial Youth Events:

24-25 February Moray, Ross and Caithness: leyanne.forsyth@gmail.com (Ley-Anne)

22-23 June St Andrews Dunkeld & Dunblane: youthandchildren@standrews.anglican.org (James)

28 July-3 August PROVINCIAL YOUTH WEEK – YEEK. Visit the website: www.yeek.scot

26-27 October Edinburgh: freynolds@dioceseofedinburgh.org (Fee)

Additional diocesan youth ministry contacts are:

Brechin – Claire Benton-Evans: youth@brechin.anglican.org

Glasgow & Galloway – Rev Canon Audrey O'Brien Stewart:

canonmissioner@glasgow.anglican.org

For all other queries, please contact the Provincial Youth Coordinator (details below) or check out our [“Who We Are”](#) webpage.



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](#).



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