

GFS WORLD NEWSLETTER



From the World President

Christmas blessings to everyone. The crib scene above is from Peru, part of my collection of Nativity Sets. This year my Christmas card will feature Nativity Sets from Japan and Korea to remind me of my special visit to both those countries this year.

As I write this we are in the first week of Advent. Last Sunday in our diocesan churches we were thinking about HOPE because Advent is a season of Hope. Our society has made it a season of indulgence. Every year we see less and less of the real meaning of Christmas in our shops, in the media, in conversations. Our world at this time needs HOPE, hope for peace, hope for an end to violence, whether we look at our own national domestic violence situation or to the violence that is being perpetrated across our world, hope for a better balance between rich and poor. I congratulate GFS in the USA who have been participating in 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence and sharing with us by email and Facebook the daily information sheets. I know we can expect the USA to bring information to world council to encourage us to be more active in this area.

We give thanks with Sierra Leone that the World Health Organisation has declared their country free of Ebola and GFS is already beginning to meet together and to try to rebuild. We give thanks for the visit to Uganda by Thembeke Pama of South Africa to initiate GFS in that country and to train leaders. We give thanks for the visit to Sri Lanka by our World Youth Officer, Tegan Hudson and Sara Rademacher the USA Junior Delegate. They are our ambassadors to begin planning for our Youth Exchange Program which we hope will be accepted at the next World Council.

I wish every member all of God's blessings as we gather around the world at Christmas and for a new year that is full of growth and promise for GFS. Each of us has a part to play as we strive to bring others to

Christ and to serve those in need. ***Val***

FROM THE WORLD CHAPLAIN

Advent is already here and Christmas is also just round the corner "like a dog returning for the unwanted bone".

Advent as we know is fresh start of a new Church Year. We can see it as a time for making a new start or a renewal in our personal journey of faith.

If we have not enjoyed our GFS ministry for this year or you are not happy with your personal life of faith, why not prayerfully reconsider making a new commitment this Advent season.

During the season of Advent, we recall the coming of Jesus as supreme judge, coming of Jesus at Christmas and the coming of Jesus into our lives.

Jesus comes to us just as he came to Zacchaeus to create a new personality in our daily life's routine. As a result of his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus started to love himself again as a worthwhile member of his community.



In the same way, our continuous daily encounter with Jesus this Advent will change our outlook on our life and also in our GFS ministry.

We believe in the Christian Gospel of "bearing one another's burden". And as members of the GFS we try to live this gospel in our lives in serving through GFS.

It is not a brave new world we need to minister to. However, we need brave people in our GFS ministry to continue each year. Members who know their faith and prayerfully are mature through the power of God's Holy Spirit in our diverse changing societies.

In our very diverse ministries, we may have encountered certain groups of people whom other people consider "untouchable" because of their immoral behaviour or lifestyle.

We should not give in to the social behaviours of this world and avoid these God given opportunities to minister to them.

Jesus loves these people too and they need to experience God's love through our willingness to touch them by "bearing one another's burdens". Jesus opened the heart of sinful Zacchaeus and allowed him the freedom to repent, which is to turn from his false self to his true self. But the crowd disapproved and murmured. How is this not just the sort of miracle of Christ's coming, his Advent, for which we ought to wait in hope and joy this coming Christmas?

Every GFS member should have a dream in ministry which should lead to a perspective that lasts beyond a lifetime, to leave a legacy behind. May our faithful members who have departed this year leaving behind memorable legacies make a lasting difference to our GFS ministry in the next coming year. May their Souls rest in peace.

And to everyone out there, may you too all have a Blessed Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year with all your dear ones and Children.

Fr Isaiah Masida

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS WITH GFS IN KOREA

What a joy it was to spent time in Korea joining in their 50th celebrations and attending the inauguration of a new branch.

Thank you Korean GFS for your welcome, your hospitality and friendship and for making this such an enjoyable visit.

Asako Yonamine, the National President of Japan and I flew from Sendai in Northern Japan to Seoul and arrived on the Friday afternoon. We were met by Ruth and Joanna and taken to the beautiful convent of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, next to the Cathedral, that we all knew so well when we attended World Council in 2008. We were made so welcome and were so comfortable. The Archbishop of Korea, The Rt Revd Paul Kim and his General Secretary, Father Stephen Sikyung Yoo (who is also the GFS Chaplain) hosted a dinner for the GFS Executive, Asako and I. Such an interesting dinner and conversation and it was followed by a walk around the city environments, including the nearby Deoksu Palace.

The next morning was the celebratory Eucharist for the 50 years of GFS. It was so uplifting, with inspiring music. The beauty of Anglican liturgy is that we can be present at the Eucharist in so many different countries, where we may not understand the language but where we feel quite at home as we follow the familiar path of the liturgy. It was no different in Seoul Cathedral. Sarah Lee. A GFS member and well known Korean Soprano sang the Ave Maria during the administration of the sacrament. So beautiful!

It was so special to have the first President of GFS Korea present, Mrs Yang-shik Kim and her retired husband, Bishop Kim. Flowers were presented to them and the grateful thanks of GFS for their dedication to the growth of GFS in Korea. Our beloved Ruth (Choi) was also presented with a gift to commemorate her long, fruitful and faithful service to GFS.

And of course there was a party. We adjourned to a nearby Hall within the Cathedral complex for lunch and a GFS concert. What fun as some very talented people entertained us. And as well as Sara Lee, Asako also sang. She is a well-known Japanese Soprano and studied in the UK for many years.

Mrs Kim cut the cake. I spoke with the assistance of Joanna as Interpreter. There were lovely Korean crafts on display and a wonderful display of items from World Councils going back many years. They brought back many memories to me. Anna and Hannah, GFS members, had been up most of the night finishing off the posters of photos and greetings for the display.

So ended the party and what a great celebration of 50 years of GFS. I was proud to be part of it.

Anna and Hannah took Asako and I walking, through traditional Korean areas and to a Restaurant run by Monks and serving exciting dishes.

Sunday saw us travelling in a number of cars to St Aidan's a parish church on Gangwha Island. Catherine travelled in our car. She was the Miss C Oh (from World Minutes) who spoke so eloquently at the 1965 World Council to ask for support to begin GFS in Korea. She is a wise, beautiful person and we were able to talk about so many different subjects on our trip. On this day a new branch of GFS was being inaugurated and it was my pleasure to witness this occasion. It was harvest time and being a farming area crops were growing right up to the church fence. A number of farmers presented grapes and sweet potatoes at the Eucharist as an offering of their first harvest. And GFS members presented the proceeds from their annual bazaar to St Andrew's Church, nearby. Those who attended the 2008 Council will remember it well, such a historic and peaceful place. On our way back to Seoul we visited Jeondeungsa temple at the top of a very steep hill but with wonderful views from the top and with



Seoul away in the distance. Lots of families were out for the day enjoying the views. We finished our day by visiting Ruth's very own "The Plantation", a large peaceful garden which led to two Restaurants and then a large grassed camping area with self-contained tents where families can come to enjoy a holiday or weekend. So many children live in high rise apartments and it was obvious from the families who were enjoying outside games that this is a wonderful opportunity for children to experience safe and expansive play areas. It is a wonderful idea and Ruth and her family have great plans to develop it further

The next morning I spent time at Café Grace. What a thrill to see it in operation. The Cathedral is situated in the heart of Seoul with many business houses nearby and so many people drop into Café Grace for coffee. Two women from North Korea work at the Café and it is so encouraging to see the result of the 2008 World Project, as an ongoing project.



Since arriving home Father Stephen has emailed me to say that a second Café Grace has now been approved, that the profit from this last year was a record and GFS Korea has given it to the Cathedral to help with the 125th celebrations of the Anglican Church in Korea. These celebrations were held just after I left.

Thank you Korea GFS members, for your love and hospitality, for your beautiful gifts not only for me but also for the World team, for the hard work you do to make Café Grace and the support of North Korean women an ongoing and very successful project and for your determination to grow GFS in and GFS members presented the proceeds from their annual bazaar to St Andrew's Church, nearby. Those who attended the 2008 Council will remember it well, such a historic and peaceful place. On our way back to Seoul we visited Jeondeungsa temple at the top of a very steep hill but with wonderful views from the top and with Seoul away in the distance. Lots of families were out for the day enjoying the views. We finished our day by visiting Ruth's very own "The Plantation", a large peaceful garden which led to two Restaurants and then a large grassed camping area with self-contained tents where families can come to enjoy a holiday or weekend. So many children live in high rise apartments and it was obvious from the families who were enjoying outside games that this is a wonderful opportunity for children to experience safe and expansive play areas. It is a wonderful idea and Ruth and her family have great plans to develop it further

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May God bless you as you move forward into the next 50 years.

From
Val





In March 2015, I represented the Episcopal Church of the United States at the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women Conference in New York City. I made a commitment that I was going to make a difference in some small way. I stated:

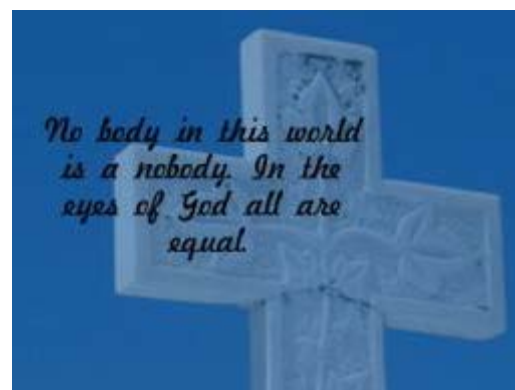
Now is the time for a call to action. We clearly have a long way to go, but we must raise awareness and the urgency of our task. The atrocities of human trafficking, gender inequality and all forms of violence against women and girls are unacceptable. Together we must find a solution and bring about change.

What can we do now? We must pray and continue to pray. As Christians, we believe that all humanity is created in God's image; that women and girls are created equal before God. Our scriptures, the way of Jesus Christ and our Baptismal Covenant call us to "seek and serve Christ in all persons", regardless of gender. As an Episcopalian, I, as well as, the Episcopal Church affirm that God's world was meant to be one of abundance for all people, with fundamental rights and dignity for all women and girls. As a member of The Girls' Friendly Society, we are part of something much bigger than just your branch or your Diocese. Our GFS "network" stretches across your state, throughout the nation and to more than 24 countries worldwide. Imagine if we were to unite in purpose – to join to empower girls and women, to make a difference in the world, to educate and inspire others to act. Together, we are a powerful force! We can achieve this mission but we must create strong partnerships at all levels – local, national, regional and global – vowing to create a world where gender equality is never in question and discrimination and violence against women and girls is a thing of the past.

As Christian Women let us begin to think how we can make a difference in our girls and women lives whom are suffering by the hands of others.

I would like GFS to join me in the 16 days of activism with a daily prayer, which I will send via email. Mother's Union and The Episcopal Church Women (USA) will also participation in 16 day of prayers.

Delores M. Alleyne, National President
The Girls' Friendly Society of the United States of America
Web-Site gfsus.org



Our Proud History being recorded!

Hello to you all!



I am conducting research into the organization and activities of the Girls' Friendly Society in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, during the period 1883-1980. Newfoundland and Labrador is the 10th province of Canada and lies on the Far East coast of the country. It is made up of an island and a portion of the mainland of Canada. From 1883 to the first half of the twentieth century, the Girl's Friendly Society was active in dozens of small rural and urban communities here. Not all branches began at the same time, nor did they all last for many years, but the Bonavista GFS is still in existence today, the last

remaining site of GFS in Newfoundland and Labrador and perhaps Canada. Little research or writing on the GFS in Newfoundland & Labrador or Canada has been undertaken, so a tremendous gap exists in our knowledge of the early organization in particular. My research is focusing exclusively on Newfoundland & Labrador (at least for now), using records from the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist GFS in St. John's (1883-1970s roughly), records and interviews with those still active in the Bonavista GFS (1894-), C of E/Anglican church records and periodicals of the day, and hopefully, GFS records in London England.



The project has several goals: to document the existence, longevity, and location of GFS branches in Newfoundland and Labrador; to record the activities and practices over time of one or more GFS branches; to record experiences and stories of GFS Members; to understand more about the construction of class and gender relations in and through the work of the GFS. It is a wonderful project, allowing me to make the acquaintance of fabulous, active and community minded women. If any of you have information on the Newfoundland GFS I'd love to hear from you!

Dr. Linda Cullum, c/o 9 Gooseberry Lane, St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada A1B 1Y3 or email: lcullum@mun.ca.

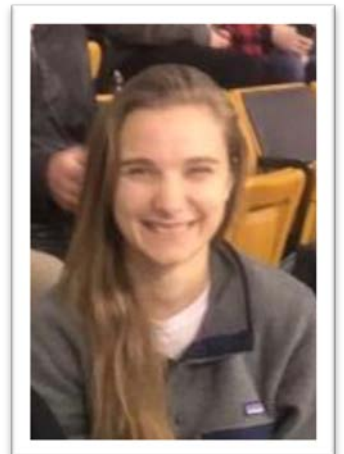
From the 27th of November to the 4th of December this year, Sara Rademacher (USA) and Tegan Hudson (Australia) will be visiting GFS in Sri Lanka.

This will be an exciting trip and is a flow on from the discussion about a youth exchange program at World Council in Wales.

It will be a busy trip, with orphanage visits and church visits plan; as well as connecting as much as possible with the girls and women of GFS in Sri Lanka.

This is an exciting opportunity for these young adult members and for the global family of GFS.

Pray for their trip, and that this will be the first of many.



Name: Sara Rademacher

Age: 19

What do you do with yourself during a normal week?

I am currently a junior at Simmons College in Boston, so most of my week is spent going to classes. But I also play lacrosse for my college team and we have workouts and practices most days.

How did you get involved in GFS?

My mother got me involved in GFS, she brought me to meetings even as a baby and I've been involved ever since, this included attending World Council in Wales as a USA Youth Delegate

What are you most looking forward to about Sri Lanka?

I am most looking forward to learning more about the culture. Also Jeanne, who I first met at the World Council in Korea, said they might teach me to play cricket, which should be fun!

How can we be praying for you?

That we will have a safe trip, and that we will be able to encourage many.

WHAT ARE LINK COUNTRIES?

Our World Guidelines state:

Link Country member countries are to be “linked” to further prayer and practical support. The groupings may be changed after discussion at each World Council.

The current link countries were last discussed in Ireland - in fact there was long discussion. We will certainly be discussing them at the 2017 World Council when we will add our new countries and perhaps rearrange the others and add a further group or groups.

Australia	PNG	Solomon Is	New Zealand
South Africa	Liberia	Lesotho	Kenya
Japan	Korea	Sri Lanka	Philippines
USA	Zambia	Cameroon	Sierra Leone
Wales	Ghana	England	Ireland

As Cameroon appears to be no longer in operation I have suggested that Canada replace Cameroon. I have asked all country leaders to make contact with the countries in this group before Christmas and to report back on the results. That means each of the 16 countries above should be making contact with the other three countries in their group. Please encourage your country leader to make this contact.



WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND OUR GFS WORLD?

GFS WALES

Greetings from Wales. After a glorious autumn with warmish weather we are now in the throes of storm Barney which saw wind and rain battering the land. However we haven't suffered the extremes of weather that some countries endure.

Our branches have restarted after the summer break. We are lucky to have some older girls who are looking to train as young leaders. Having grown up in GFS they see it as their chance to give something back. We are still praying that new branches will start and the signs are hopeful.

Welsh Council met recently and are planning some events for our girls in 2016 giving girls from our branches chance to meet together to learn and to share fun and fellowship.

Rachel Matthews, our development worker recently met with our oldest GFS member. Many of you may know Rosemary Macdonald from Monmouth Diocese as she has been a member for over 80 years and has attended many World Councils. Mrs Mac, as she is known to generations of GFS members has a wealth of memories and experiences and until the branch closed still helped out Carole Jacob in Pontnewydd.

We are almost in the season of Advent which ought to be a time of reflection as we await the coming of Christmas. I have a friend who doesn't like the church dressed for Advent (or Lent for that matter) as she doesn't like the purple vestments or the lack of flowers. But for me we need the time of plainness or austerity as the gold and decorations of Christmas have so much more of an impact and remind us of the Light coming into the world.

Nadolig Llawen &
Catriona



Mrs Mac with Carole Jacob

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda
Charlesworth

GFS JAPAN

A copy of the report of my visit to Japan in September to see the World Project in action has been sent to all country leaders. If you have not seen it please ask your leader for a copy. It was a most interesting visit and GFS members in Japan are fulfilling all the purposes of the project in such a positive way. But the money given so far has been used and we desperately need more money for the project. Please do not wait to bring it to World Council but send as soon as you can (anything over \$AUD1000). If you have small gifts it is Quite OK to bring to council to save exchange costs. (Val Gribble)

GFS RWANDA

Greetings from GFS Rwanda. I am Yavellah and I'm the Coordinator of GFS in Rwanda. From our first meeting on 8th August 2015, we have set up guidelines of GFS. Mobilizing girls from rural and urban areas to join GFS and explaining to them why they need to belong to GFS which was well received. The official launch of GFS Rwanda was on 14th November 2015 and 25 girls who represent different branches were commissioned by the Bishop of Kigali Diocese. We are planning a girl's conference on the 12 December 2015 where we expect 200 girls from around the country and continue mobilizing. Your prayers and support are highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully
Yavellah – GFS Coordinator



GFS SRI LANKA

GFS World Day of Prayer

On the day that we observed The GFS World Day of Prayer, we gifted a stock of medicines to the national Mothers' Union. Here, the President Jeanne Withanage hands over the medicines to Roshini Mendis, the President of the national Mothers' Union.



Pink Pearls

History in the making - "Pink Pearls", a junior group was inaugurated on October 31. Here are some of the "Pearls", happy together after a particularly energetic balloon game. The name of the group was chosen after much thought. Pink is for girls and a pearl is pure, precious and has a luminous glow which is in keeping with our vision of making each girl realize her worth, uphold the purity of life and glow or shine for Jesus. The motto is : Reflecting THE Light. Jesus said : "I am the Light of the World" – John 8 : 12 and just as a pearl reflects the light, our Pearls are expected to reflect the Light of Jesus. There are 3 categories of Pearls – Natural (original), Cultured (man made/ "polluted" by sin), and Imitation. This would make each Pearl think about who she is. Pearls come in 8 different shapes – like all of us who are different to one another, not only physically but have different abilities, different talents that we must offer to God.



The Pearl is mentioned in the Bible - Some instances: In Matthew, the Pearl of great price or a very valuable pearl is compared to the Kingdom of God or Heaven.

In Revelations, the Gates to Heaven are referred to as the Pearly Gates and each of the 12 gates is made of one pearl each.

Visit of GFS youth leaders

Tegan Hudson (Australia), the GFS World Youth Officer and Sara Rademacher (USA) will visit our GFS for a week at the end of November. We are all excited because this too is a historic occasion – the first time that youth leaders are visiting us! We have planned a variety of events and hope to show them a little bit of our beautiful tropical island too.

One of the main events is the meeting that has been planned for Tegan and Sara to meet the Pink Pearls. It is not easy finding girls who are willing to commit themselves and it is harder to sustain their interest in the midst of school, classes, work, church etc. Tegan's and Sara's visit will not doubt create an impact and encourage this very new group. The other important function is when Tegan speaks at a service of praise organized by the Student Christian Movement. This visit will, I believe, officially launch the GFS youth exchange program.

(Jeanne)

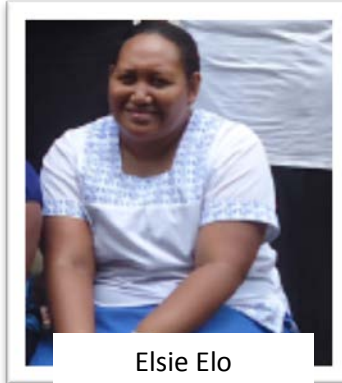
GFS MELANASIA (INCLUDES THE SOLOMON ISLANDS)

On the 10th October 2015 during the commemoration for St Michael and all Angels, 10 Townsends member and 31 Members were admitted.

I have organized with GFS members here to come up with a design for badges depicting Melanesian themes for GFS membership.

There were more than 400 GFS members (DOCM only) attended during the occasion and given the opportunity a GFS coordinator for the Diocese of Central Melanesia (DOCM) was elected, she is Mrs Elsie Elo.

With best regards
Mrs Betty Kesaka
(Provincial GFS Coordinator)



Elsie Elo



Betty Kesaka



GFS KOREA

On 19th September, we celebrated our 50th birthday. We had Val Gribble and Asako Yonamine (the President of GFS Japan) in our celebrations. We also celebrated our World Day of Prayer service with them on that day. All GFS members in Korea would like to express our deepest gratitude for the warm messages from all around the world. Thank you so much!! ☺

<Photo 1: After the World Day of Prayer service at Sts Mary & Nicolas' Seoul Anglican Cathedral>



We're so pleased to announce the opening of our new branch at St Aidan's Church in Gangwha Island. St Aidan's Church is a small, but historical church, which was founded in 1901. On 20th September, our national board members visited St Aidan's Church with Val and Asako to witness its inauguration and to congratulate the admission of five new GFS members in Gangwha Island. On that day they also visited St Andrew's Church in Gangwha Island as a part of 50th Anniversary celebration programme.

<Photo 2: After the inauguration, in the front yard of St Aidan's Church. Everyone's eyes grinned in happiness>



The employees of Café Grace had a day out with GFS members in Seoul Cathedral on 28 October. They went to Gyeongbokgung, which is the

main palace of the Joseon Dynasty for more than five hundred years and the name Gyeongbokgung means "the Place Greatly Blessed by Heaven", which is located near the Seoul Our Cathedral, on 28th October.

The new President of GFS Seoul Diocese was elected at the 44th GFS Seoul Diocese board meeting on 17th October. Seok You-Seon (Fides), the current President of GFS Gangnam Church (St Monica's Church), was elected as the new President of GFS Seoul Diocese and new Board members were also appointed. On 9th November they had their first monthly meeting and discussed about coming junior camp.

Café Grace opened its 2nd branch at Dongseo Oriental Medical Centre_national board members celebrated its opening and the Most Revd Paul Keun-Sang Kim also attended its opening ceremony and blessed it. The café is located on the ground floor of the building and shares the space – it is the waiting area in the hospital – with the hospital administration department, so we expect many hospital staff and visitors as well as patients will use our café.



GFS ZAMBIA

GFS Zambia recently held elections to usher in a new National Executive that saw Mrs Thelma Mwansa Lumbeta Nkholomba emerging as the new National President. Following a very successful elections that has seen a number of youths holding positions on the National level the new National Executive held their first meeting to do a Strategic Plan for the next 3 years as well as relooking at the current GFS Zambia Constitution and made recommendations to be taken to the General Conference to be held in January 2016.

New Branches

The Girls Friendly Society in Zambia has continued to spread in Dioceses where there is no GFS, another branch was commissioned in Luapula Diocese – Mansa by Bishop Mumbi with the emphasis to take to other Parishes in the Diocese.

We welcome Mwansa (Thelma) Lumbeta, the new President of GFS in Zambia. We pray for her as she begins this important role and look forward to hearing more about Zambian GFS. I know that Beatrice Zulu will offer much advice and support to Thelma.



GFS AUSTRALIA

GFS Newcastle: This year along with celebrating World Day of Prayer Newcastle Diocese also celebrated an 80th birthday for Kathleen Reynolds (former Australian chairman) on the same weekend. After our service at St James Church Morpeth led by our Chaplain Archdeacon Sonia Roulston and lunch in the Rectory we surprised Kath at her retirement village for a birthday afternoon tea.

Although Kath is not able to get too many of our meetings now she still keeps up with happenings in the Diocese, around Australia and around the World.

In the photo you can also see Mrs Joan Nicholson and other members of GFS Townsend Group in Newcastle. Gail Orchard



GFS Sydney has a well organised camping program with their latest camp being held across the World Day of Prayer. They used the theme of "Light of the Universe". Girls took part in Abseiling, Archery, Hiking, Craft and Science with great spiritual input as they used the theme to see Jesus as

the Light of the world. A space disco, a Mystery Night and great worship made this such a successful camp.



Christmas in Japan Val

Gribble reports: Following my report on my visit to Japan, Deidree Noss from Sydney, who was the Junior Delegate (as Deidree Nixon) to Japan World Council in 1984 prepared a delightful Christmas in Japan program for the use of Australian



leaders. You will see the whole program in the next Australian newsletter and we hope that our GFS friends in Japan will approve of Deidree's wonderful gifts in preparing this program.

I was invited to speak about my visit to Japan to GFS members at my old parish. It was such a joy and they used much of Deidree's program. Parents and parishioners attended to join with GFS to understand a little of the tragedy of the 2011 Tsunami as I showed photos of what I had seen.



And just this week as I write these notes Caritas (which is an arm of Mothers Union) gave a gift of \$AUD100 to the Japan Project. We are most grateful.



GFS and Kids+ Perth With the ages and numbers of children going down Perth decided a few years back to stop running camps and offer a holiday club for a week during the school holidays. These have proved very successful and we regularly have up to 20 children attend in the 3 midterm

holiday breaks that we have in Perth. They are run on a theme and the children have fun participating in songs, memory verses, bible stories, crafts, activities, movies and dancing around the theme.



We also offer a shorter version to 3 country destinations. In the July holidays we go to Bruce Rock and Wongan Hills (3 hrs to BR and 2 to WH to the East, then 2 back to Perth) and then in the October holidays we go to Esperance which is a 8 hour drive to the far south of Western Australia. These were started 3 years back to honour the memory of the Missionary work undertaken by Marjorie Burton in the Caravan that began in 1934 in rural areas around Western Australia. These holiday clubs are well received with the country areas being so isolated, they run on the same principals as the week long ones but we just adapt to either 1, 2 or 3 days depending on the place.

GFS SIERRA LEONE

With the decision to declare Sierra Leone Ebola-free (8 November) the church and GFS is again active.

Alberta tell us that they held their first Diocesan Council meeting on 26 November and on 27 November they held a Diocesan Africana Service during which they launched their 50th Anniversary Project Fund which is for the construction of a GFS House. Sierra Leone does not have any permanent location for administrative and other activities. With the Blessing of the Bishop, the Diocese is considering ways and means of providing a suitable environment for the project site. Alberta wishes everyone a pleasant and peaceful yuletide season. We also welcome the Revd Robertson Curtis as the newly appointed Chaplain for GFS Sierra Leone.

It is Sierra Leone's turn to produce the World Day of Prayer Service for 2016 so we look forward to their service.

GFS IRELAND

"Love and Christmas Greetings to all Readers" from GFS Sisters in Ireland



We have closed the door on November, a month for Remembrance and Reflection and we are in the season of Advent; a time for Contemplation and Preparation, that leads us to Christmas morning, when we celebrate the birth of Christ our Saviour. During September



and October GFS Ireland had three Regional Trainings in various locations. The theme was "Our Society ... GFS ... Our Care".

- Each event began with a small Conference on the running of our organization at all levels. This part was felt necessary to ensure that members are aware of changes and legalities and that a good flow of communication exists.
- The Bible Study Project, with its theme *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength"*; Philippians Ch. 4, v 13 was on the agenda. Two simple stories are being used to help youngsters understand the theme: Acts Ch. 3 v 1-10 and Daniel Ch. 3 v 14-30.
- An interesting Craft Discussion with a display of completed articles was of great interest.
- "Belonging to a Female Organization" was the title of another session. Each guest speaker spoke from a different perspective which members found encouraging and lighter than documentation details!

Prior to our Autumn Central Council meeting members joined Georgina Armstrong, Derry and Raphoe Dioceses, as she led us in our World Day of Prayer Service. Georgina had a Prayer Tree where we laid a Prayer Request and took away another. 'Well done' to GFS Papua New Guinea for compiling a lovely Service where members feel a strong connection

NEWS FROM KENYA

Veronica has emailed to say that GFS in Kenya has been through difficult times but they are picking up again and were having meetings in November. They live in a country which is also often in turmoil and we remember them in prayer.



GFS USA

NEWS FROM YOUR GFS SISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GFS in America celebrates the month of October as the month of “Caring” Every branch in the USA in some way has the opportunity to serve, help, bless, encourage, and comfort others. Age is not a factor; from our youngest to our senior members along with their leaders receive so much in return, a feeling of pride, it also gives them a sense of belonging and value. Teaching our girls that God calls us to service far beyond anything we could ever imagine and that He put us on Earth to contribute, whether it be big or small. We were not put on the Earth to consume resources, to eat, breath and to take up space. Every individual on this earth can to do something and to give to others what we have been bless with. This is what GFS America is about teaching our girls that it is better to give then receive all the time. Many branches did a number of projects of caring during the month. Making dog biscuits and St. Francis peg dolls to hand out at the Blessing of the Animals. On the west coast during their camping during school break, the girls "gave back" by moving rocks to shore up a slope that will be susceptible to the rains. Many branches made brownies and cards for our soldiers serving our country that the American Red Cross will mail, visiting the elderly, writing letters and reading to them, giving thankful baskets to fire fighters in their local communities and serving meals at homeless shelters, and making sandwiches for shelters and outdoor ministries.

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”
– Martin Luther King, Jr

Now that our “Month of Caring” has ended, it does not mean that GFS America has stopped serving others. We continue to reach out to the less fortunate by living by our GFS motto “Bear Ye One Another’s Burdens” in our daily lives. This is what makes GFS amazing! At the end of November, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving in our country. This is a time were families and close friends gather around a table with an abundance of food and give thanks for all the blessings they have received. To be thankful is something we much continue to teach our girls because of the many material thing they have the iPhone, iPad sometimes it difficult for them to relate to that they are bless with whatever they have because in the world around them some have so little or none at all. We also remind them that we live in an imperfect world with many problems, children going to bed without food, poverty, abuse, terrorism, deadly Ebola, but that the GFS Family is one that will listen to them, and love them unconditionally. Our GFS girls and leaders gives us all hope for the future because they are caring who seek to improve the world we live in and make it a better place.

GFS American will keep all of our GFS sisters around the world in our prayer as we approach the Holy season of the coming of our Lord, Advent and the Celebration of birth of Christ, Christmas.

Delores M. Alleyne (National GFS President USA)



GFS SOUTH AFRICA

Under the guidance of Thembeke as Provincial President and the Executive members of a number of dioceses, GBFS (Girls and Boys Friendly Society as it is known in South Africa) has been very busy. New branches have been established. There has been a very positive Conference. The soup kitchen in Thembeke's parish provides so much to so many in need and have recently held their Christmas luncheon. We look forward to sharing the vibrancy of GBFS in South Africa when we visit for the 2020 World Council (seems very far away at the moment but already they are beginning to plan their role as Host Country from 2017)



GFS UGANDA

Thembeke reports on her visit to Uganda. This visit was financially supported by a number of GFS countries.

This is the day that The Lord has made. Let's Rejoice in it. Thank you once more for the support that you afforded me for Uganda trip.



Thank you once more for the support that you afforded me for Uganda trip. Thanks to Gertrude, supported by the Dean of the Cathedral of Kaku west of Uganda for mobilizing on the ground. On my arrival GFS was not yet started the first day, Friday the 20 Nov. I was exposed to the confirmation which was done by the Bishop . That's where I started presenting to the bishop and marketing it to the congregation with positive results. The Bishop gave a go



ahead for it to start then, at that parish using girls, mostly that have been confirmed



on the day. I had a two hour session with identified two leaders after service.

I had an honour to present GFS in a group of about 30 priests from different parishes of the diocese where there was thanks giving service with positive results .

I introduced GFS and practically started a 3 hr session with a group of about 35 possible members prepared to be the first group in launching.



I conducted a workshop with 9 possible leaders from 9 different parishes in the diocese for two days. The second day we came up with operational plan with time frames. Those leaders according to their plan are going to start GFS in their parishes this coming Sunday including the one that I started on the 20 Nov on my first day. They are together as an interim diocesan committee and are going to market it in the whole diocese and spread it other dioceses in Uganda. They are 10 parishes under the leadership of Madam Gertrude.

On my last day Sunday the 29 Nov. was the launch of GFS establishment in Uganda, blessed with the presence of the Dean of the Cathedral.

Now GFS ACSA is preparing to be visited by GFS world president in 5 months time May 2016, Uganda GFS is starting preparing to attend a GFS provincial conference to be hosted on the weekend of 3- 5 June venue Diocese of Johannesburg in honour of our GFS world president.

Together We Are Building This Kingdom Of God Serving Through GFS

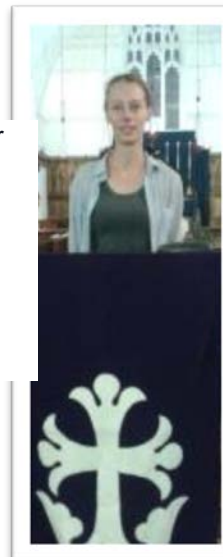
Thanks once more for your support of prayers and be blessed.

A Pictorial Story of Tegan and Sara in Sri Lanka



They will report in full to the World Council and the report will be distributed early next year. They are visiting Sri Lanka as the first process in our proposed Youth Exchange Program. We thank Sri Lanka for hosting their visit and for those who have assisted Tegan and Sara to undertake this visit.

The Pink Pearls with our visitors Tegan & Sara at the meeting held this evening ... wonderful to see so many Pearls!



A happy evening with the girls of St John's Home



One of the many outings exploring the beautiful Sri Lanka

Tegan & Sara both participated in the morning service at St Michael's Church - Sara read the Epistle & Tegan gave the Sermon ... and in the evening Tegan gave her testimony at the Ladies College Praise Service. And then ... wait for it! ... Tegan was invited to address the morning assembly at the College



At GFS Christmas party

**Thank you Tegan and Sara.
You are precious members of GFS and a great example for our
future leaders.**

Prayer thoughts for December 2015

Week beginning 1st December

We pray for Sri Lanka – for their coming events including the Nativity Play especially for Tegan and Sara and all other happenings at their beautiful GFS hall. We give thanks for the success of their market day held last week and for the “Pink Pearls”. We especially pray for the time spent with the Youth Officer, Tegan and Sara (USA) as they consider how to begin the Youth Exchange Program. Give them wisdom and insight into the best way forward to share GFS with other younger people.

Week beginning 6th December

Lord we pray especially for the GFS groups in South Korea, Japan and the Philippines. We ask for wise leadership, for continued blessings on their members. We celebrate a new Café Grace opened recently and give thanks for the opportunities opened up through these cafes to serve others in need.

Week beginning 13th December

Lord we bring before you a world suffering with wars and crisis for many people especially those who are now homeless as a result of turmoils. Help us to serve each other, sharing our resources, our homes and hearts with these people. Bring about your peace through us as we consider their needs.

Week beginning 20th December

Heavenly Father, you sent your precious Son into the world so many years ago to help us to know more about you. As we celebrate this joyful gift for us, keep us mindful of sharing this good news to those who are still to come to know you as their Father. We pray for those who feel sadness at a time when many are brimming over with goodness and happiness. Give them a real sense of your loving care for them, today and always.

Week beginning 27th December

We pray especially for the World President and her Team (Val and the team – Kate, Glenys, Ros, Tania, Reverend Cheryl and Reverend Isaiah, Chris and Julie). We pray for strength and wisdom for Val as she leads this organisation bringing together its many parts around the world. We pray for those who need the gifts of wise handling of finances, generous sharing of news, inspiring programs to share and guidance as the World Project continues.



Prayer thoughts for January, 2016

Week beginning 3rd January

As this New Year begins we pray that the words to the song “Brother Sister let me be your servant” might resonate in our hearts as we look for new and exciting ways to be servants for each other. Help us to be humble and gracious; quietly seeking to help others, to always care more for others than ourselves and to spread the Good News of God’s saving love.

Week beginning 10th January

Although some have snow for January, we know that this is not familiar for our friends in the Solomon Islands and PNG. We pray for abundant rains to water gardens and for generous crops for farmers to feed the hungry. We pray for the leaders of the Solomon Islands who are still finding out more about GFS and its potential. We pray for the continued spread of GFS in PNG and the use of the Sunday school program for children.

Week beginning 17th January

Lord we pray for the leaders in every country. We pray for those in Government where the people despair of their greed and disinterest in helping the weak and needy. We pray for the leaders of GFS as they carry out their responsibilities. Help them to be mindful of serving well those who are looking for guidance from them. Help each branch leader to be a role model for the members to see Christ at work in all they do and say.

Week beginning 24th January

We pray for Australia as they celebrate Australia Day and remember all that’s good about the nation. We pray for Jan as she recovers from her recent illness. We pray for our Youth Officer, Tegan, as she has now completed her studies and waits to begin her working career. We give thanks for the time spent in Sri Lanka. We pray for our near neighbours in New Zealand and the work with girls studying and the opportunities they provide. We give thanks for the recent wedding in Helen’s family.

Week beginning 31st January

We pray for the work of the World Project. We encourage each branch, each member to be constantly considering how to assist financially to spread the good work that has begun through the World Project. We pray for each child who is given a small opportunity to play without cares. We pray for the women who sew and make such beautiful pieces and that this continues to offer hope in their lives.



Prayer thoughts for February, 2016

Week beginning 7th February

As schools begin again for a new year in the Southern Hemisphere, we thank you for the gift of education. We thank you for those who teach and the gift to share and lead others into new understandings. We thank you that we can learn to read your Holy Word, to speak about your name and your love to others. We thank you for the gift of singing to worship and praise your name.

Week beginning 14th February

We thank you Lord, as we pray for those who are close to us whom we love dearly. We pray for those we miss at this time and thank you that we knew them and loved them while here on earth. We pray for those gone already to a new eternal life in Heaven and look forward with joy to our time in eternity.

Week beginning 21st February

We lift before you the members of England, Ireland, Wales USA and Newfoundland. We celebrate with the achievements of last year and the hopes for this year. We pray for those who have known sadness through bereavements and pray for your comfort Lord for those families. We pray for Sara as she comes home to share the excitement of the time in Sri Lanka and that her enthusiasm might encourage many of the young adult members.

Week beginning 28th February

We pray and give thanks for the African countries of South Africa, Liberia, Lesotho, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Uganda, Zambia. Lord we give thanks for the new countries and ask for your guidance as they are established and operating. We think of Thembeke as she continues to work to promote GFS and to prepare for her time as the next World President. Give her peace and strength to continue all these things.



**CUT OFF DATE FOR NEXT
NEWSLETTER 15TH FEBUARY
2016**

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**GFS
World theme
Prayer
2014-2017**

**Gracious Lord, guide our
footsteps of faith that we might
walk in your grace and wisdom as
we act to serve you. Rekindle
afresh in us our spiritual gifts that
we might transform ourselves and
others, serving the whole body of
Christ through GFS. Make us
worthy of our calling to service,
through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
AMEN**

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