

DACYP Prayer News - September 2026

I'm just back from an excellent outdoor retreat in the Scottish Highlands at the Abernethy Trust Kilmalieu centre. There were just 7 of us, each looking for rest, guidance and a space to offload. Almost all the sessions were outside and they encouraged us to use the natural environment to reflect on our faith and practices. I'm used to doing this from Life Walks, but it was nice to be on the receiving end of someone else's guidance. The recurring question was 'Where, in all of this, do you see God?'

One example I am happy to share was on a night walk. I shone my bright torch up a burn and a pair of eyes reflected back at me. They started moving and got closer, until eventually their owner appeared beneath me on a foot bridge. It was a pine marten. Such illusive creatures, and yet this was within a metre of me. A blessing indeed. It reminded me of when I used to visit my Grandma. I knew she would usually give us a pound, or a fiver or 50p, but she would do it secretly by putting it in the palm of my hand, clenching it and then leaving it for me to discover what it was. And so it was, I had come away on a retreat, expecting God to give us something, and here it was (the first of many more blessings). It reminded me that with DACYP, we hold on to the belief God has and will show up, and usually in ways we didn't expect.

Last month we asked you to pray for our financial situation. I don't have details, but I believe we have since been awarded a grant that will put a dent in that deficit. When we turn up to pray, we can expect God to show up. That is the encouragement of **prayer breakfasts**, where we gather expectantly on God, and usually with thankful hearts from the answers to prayer from the previous month.

Religious Moral Education (RME) - I have been back to work with Primary 7 in RME. The Big Questions has been rebranded the Heart, Mind and Soul Sessions. A few new changes along the way keep it fresh, but it remains a space for the young people to express their beliefs, ask questions and wonder. The discussions are very deep and some of the wrong ideas they have about God are already fixed in some folks' lives. It is also a privilege to hear them finding the words to articulate what they do believe. For some, this is the first time they have ever done this, and I am sure it will help them develop a faith that they can build on in the years ahead.

Volunteers - The volunteers have almost all undertaken the safeguarding training required of them by the school. This is opening up many opportunities for DACYP to support the schools. We are very thankful for the servant hearts so many people have. It is a fantastic witness.

Lads' Group - The group is a little low on numbers, but the value of the sessions remains high. With his mum's permission I can tell you that one of the lads (DJ) is awaiting major surgery on his leg following a nasty accident at the harbour. The injury is life changing, and the surgery will determine just how much. This has had a profound emotional impact on his family and his friends. I told his mum about the prayer group and she was grateful for us to add him to the list of things to pray for.

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) - The high school asked me to join others in training young people to develop strategies to reduce gender-based violence. The training took part in Belhaven Church and the ethos of it very much chimes with Christian values around loving our neighbours and enemies. It is a privilege to get the opportunity to be involved and for the church to support the initiative.

The Cup of Kindness Award - This week we will present Ben Melville with the Cup of Kindness Award. He was one of several nominated by other young people for the award because he has consistently demonstrated kindness to others. A panel of folk from different churches agreed on him getting the award. The award creates a great opportunity for local churches to show the relevance of the Christian faith and values to others.

Harbour Lights - We have enjoyed welcoming a couple of P7s to the group, and the return of one of the older lads... who still can't beat Malcolm at chess! One of them brought her homework in to do, others bring their own model figures to paint. All of these things lend themselves to being able to talk together.

Navigators - This is a high school initiative I am involved with at the Bleachingfield. It targets those pupils who struggle to attend school, and some of them bring parents or carers along. They sometimes need support too, and our hope is that over time, we might be able to find volunteers who can befriend adults in this sort of situation.

Primary 7 Camp, Aberfoyle (5-8 October) - We will soon be off on school camp. Chris, Moira, Fionna and myself will be supporting this trip. It's a great opportunity to get to know young people and staff. The usual challenges and threats of homesickness, minor accidents and mishaps loom over proceedings, but our prayer is for safety and the smooth running of things.

That's all for now. If you know of local youth-related things we can pray for then do get in touch. We hope that these things listed will help guide your valued prayer for DACYP.

Every blessing,

Richard Taylor