



# Faith in Older People

NEWSLETTER – Issue Summer 09

## Mission Statement

Faith in Older People aims to celebrate the lives of older people and to support the spiritual care of older people and their families

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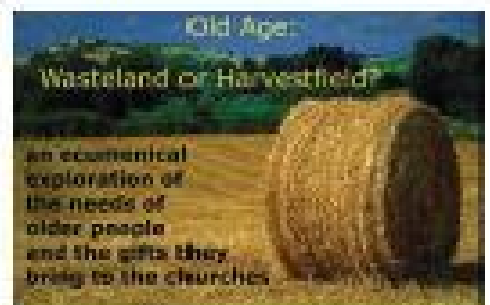
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*Building on a very successful conference in October 2008 on the theme of Old Age: Wasteland or Harvest Field Faith in Older People responded to requests to hold a conference in Inverness. This enabled people from the more northerly parts Scotland to participate in discussion and met our aim of working on a wider geographical basis.*



Even though the conference was held in May the harvest theme seemed to resonate with our participants! We were delighted to welcome over 50 delegates to the very pleasant conference venue, the Bishop's Palace which is part of the Eden Court developments. Financial support from ACTS and the Scottish Episcopal Church in Society Committee was very much appreciated.

Our morning speaker Gaynor Hammond talked about the use of memory boxes (see also next page) and the importance of these during 'transitions'. She was speaking particularly about movement into residential care but I felt that she could just as well have spoken about any kind of transition.



Professor John Starr looked at the demographics of individual ageing in Scotland in the context of economic, health and social policy. He gave us a very engaging talk and helped us understand the wider context in which we experience ageing.

We divided into group work sessions which covered a variety of topics including the spiritual tasks of ageing, worship and dementia and voicing the spiritual. The expected rain didn't materialise so that we could get to the different "break out" venues without getting soaked.

During the day we talked a lot about the importance of relationships and how relationships are made and sustained through story telling and listening. It is our relationships with each other that help us understand ourselves and our own ageing. Our gift to each other is to offer ourselves in friendship and to faithfully try to understand and celebrate ageing.

The delegates all felt by the finish of the conference that this should be the beginning of something important rather than the end of the conference. We hope that we can build on this feeling and aspiration and take our learning from the conference back into our faith communities, building on a very successful and encouraging day. We will be setting up some further North of Scotland events which will help to do this.



*Dr Harriet Mowat*