

Fellowship of the Least Coin Newsletter January 2024



Good News for 2024

Last year FLC Scotland sent £1,500 to the international funds. Thank you for your prayers, commitment, and generosity.



FLC Scotland will have a **new website** for members in Scotland from 1st April. We are hoping that this will give greater access to information exchange and the possibility of gathering of members to pray together. I will send out a message when the website is open through the Guild Office so watch out for this and spread the word among our members.

We are talking, with the blessing of the International Committee, of a closer working with FLC members in the UK. We will keep you informed about our progress.

We continue to care for those without internet access and these members and any new members will continue to receive postal communications. As stated below if it is at all possible for us to send online communication to your local church office, clergy or to a family member (opportunity to spread the Good News about FLC) this will help us direct more funds to areas of need. Contact Secretary for Newsletters by post.

If you are reading the FLC Newsletter for the first time you may like to join us in this important ministry and pray either individually or as a regular pray group. Each time you pray you join an ecumenical worldwide movement focused on reconciliation and peace. This may be a prayer for a local family situation, one of concern in a local community or the offering of prayer for a national or international situation.

FLC Prayer

O loving Creator, we present ourselves in your divine presence to thank you for all the bountiful gifts of life. We are especially grateful for the Fellowship of the Least Coin which binds us together in love and forgiveness around the globe. Free us from all doubts and prejudices, we pray. Inspire us to live in solidarity with humankind that we may know the joy of giving and receiving. Dear God, accept this least coin, 'symbol of love'. Make us mindful of the miracles of these coins. Let us honour your creation with love, as shown through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As a sign of commitment to this life changing possibility members are asked to put aside one coin, the lowest denomination of their country, in Scotland this is 1p. This is the miracle that the gathering of coins across the world, transform people's lives by providing education and training, opportunities to meet in a safe place to bring new understanding and commitment between peoples divided by conflict or cultures and final resources and aid to areas of need, whatever the cause. FLC give regular updates of those projects funded and you are the ones making the difference for a membership donation of £3.65 !

Is God calling you to this ministry?

Is God calling you to pray faithfully for justice, peace and reconciliation?

Prayer-links in Scotland (Ann Wren, Secretary)

I live in Dumfries, but Christopher and I travel around the Diocese covering services for other clergy. In October I met a lady over coffee and in conversation about the developing situation in Gaza she shared that her son was working for an aid agency in Jerusalem. Before this current situation his task was to support pregnant Palestinian women access resources and health support. I promised her I would pray for him and have included him in my daily FCL intercessions ever since. So, when this article was posted by FLC in

November it confirmed what I had seen on the News bulletins, how desperate the situation has become for women, babies, and young children in the Gaza strip.

This focuses the need, just one of many, that prayers for peace and reconciliation by FLC members are



needed more than ever. Communication is very difficult, but updates are being received through links with the ecumenical faith leaders. Last month I was talking with a Church of Scotland deacon who has a ministry in the Holy Land and she related stories of people's Christian witness, defining even their own family members in some cases, to bring aid to those displaced and their vital need of resources. She talked also of a woman, her son has been killed in the strikes, yet she continues to bring bereaved women together whatever their faith or cultural

identity. Meeting together they pray for reconciliation and a just solution in the future. "Ordinary" men and women, innocent people caught up in the violence of a political war, from their pain and sorrow they are determined to pray and work for a hopeful future. So, all members of FLC I call you to pray for these people and all asking for our prayers today yes, in Palestine and Israel but in so many other places around the world.

As I write today, the Parliament in N. Ireland has sat together with a new coalition Government. This has taken a great deal of dedicated vision and determination by members of all parties. We learn from history that what seemed hopeless situations of the past are brought to a new beginning by much prayer, time and gifted skills of negotiation. So let us earnestly pray for all those we do know are working so hard to bring an end to these acts of conflict. In the last newsletter I shared prayers from Mathilde, in Syria. I include her reflection on the Magnificat followed by prayers written in the Holy land, by the Deacon of the Church of Scotland working there.

Luke 1: 39-56 The Magnificat

Stories are always connected to names, to make a story realistic and comprehensible. I always focus on names, especially that I serve within a very patriarchal community where women forget their names and introduce themselves as "the mother of...". I always find myself asking them: but what is your name, what is your story?


Most of the women in the Middle East feel connected to one Biblical name, a name that has a story which is different from the world stories. Maybe women feel connected because the Biblical figures are Middle Eastern, maybe because of the tradition. However, I always mention this Biblical figure not because she is like us from the Middle East, or because she speaks a sister- language, or because she is adored by the tradition. No. I mention her and I admire her because her story is revolutionary. Mary was her name.

In Luke 1: 39- 56, after the announcement of the angel to Mary and after hearing the blessing, Mary then chanted the Magnificat. A very well-known passage in church, it reached the level of being known by heart and recited especially during Christmas season. However, like other passages that are recited, this passage reached the level of being known but not really understood or meditated upon. In addition to its poetic beauty and its high theological confession, it still has a very perplexing terminology and, if it is understood in its historical background, then this is a revolutionary announcement. It was dangerous to be said.

This terminology of the "rich, proud, rulers, humble' make us ask "who are the poor according to the biblical understanding?" That is to say, are we talking about those who are economically poor? So, we can feel connected as poor communities living under the destruction of different wars. Or is the Bible introducing a different understanding of the poor and the rich? According to the biblical understanding, the poor are the people who are forced to live and suffer violence and the acts of darkness without being able to defend themselves. The poor are those who live physically and psychologically at the edge of the abyss. They are those who live under the mercy of others. They stand before them with open and empty hands. In this context then the rich are not those who have more money. The rich are the violent ones who oppress people and make them be poor so the rich can become richer. They are those who take advantage and never care about the rights of other human beings. On the contrary, they step on those rights.

When I look closely at this song of Mary, I can see that most of the people in the Middle East especially my fellow Syrians live under the poverty line. Not only there is the economic poverty line; the truth is this: there is oppression, killings, siege, violation of human rights, freedom taken away... But like Mary, we HOPE for God's Salvation only.

Points for Prayer



**Remember the dead, the injured, the bereaved of both sides: each one made in the image of God,
Pray for leadership with vision, courage and compassion here in Israel-Palestine and around the world,
Pray for an immediate cease fire and humanitarian aid to Gaza, and for the safety of all hostages held in Gaza,
Pray for leaders on the world stage to behave with integrity, in accordance with international law and respecting the human rights of all,
Pray for those, especially peace activists who feel God has abandoned them, that hope is lost.**

Excerpt from the FLC Prayer Diary 2022, a reflection by Preacher Mathilde Sabbagh a Pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Al-Hassakeh, NE Syria began her ministry in 2016.



2023 FLC IN- GATHERING LITURGY

Earth Care

Our Calling



Artwork: Sr. Eleanor Llanes, ICM, the Philippines

(Pachamama Alliance)

Response to climate change, is the focus for this year's Gathering Liturgy. What can we do individually, as a family or as a group to address this world crisis?

- 1) What is your own understanding of Earth Care?
- 2) How do you translate this understanding to your daily life? How is Earth Care a part of your calling as a human being?
- 3) How can you (or your group) help contribute to caring for the Earth in your own context? What do you think of these suggestions, below?

May we all embrace another way of knowing; another way of being in relation to each other, and to all of God's creation. To care for and restore this Earth – our only home - is our one calling. In the name of Jesus who showed us to be Christ to each other and to all of God's creation, Amen.

We are encouraged to do more and more online to save funds so they can be directed to the Projects and that we may act responsibly from an ecological perspective. Therefore, I am please asking you to **send me an email contact for future mailing** wherever this is possible. Use this as an opportunity to share the work and ministry of FLC with you church community or a family member or a friend who is online and can share news and worship resources with you. In doing so we are spreading the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ and demonstrating our care and prayers active in his name.

For more international articles and information you may visit: <https://www.fellowshipoftheleastcoin.org/>

Finance Report December 2022- December 2023

Fellowship of the least coin: Treasurer's statement

I took over the treasurer position in September 2022 however, there were many problems with changing signatures and becoming the designated internet banking official for the account. I finally got all the legalities and banking requirements sorted around March 2023, so could then manage the account appropriately. I made a formal complaint which resulted in the account being compensated, by £100, for the poor customer service!

The accounts for 2023 show donations from over 30 different groups, which has enabled our donation of £1,500 to the Ecumenical forum of Christian women in Europe (our FLC partners in Europe. The forum meet and with our representative Dr. Marianna Apresyan, administer funds to FLC projects once a year). This still leave funds available for the new website and the expenses needed for various mailings. FLC project reports can be found on www.fellowshipoftheleastcoin.org/ and then look under Projects.

Direct donations by bank transfer are coming into the account which is good to see. The 2022-2023 accounts were inspected at the end of the year by an independent examiner.

Account name: Fellowship of the least coin *(This is a business account)*

Account number: 50033484

Sort code: 82.65.24

Please put your group name as the reference.

Please continue to send cheques to the Secretary. These will be duly acknowledged. Please enclose a s.a.e

Thank you for your continuing support.

Beverley Clews

February 2024

Our New Website address for flcscotland will be: flcscotland.com

Scotland's Secretary address for all cheques and enquiries:

Ann Wren,
40 Park,
Thornhill,
Dumfries and Galloway,
DG3 5JP

Email : secretary.flcscotland@gmail.co

Please share this newsletter with friends and Church members