

REPORT OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2015

INTRODUCTION

The continuing decline in numbers of children and young people connected to our congregations is a matter for concern. However, the Youth Committee is encouraged by the quality of the young people we have in the denomination, and by their faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus and his Church, some of which is demonstrated through the activities described below.

CAMPS

In December of each year, a brochure is sent to all children and young people who have previously attended an event, along with a Christmas card, inviting them to join us at the planned camps and youth assemblies for the coming year. Copies of the brochure are also sent to congregations to invite young people who may not have attended previous events.

Unfortunately this year's S1-S4 camp had to be cancelled because of low numbers, although the 6 who had booked enjoyed a ten-pin bowling evening with the team instead.

The P5-P7 camp at Lendrick Muir in May at the time of writing had 20 children booked, some of whom are coming for the first time. Our theme for the weekend is 'Life Saver' looking at various people in the Bible who met with Jesus and seeing how their lives were changed. The Committee is very grateful to Elizabeth McNaughton and Gordon Mackenzie for cooking at these events and to the team of young people who teach and lead.

YOUTH ASSEMBLY

The Youth Assembly at Inchinnan in March was attended by 10 young people, half of whom were from Darnley with the others coming from Bannockburn, Bellshill, Uddingston and Shetland. The speakers for the weekend were Rev Bruce McDowall, who took us through an overview of the Bible on the Friday evening, and Mr Norman Liddell of the Bible Society on the Saturday, who shared the work of the Scottish Bible Society both here and abroad, specifically in China and Rwanda. The young people were challenged to look afresh at the Word of God and to appreciate that we have it so readily available, unlike many throughout the world. We were pleased to have 3 new young people at the Youth Assembly this time.

The Committee would like to thank the congregations and presbyteries who gave financial assistance to allow young people to attend the camps and youth assemblies on offer, and also the Church Office staff for assisting with the administration of these events.

SUMMER MISSION

A summer mission was held in Bannockburn in August led by Laura and a team of 5. Numbers attending were very small but the Bannockburn members who assisted spoke highly of the quality of the programme. Laura and a team of young people also led two follow-up events later in the year with volunteers from the congregation.

PRAYER LETTER

Laura continues to produce a regular prayer letter and would like to thank you for your prayer support for the youth work and the young people.

EASTER SCHEME

This year's Easter Scheme was selected to complement the Mission Trip, with the money raised going to provide water filtration systems, tee-shirts and craft materials. Laura produced colourful publicity materials which included suggestions of money-raising methods. The Committee would like to congratulate the denomination for their giving to this worthy cause.

TRAINING EVENTS

A successful Training Event was held in Uddingston in September. Approximately 40 people from various churches and denominations attended workshops led by the Youth Worker, the Vice-convener, and Urban Saints representatives over the course of a day, during which they were amply fed by members of Park Church. The opening devotions were led by Rev Steve Younger, and a bookstall was there to offer resources to those working with children and young people. The feedback forms received by e-mail after the event were very positive and the Committee will explore other training events in the future.

SPARK! YOUTH EVENT

There have now been three Spark youth events, two in Darnley and one in St Ninians. They have been well organised and attended by a range in numbers from 12 – 17 young people and their leaders. At least one person followed up his attendance at Spark by booking for the Youth Assembly. The next two events will be in September and November. The Committee is grateful to the young people who plan these events and who lead worship, steward and help with food preparation and games.

ETHIOPIA MISSION TRIP

Preparations are well advanced for the Ethiopia Trip from 2nd - 15th August. The interviewing team was very impressed with the quality of those who applied to go. Two training weekends have been held, one with David Spurdle, Director of the charity, who has replaced David Stirling as the Stand by Me representative on the trip. He, along with Laura and Gordon Mackenzie, will be leading a team of 13 to Dembi Dollo, where they will be involved in building water filtration systems and running Holiday Club activities for the children and working at the Abdi Academy School run by the organisation.

The team are excited about the experience and have been working hard to raise their own funds for going. There have been a variety of activities from bungee jumps, haggis runs and walking the West Highland Way, to coffee mornings, quiz nights, climbing mountains, concerts and car washes. They have worked well together and look forward to serving God in Ethiopia and returning to share their experiences with the denomination.

OTHER YOUTH WORKERS

The Committee is encouraged to hear of congregations whose concern for youth has expressed itself in support for, or employment of, local area youth workers. Cathcart and Croftfoot are two such congregations, while Corstorphine is seeking to appoint a Community Outreach Worker and Uddingston is exploring the possibility of having a Children and Family worker.

YOUTH WORKER

With the closure of the Living Room in Drumchapel in January, Laura's post has become that of full-time youth worker since February. The opportunity was taken to assess the various elements of Laura's workload and consider new things the extra time could be used for. A number

of possibilities were identified, including afternoon get-togethers for P5-7s, liaison with other Youth Workers, more visits to and training for individual congregations. However, it was also recognised that the organisation and planning of the Ethiopia trip may mean that some of the tangible benefits of this extra time will not be seen until after the summer.

Since then, Laura has intimated to the Committee that she will be giving up the post at the end of September in order to better support her husband in his new role. The Committee is very appreciative of all that she has done over the last 13 years and wishes Gordon and Laura fulfilment and happiness in their new sphere of service.

CONCLUSION

While the above, in theory, contains a report of the work of the Youth Committee over the past year, it is, in practice, testimony to the sterling work of Mrs Laura Mackenzie, our outgoing Youth Worker. The challenge for the coming year is to find appropriate ways of sustaining and developing that work.

In the name of the Committee

JOHN CROSS	Convener
ELIZABETH MCDOWALL	Vice-convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary