



Unity²⁷

Lochgilphead/Inveraray



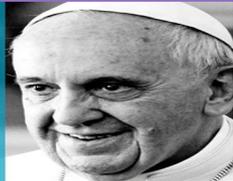
St Margaret's parishioners turned out in force at the 'Speak out against Climate Change' meeting with Brendan O'Hara MP organised by Ardrishaig Church Eco Group. See more P3. Photo: Catriona Beale

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December 2016
Issue 27

In the face of the emergencies of human-induced climate change, social exclusion, & extreme poverty, we join together to declare that:
Human-induced climate change is a **scientific reality**, and its decisive mitigation is a **moral and religious imperative** for humanity. ##



Advent: a season of hope...



Advent is a season of hope, of positive expectation. The Church in its wisdom gives us this season before we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. It is the beginning of a new liturgical year, and also this year it is the beginning of our three year liturgical cycle, as Year A.

It is no coincidence then that the very first reading in the lectionary is the vision of Isaiah, "a vision that people will turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, there will be no more training for war".

Never has this reading been more relevant than in today's world with all the political uncertainty that we have at the moment.

But for us as Christians, Jesus' message is clear. His message is a message of peace, of love and understanding, of creating peace in our own hearts, and in our own families, and our own communities. Each and every one of us as Christians has a duty to work for Justice and Peace.

And in a practical way, we have started our own Justice and Peace Group in the Parish. I would encourage all people to come along, and join with us in doing what we can to make the world a more just, peaceful and caring place, for our generation, and many generations to come.

Our next meeting will take place in the Chapel House at 7pm on Tuesday, December 6 - all are welcome.

With every prayer and good wish, for a blessed Advent

Fr. David

Starting St Margaret's Justice and Peace journey



Befrienders

For Argyll & Bute Children

Because children's lives are never just black and white

The new St Margaret's Justice and Peace Group has already come up with a number of ideas (see the minutes in the porch).

One was for the parish to become more closely linked with the Befrienders organisation because we are very aware that children's lives really are 'never just black and white'.

Here Margaret Soudan, Befrienders Project Development Worker, explains how the organisation works...

It is likely that many of you will know someone who is involved with Befrienders. We've been working with families in Argyll and Bute since 1989. For many of these years we had an office in Lochgilphead. A few years ago, due to funding difficulties, we had to give up our office but we're still here, based in Mid Argyll, and working throughout Argyll and Bute.

You may know someone who has been a volunteer befriender or who has served on our committee and I am sure that, over the last (almost) thirty years many of you have supported our fundraising efforts. We rely on the commitment and hard work of our volunteers and committee members and the support of our local community. We are grateful for the huge amounts of support we have had from so many groups and individuals in the Mid Argyll area over the years.

Our volunteer befrienders spend time with a child or young person from their own community. The friendships formed sometimes last for a short time, providing enough support to get through a difficulty, but often they last for many years.

Our Project Director has many years of experience in matching, and matching is done carefully to ensure that the relationship has the best possible chance of success. Our many volunteers will tell you that being a befriender is a rewarding experience. Our volunteers receive training and support on an individual basis, we have local volunteer meetings, and once a year we all meet in Inveraray.

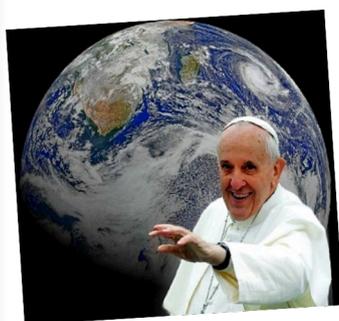
Our paid workers also work with families and sometimes, where necessary, with individual children. Sometimes we can't help with a particular issue but we have longstanding relationships with organisations throughout Argyll and Bute and we can signpost a family to the best place to get support.

If you would like to know more about Befrienders we would love to hear from you.

Contact Cathi on 01546 603144 or cathibertin@btconnect.com

Our website is www.befriendersforchildren.co.uk and we're even on Facebook!!

Caring for our common home, sharing ideas to stop climate chaos



In his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis made a plea to the world to care for our common home because, as he explained, the earth '...cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.'

In November, Ardrishaig Church Eco Group held an open meeting to discuss how best to encourage our politicians to focus on the commitments made at the Paris Conference on climate change held in December 2015. The guest speaker was Brendan O'Hara MP, and St Margaret's parishioners turned out in force to add their voices to the on-going battle to care for our 'common home'.

Although more than 100 countries have now ratified the Paris Agreement to reduce the levels of carbon emissions, including the US and the UK, President Elect Donald Trump has dismissed the idea that climate chaos is man-made and has said he will withdraw American support once he is in office.

The Ardrishaig meeting clearly disagreed with Mr Trump and Brendan O'Hara, who said 'Use me in any way you see fit to further your cause', pointed out that 'when the World Bank starts saying that climate change is going to have a catastrophic effect, we know it is problematic'.

The swap of ideas and information at the meeting showed how concerned people are. The issue was discussed on every level, from local recycling to the effects on developing countries that produce the least emissions but suffer the most.

The Catholic Bishops Conference is anxious that more Catholic parishes should become 'Eco-congregations'. In our own diocese, the Justice and Peace group of Our Lady and St Mun's in Dunoon recently registered their parish, and with representatives from both Justice and Peace Scotland and SCIAF on the board of Eco-congregation Scotland, the percentage of Catholic parishes taking up the challenge should rise. This isn't simply a matter of putting in an eco-friendly heating system in the church (such as we have at St Margaret's). It is about changing individual lifestyles.

Pope Francis reminded us in *Laudato Si'* that in 1971, Blessed Pope Paul VI referred to the ecological concern as 'a tragic consequence' of unchecked human activity. We didn't listen enough 45 years ago when Paul VI said 'Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation.'

As too many people become victims, it is time for us all to act. Parish power can convince politicians to act. See SCIAF's *Caring for our common home* booklet for practical advice (0141 354 5555 or email frayner@sciaf.org.uk). You can also download a PDF (and conserve the forests) on <http://www.sciaf.org.uk/go-green-with-sciaf/go-green-with-sciaf.html>

Putting faith into action

- ✚ The Glasgow-based charity The Simon Community desperately needs sleeping bags for homeless people this Christmas. Can you help? Marian Pallister pledges to deliver (marian.pallister@zen.co.uk) or contact <http://simonscotland.org/>
- ✚ Don't miss the Justice & Peace Scotland weekly blog: <https://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/Blog.aspx>
- ✚ Have you visited the Justice & Peace Argyll & the Isles Facebook page? Don't just like – share and act! <https://www.facebook.com/JusticeandpeaceArgyllandIsles/>
- ✚ MO-MA has an on-going need for toiletries, household cleaning products & towels. Box in the church porch.

Parish life (everyone's welcome)

St Margaret's Prayer Group: Every Wednesday at 7pm at St Margaret's.

St Margaret's Justice & Peace Group: First Tuesday of the month, parish house.

The Evangelisation Group needs your help - have you completed the Parish Census Form?

**Relief Eucharistic Minister, Cecelia Reese
January-April 2017 Year A**

Date	Eucharist Ministers	Readers	Date	Cleaners
Jan			Jan	
1	P Connor P Singal	C Paddock	7	D McLean
8	M Shaw I Salmon	R Ranger	14	A McCartan
15	C McFadden J	A McCartan	21	T Sinclair
22	McFadden	C Reese	28	E Salmon
29	D Bernt M McCall			
Feb			Feb	
5	P Connor P Singal	E Salmon	4	C McFadden
12	M Shaw I Salmon	M Pallister	11	J Malcolm
19	C McFadden J McFadden	J McFadden	18	K Welsh
26	D Bernt M McCall	C Lamont	25	A Cumming
March			March	
5	P Connor P Singal	J Green	4	K Goodchild
12	M Shaw I Salmon	B Robins	11	A Martin
19	C McFadden J McFadden	M McCall	18	M McLay
26	D Bernt M McCall	C Paddock	25	E McLachlan
April			April	
2	P Connor P Singal	R Ranger	1	D McLean
9	M Shaw I Salmon	A McCartan	8	A McCartan
16	C McFadden J McFadden	C Reese	12 ?	Easter Clean
23	D Bernt M McCall	E Salmon	22	T Sinclair
30	P Connor P Singal	M Pallister	29	E Salmon

**SCIAF ADVENT
APPEAL
FOR SYRIA**



Bishop Joseph Toal, Bishop President of SCIAF, has written to all parishes asking us to think about 'the plight of our brothers and sisters caught up in the brutal conflict in Syria'. He reminds us that millions who have fled their homes to escape the fighting now face 'a cold, bleak Christmas' in camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other countries in the region.

Caritas Lebanon, with help from SCIAF, is providing healthcare, shelter and food for refugees there. Many, Bishop Joe reminds us, are children, and many have lost their parents. Others have been injured and most are traumatised by the scenes of conflict they have witnessed. Can we help? See the panel on the left.

Pope Francis has identified 15 January 2017 as a day of prayer for Refugees and Migrants.

**God of Mercy,
Shine a light in the darkness for the people of Syria,
Guide those who have lost their homes to a place of safety,
And bring comfort to those who mourn**
<http://www.sciaf.org.uk/latest-news/syrian-refugee-emergency-appeal.html>