

Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane with Diocese of Brechin

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Dear friends

What a summer we are having, its quite the best since we moved to Scotland in 2003 and I have worn summer dresses that haven't seen the light of day for many a year. As I write to you on St Swithun's Day and look at my parched garden I am reminded of how precious a gift that water is –without it we cannot live and we struggle here to cope with a few weeks of drought. I was lucky enough to stay for several weeks with MU members in Uganda where it was quite normal not to have a standpipe in the village and the women had to walk several miles to a local spring that was also used by the wild animals, so really the water they then carried home for cooking, washing, watering their crops and feeding their animals was unclean. And if the rains failed then the crops didn't grow and the resulting famine could be devastating. Then on the other hand some of our members live in countries subject to monsoons, and somewhere like Bangladesh whose country is barely above sea level live with the fear of flood when homes, animals and food gets swept away by the water.

I wonder if, like me, you watched the recent programmes on Myanmar by Simon Reeve. In the first one, he travelled to Rakhine State in which Sittwe diocese is situated and then went across the border into Bangladesh where the vast refugee camp for the displaced Rohingya refugees is situated. It was horrendous and the monsoon season is upon them. Please continue to pray for them.

However, let's be grateful for the sunshine and warmth and for the families away on holiday that can enjoy the beauty of the countryside and pleasures of the seaside as well as the ripening crops and joys of the garden with the profusion of butterflies that are around at the moment.

Pray for me as I pray for you. *Elizabeth*

LOST Can you help find these missing items?

This barkcloth table covering which was given to us by a visiting member from Fiji. Also missing are display boards on which was an exhibition about abuse that was being displayed in turn in each branch. And we have also lost our MU white stole with the logos, that was made for



our Chaplain several years ago.

If you have any knowledge of where these items might be, do let Sarah Gammell know!

OUR CHAPLAIN NERYS WRITES

For my birthday this month, my younger son, Sean, gave me a Fitbit. This wireless device which is worn like a watch, monitors every step I take, helping me to make sure that I get the 30 minutes daily exercise prescribed by my doctor. Not that I've needed much encouragement recently to take Jinni the dog on long walks around Dunblane, thanks to the bright dry mornings and long light evenings of the wonderful summer we're having. When winter comes again with its rain, cold and darkness, it will be another matter!

I find it much easier to pray when I'm walking than when I'm sitting still. The action of putting one foot in front of the other helps me to focus and I feel closer to God in the midst of the natural world. I imagine that people have always enjoyed praying on the go. Labyrinths have been used for meditation for over 4,000 years and pilgrims have been travelling to the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of Jesus since the fourth century. Today these forms of prayer journey are particularly popular among people who struggle with formal Sunday morning worship but long for opportunities to travel in the company of God.



We are blessed in the Diocese of St Andrews to have up to a dozen labyrinths and many pilgrim paths which we can enjoy. There is a booklet listing some of the most easily accessible labyrinths on the diocesan website. What about organising a visit to one or two of them before winter comes? The Fife Pilgrim Way is an exciting project linking a network of paths and tracks to create a 64 mile route starting at Culross and North Queensferry, passing medieval landmarks, industrial landscapes and historic picturesque villages on its way to St Andrews.

I am looking forward very much to our Diocesan Pilgrimage on July 28th when we'll walk a 10 mile section of the Fife Pilgrim Way. In preparation for it, I have been reading prayers and accounts of pilgrimages down the ages. One of my favourite is the story of St. Sarapoin the

Sindonite, one of the best known of the Desert Fathers of fourth-century Egypt and a great traveller who came once on pilgrimage to Rome. He was told of a celebrated recluse, a woman who lived always in one small room, never going out. Sceptical about her way of life, Sarapoin called on her and asked, 'Why are you sitting here?' To this she replied, 'I am not sitting, I am on a journey'.

We are all on a journey, coming from God and returning to God. To make our journey a pilgrimage, we need to live purposefully with Christ as our guide, open to all those we meet along the way.

May God the Father who created you, guide your footsteps,
May God the Son who redeemed you, share your journey,
May God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you, lead you on life's pilgrimage,
and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you wherever you may go. Amen.

We send our love to you for your birthday !

AND TALKING ABOUT PRAYER.... A true story.

On Tuesday 14th November 2017, I was engaged in my normal daily activities when I felt a 'ball of fire and light' pass painlessly through the front of my body and settle on my heart. "Who is praying for me", I wondered, "and why today?" The previous day had been our MU visit to Cornton Vale Prison, surely that was the day on which I had needed members prayers?



Some years ago a very spiritual, elderly friend had held me in her prayers regularly and her prayers had reached me as a painless, yet very powerful ball of fire and light. On those occasions, I had truly felt filled with the Holy Spirit.

So, although I had immediately recognised the November experience, I was unable to identify its (human) source. Who was praying for me?

It was several weeks later, at our Quiet Day, that Rosemary explained that I had been held in prayer during November's MU Cathedral prayers, which that month had fallen on 14th of the month. Suddenly, all was clear to me.

I sometimes wonder if our members truly realise the power of their prayers.

Isabelle Pottinger.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Baby Changing Tent at Perth Show. Aug.3rd and 4th
MSD at St Kessog's Auchterarder Aug 9th
General Meeting Swansea 17th and 18th Sept.
Council St John's Perth Oct 13th
Creative Quiet Day South Lodge Auchterarder Oct 27th
Cathedral Prayers 11th Sept 9th Oct. 11.30am.

Please note there will no Prayers in August because of MSD.



St Kessog's Auchterarder welcomes you to Mary Sumner Day on Thursday August 9th. Coffee from 10.15, followed by a special service, and lunch. The Rev'd Tracy Dowling will be talking about **God's Unruly Women** and it promises to be a super day, so do come and bring your friends. There is plenty of parking at the Church, and there will be a bowl for donations.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Wilma Dyer has kindly agreed to order diaries and Christmas cards for us, so it can be done collectively and save us all the postage as long as she receives your orders by Sept 1st. They will be ready for collection at Council on Oct 13th at St John's in Perth – and if not there, they will be got to you.

Order forms and details have gone out to leaders and Dio. members, but if you haven't had the details, contact her.



ELECTIONS

We are drawing to the end of the current triennium so those who have done their time in office prepare to step down and others nominated and then elected take their place. I have done my 3 years and I have decided that someone else should take my place to oversee the transitions from one constitution to another. So please, we need your help to find that person, as well as names to serve on the Diocesan board. Christine Fraser is stepping down as Treasurer, but Liz Crichton from ABC branch has volunteered to take her place, for which we are very thankful.

Our WWP Lynne is also at the end of her six years and if you would like to contribute to her leaving present, then there will be a bowl at both MSD and Council, or send a branch contribution (**BUT do not take it from your funds**) to Christine or Sarah Gammell.

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