

# WPCS NEWS FOR YOU

Spring newsletter



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## What's on and where

WPCS has established a regular calendar of events, throughout the year, across the country, to help people find out more about chaplaincy in the workplace and how to go about volunteering.

So far this year, we have held Introduction sessions in Glasgow and Forfar with another, in Dundee, coming up in June. For more details on events please visit our website

[www.wpcscotland.co.uk](http://www.wpcscotland.co.uk)

find us on Facebook or Tweet to @WPCScotland.

You can also email us or speak to a chaplain directly using the information on our website Contact page.

In addition to our initial 'taster' sessions for volunteers, we run several training modules annually.

To date this year, chaplains have had the opportunity to learn about Thinking Theologically, Trauma in the Workplace, Active Listening, Suicide Awareness, Depression and Engaging with the Media.

Later in 2016 we will be offering modules on Organisational Dynamics; Ethical Practices in the Workplace; Safeguarding; Redundancy Workshop; Building Resilience; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Conflict, and Bereavement.



Dundee Workers' Memorial Day Lecture keynote speaker Dr Rowena Arshad pictured here with WPCS East of Scotland Regional Organiser Chic Lidstone (left) and Dundee's Lord Provost Bob Duncan.

## Remember the dead fight for the living

**W**PPCS has been closely involved in events to commemorate those who have died, been injured or made ill at work.

Workers' Memorial Day is held on 28 April every year. All over the world, workers and their representatives conduct events, demonstrations, vigils and other activities to mark the day which is also intended to serve as a rallying cry to: "remember the dead, but fight for the living".

In Dundee the day was marked by a commemoration service at the city's Workers' Memorial Tree by City Council Chaplain and WPCS East of Scotland Regional Organiser, Chic Lidstone. The following day he co-hosted a Workers' Memorial Day Lecture with Dundee City Council.

A packed Steeple Church was the venue for the talk - on Young People Shaping Policies and the Agenda - by Dr Rowena Arshad, Head of Moray House School of Education and Co-Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES).

Lord Provost Bob Duncan said he was delighted to see so many young people in the audience as they were: "The future of our city and our country." He spoke too of the poignancy of the event, the 23rd such lecture in Dundee, particularly in light of the fatal accident at the Queensferry Crossing the previous day - which had been International Workers' Memorial Day.

East of Scotland Regional Organiser Chic Lidstone also paid tribute to those who

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# Looking forward in faith



**A**t a time of major challenges in communities across the country, the benefits of a forward-looking, outward-facing ministry like WPCS are clear to Edinburgh Chaplaincy Team Leader Rev Tony Bryer (pictured).

An Anglican priest for some 40 years, he has spent two very different periods as a workplace chaplain in the capital. He first came there in 1996 to develop work begun initially in the 1970's by the late Rev Andrew Wylie, minister at St Andrews and St George's who pioneered retail chaplaincy in the city centre.

"Under him and Andrew McLellan (former Church of Scotland Moderator the Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan), a series of associate ministers at the church carried out a ministry to the retail sector and offices," explained Tony.

"My role, now fully funded, was offering spiritual support to city businesses and overseeing development of the church's work, daily ministry, daily prayer and at end of my term in 2004, St Andrews and St George's was beginning to explore working together with St John's Episcopal Church, in Princes Street, St Cuthbert's and St George's West.

"Rev Ian Gilmour was the first minister of the united parish and instrumental in establishing the Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together ecumenical covenant to work together in as many ways as possible.

"When I started working in Edinburgh, partnership with churches

was quite unusual. Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together could be seen as: 'trailblazers' in that respect.

"Now we have similar chaplaincy partnerships with a number of churches."

Tony has seen dramatic changes too, in his current post with WPCS.

He returned to Scotland to take on the role in October 2011 following some years back in Church of England parish ministry.

"I felt I was coming back to build on all the things that had been going on before," he explained.

In all, Tony now provides chaplaincy to close on six thousand people in the workforce across the north, east and centre of the capital.

## CHANGED

"My role has changed considerably over the years. Providing chaplaincy to Lothian Buses and later the trams were significant further developments which took me out of the city centre.

"The agreement to do that was due to negotiations between WPCS and the three 'Together' churches in Edinburgh City Centre who help fund the post.

"Within the last two years WPCS' training programme has been stepped up and more volunteers are coming forward.

"I am now a team leader of eight volunteer chaplains in the city centre, meeting with them for supervision and support.

"Recruiting, selecting, training and supporting volunteers are now substantial parts of my work."

Possibly the most important change Tony has noticed in the four and a half years since he began working with WPCS is the charity's much closer engagement with churches and the people in the pews.

"When I started with WPCS we weren't getting people from those churches coming forward to volunteer as chaplains.

"Now there are already three volunteers from the three 'Together' parishes and at least another one or two seriously considering it. There is a sense of WPCS being more embedded in the consciousness of congregations and chaplaincy as something that can be done by folk in the pews rather than only full-time chaplains. That is good, I think.

"For me it is very important that it is owned by the church, because we are in touch with other people who would not normally have anything to do with the church.

"WPCS is really the outward facing mission and ministry of the churches, with members going out into the local shopping centres, fire service and other workplaces.

"I hope and pray that as WPCS continues to grow and develop in Scotland, it will inspire people in the churches to think: 'We should be getting involved in what is going on outside the church'. Outreach means going 'out there'.

"Chaplaincy is a model for Church at a time when we are facing big challenges in the community.

"So many people do not now have experience of a church."





# It's about people

**Aberdeen chaplain Ron pictured with Georgie (left) and Meredith**

**W**orkers in Aberdeen city centre are finding that the old adage: 'a trouble shared' really is a trouble halved thanks to our volunteers Georgie Middleton and Meredith Lilley.

As trained volunteers, mentored by Aberdeen chaplain Rev Ron Flett, the WPCS duo have been getting to know more of the people working in and around Union Street.

Georgie and Meredith have been heartened by the warm reception they have had in shops around the city centre.

Says Georgie, a lay Reader in the Episcopal Church: "Meredith and I are building up contacts. It's going well, as we get a warm response on follow-on visits. I always look forward to the conversations we have with the people we meet."

Meredith recognises: "a real calling for mission," in herself. Currently on a three-year placement while her husband completes his PhD at the university, she previously worked in Washington DC overseeing mission and outreach in a church where the Supreme Court justices worshipped. "They were powerful people, but believers," she says.

WPCS enjoys close links with Aberdeen's public, private and third sector and Ron is in direct contact with Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations (ACVO), the Salvation Army's Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation worker, Aberdeen Churches Together (formerly the Regional Ecumenical Team) and the council's emergency planning group.

While chaplains are not counsellors, he has increasingly been asked to support people in a number of workplaces who have encountered tragedy - even trauma. In addition to providing a confidential, impartial, listening and support service to the council's 9000 staff - which includes those working in the social care provider Bon Accord Care - Ron is chaplain to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

His work there, particularly following tragic incidents such as road traffic fatalities or suicides, underlines the value of a workplace chaplain ready to listen and if need be, signpost people to further help. Most recently he was invited to speak at the city's service for seven incorporated trades. He chose: 'What Makes a City Great?' as his topic.

His answer: "Its people," holds just as true for chaplaincy.

## Workers' Memorial Day events

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had lost their lives in the workplace, from disasters like Chernobyl, to the Queensferry Crossing worker who had so tragically lost his life on Workers' Memorial Day this year.

Acknowledging the importance of this country's Health and Safety laws and the need to maintain them, Chic said Workers' Memorial Day events not only offered the opportunity for reminiscing, but a challenge to make our workplaces safer. He then called for a minute's silence to reflect on the dignity and value of life and that all life is precious.

Dignity and value were threads underpinning the presentation given by Dr Arshad. From her recent research with University of Newcastle and University of St Andrews - involving 382

young people, aged from 12 to 25, from different cultures and backgrounds, living in urban, suburban and rural areas of Scotland, Dr Arshad explained the current situation for young people in Scotland and how it might look if they were more involved. Link to the report : <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/youngpeople/outputs/finalreport/>

Dr Arshad spoke of the passion and enthusiasm she had encountered from young people. "We need their new way of thinking," she said. (A full report of these events will be available at [www.wpcscotland.co.uk](http://www.wpcscotland.co.uk) ).

In Midlothian, WPCS Trustee and STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith was one of the key speakers at a special service at the memorial in Bathgate's Balbardie Park on Thursday, 28 April.

Prayers at the service were led by WPCS volunteer chaplain Rev Chris Galbraith, minister of Boghall Parish Church Bathgate and Father Alistair Lawson, parish priest at St Mary's and St Columba's, Bathgate.

The event, which is organised by West Lothian Trade Union Council (WLTUC) and supported by West Lothian Council, marked the 16th year of the opening of the dedicated memorial site in the park which includes a special sculpture with the International Workers' Memorial Day slogan, 'Mourn the dead and fight for the living', as well as a memorial tree and shrub garden.

The service was introduced by the Chair of WLTUC George Paul, followed by an opening statement by West Lothian's Provost Tom Kerr.