



## Faith in Older People Update – November 2013

### The Golden Age Project – Church of Scotland Guild

The aim of this project is to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Guild by developing resource material to encourage and assist congregations to support and involve the older members. The first part of the project has been to work with 13 different congregations to consider the activities they have developed and to see what common themes emerged. This project has been led by **Professor John Swinton, Aberdeen University and co-ordinated by Dr. Harriet Mowat**. Some of the work has been facilitated by Faith in Older People.

The final meeting of this stage took place at the end of September which enabled all the contributing congregations to share their ideas and progress which included the following:

- Story telling
- The importance of meeting over a meal – Sunday lunches, breakfasts, coffee.
- Discussion groups which could encompass talking about age, change and loss
- How churches can become more dementia friendly
- Recording the Sunday service
- Styles of worship
- Transport needs

This is just a flavour of the kind of initiatives which will be drawn up for wider distribution during 2014. The Golden Age should be seen as an encouragement, a prompt and reminder about ageing in order to build on the positive attitudes and practices which are already evident.

### The Life Changes Trust – Longitudinal Study

The scoping exercise to establish the focus of a longitudinal study on the issues affecting people with dementia and their carers has been completed and submitted to the Life Changes Trust. This was a very stimulating collaborative project with Edinburgh University which was able to make some clear recommendations for the next stage of the work. FiOP was delighted to be able to provide the project management.

### The International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality – the Quilt

During the conference all the participants were invited to contribute to making a quilt with the theme of 'the tree of life'. This has now been completed by the quilt designer, Carole Sowton, and will be presented to MHA Auchlochan Village at the beginning of December for safekeeping until the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference which we hope will be hosted in Los Angeles, USA in 2015.

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## Faith in Older People Training

We are very pleased to welcome Derek Morrison to join the team at FIOP. Derek took up the post of Training Development Co-ordinator in October this year. He has a background in Social Work where he worked in various positions including roles in Learning and Development. He is currently getting out and about meeting people who help us "enable a better understanding of the importance of spiritual care to the well-being of older people". He will work with our partners to develop training provision and can be contacted at [training@fiop.org.uk](mailto:training@fiop.org.uk) or by telephone 07889 543143.

### Upcoming Courses

#### Journeying Towards Death - Day 2

Explore responses to issues around death and dying and strengthen your ability to provide support to your family and members of your congregation.

**To be held in Glasgow on: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**Venue: Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow G3 6PE**

**Aim:** To enable participants to explore responses to issues around death and dying and to strengthen their ability to provide support to their families and members of their congregation:

- To increase understanding of living with and dying from an advanced progressive disease
- To consider issues around bereavement
- To develop an understanding of how to communicate effectively

**Cost:** £25

**Further information and online booking are on the website:**

[www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

### Recent Training

A stimulating and informative workshop took place in St Bryce's Kirk, Kirkcaldy on Saturday 26 October. In response to a need expressed by 4 local churches, FIOP arranged the workshop around the theme of pastoral visiting in relation to people with dementia. Mary Moffett facilitated the day and positive feedback was received from the 20 people who attended. They also made several suggestions for possible workshops in the future. These included:

- An introduction to spirituality and ageing
- How to facilitate churches becoming more dementia friendly
- How to conduct worship in residential homes and
- Assisting people in the transition from living at home to entering residential care.

These suggestions will be included in an exercise which is currently taking place to analyse expressed need and prioritise our training programme.

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## Events by other organisations

### **Creative Supervision Group for Caring and Helping Roles.**

Begins Tuesday 29th October 7-9pm, then every 4 to 6 weeks until May 2014, in Canonmills.

Open to anyone who wishes to become more reflective in their work, and find external support for paid or voluntary settings. This could include youth workers, NHS or healthcare workers, social care employees, church volunteers, chaplains, alternative therapists etc. Three or four people from different professions will meet together to explore working lives, both verbally and using creative methods such as cards, objects and action. £15 per person per session. Individual 1 hour sessions are also available in weekday daytimes - please enquire. To book or for more information contact Elizabeth White 0131 552 4102 or [reflectivespaces@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:reflectivespaces@yahoo.co.uk)

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## Book Review

### **Rich in Years, Finding Peace and Purpose in a Long Life**

**by Johann Christoph Arnold**

In this book the author takes the reader through different experiences and challenges of getting older, seen through the prism of his deep Christian faith. He boldly deals with difficult topics such as facing death and coping with bereavement. He quotes widely from religious and other sources

The reader is introduced to a host of characters who have been part of Pastor Arnold's life and whose ways of coping with the challenges of ageing can be a lesson for all. One story that moved me was that of Ben who had been estranged from his sons for many years. Facing death, he wrote to them expressing his love for them and his pain at not being able to speak to them 'face to face'. This reconciliatory gesture had the required results and Ben was able to make peace with them both in person before he finally succumbed to his illness. The chapter on Living with Dementia gives a new approach to how we treat those who are afflicted. He quotes a German pastor, Detlef Manke who suggests that 'rather than trying to help an Alzheimer's patient to make sense of our world, we should try to understand theirs.' There is much in this little book that will help family members, carers and older people themselves who are going through new and challenging experiences as they age and become infirm. The one caveat is that the book with its powerful and explicit Christian message could put off the non-Christian reader. A version suitable for the wider multi faith public would be welcomed.

Dianna Wolfson

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In line with moving to a new style of e-newsletter, with more links embedded to click through to websites, we have sent the newsletter in email format to all subscribers with an email address. If you would like to receive this newsletter by email in the future, please contact Joanna Kemp on [info@fiop.org.uk](mailto:info@fiop.org.uk) or phone on 0131 346 7981.

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