

**Summary of the Presbytery Meeting held at St Matthew's Parish Church on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>  
November 2023 at 7.00pm.**

**OPENING WORSHIP**

The Moderator opened the meeting with worship and spoke about the many positive and exciting things which she said were happening in Presbytery.

**INTIMATIONS**

Margaret McVean intimated that there would be a Charity Christmas card sale in the A.K. Bell library, Perth from Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October, and encouraged members of Presbytery to give their support.

The Moderator advised that the planned Pilgrimage to the Holy Land had been postponed because of the ongoing war in the Middle East.

**MINISTERS JOINING PRESBYTERY**

Four ministers were admitted to the Presbytery of Perth, having transferred in from other Presbyteries. They were the Very Rev Albert Bogle, the Rev Blair Gillon, the Rev Alan Murray and the Rev Lorna Tunstall.

The Moderator also welcomed Marie Clare Dungavell to the position of Community Engagement Worker at St. Mark's Church, Stirling and said that she was formally introduced to the congregation on Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup>.

**VACANCY MATTERS**

A number of ministers are retiring or moving on to a new role.

The Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin of Forfar: East and Old Parish Church is retiring on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2024 and the Rev Andy Graham of Bendochy linked with Coupar Angus Abbey is retiring on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Rev Emma McDonald is moving on from being minister at St David's High in Dundee to become a Pioneer Minister in Dundee for the next two years.

The Rev Elisabeth Stenhouse is leaving Cleish linked with Fossoway, St Serf's and Devonside to become minister at Aberlady and Gullane from November 27<sup>th</sup>.

All the ministers were thanked via statements read on behalf of their congregations and by the Moderator.

The Rev Carleen Robertson was thanked for serving as an Interim Moderator at Glamis, Inverarity and Kinnettles for 12 years and noted that she would continue to serve as Interim Moderator at Glamis. This may well have been a record for length of time served!

**OVERTURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT**

The General Assembly had approved an Overture from the Theological Forum to create a Book of Confessions, and corresponding changes to the vows and subscription of office holders. The Book of Confessions will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1992 Statement of Faith. If the Overture is accepted, these will form the subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland. The new vows will explicitly identify the location of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. These creeds are short and relatively accessible, and should help ministers, elders and other office holders to disciple enquirers

and work with those interested in the Christian faith, as well as promoting ecumenical partnerships with the many other Christian Churches that also accept these creeds. Nevertheless, by retaining the Westminster Confession as a subordinate standard, and adding the Scots Confession and 1992 Statement of Faith, the Reformed character of the Church of Scotland will be maintained. The Presbytery voted by 121 in favour and 1 against to accept the Overture.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Business Committee**

The Rev Fraser Penny presented the report.

### **Buildings Officer**

Fraser welcomed the appointment of Mr Jamie McNamara on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023. He had previously held the same position within the Presbytery of Clyde and would be available to advise congregations and offer support as buildings issues arise as well as overseeing the process of routine maintenance through the quinquennial surveys.

### **Review of Committee**

It was agreed to split the Stewardship, Finance and Property committee into two. There will now be a Property Committee convened by Mr Ian McVean and a Finance and Stewardship Committee convened by Mrs Elizabeth Kidd.

### **Church in Community**

With the absence of the Rev Alan Miller, Ms Marjorie Clark was appointed as interim convener of the Church in Community Committee.

**Dates of Meetings** - Following a debate at the last Presbytery about arrangements for Ordinary Presbytery meetings a draft timetable for meetings had been discussed by the Business Committee. The main consideration was the need to offer hybrid facilities. The Clerk had met Sanctus Media and St Matthew's Church about requirements. It was agreed that all meetings should be hybrid.

The following future meeting dates were agreed:

**Saturday 3rd February at 10.30am**

**Tuesday 11th June at 7pm**

**Tuesday 10th. September at 7pm**

**Saturday 2nd November at 10.30am**

There will also be Special Purpose Meetings for the Rev Beverley Stevenson as Mission Project Coordinator for Stirling and the surrounding area on November 30<sup>th</sup>, a Service of Union for the creation of Carnoustie Trinity on January 11<sup>th</sup> and another Service of Union for Dundee Northeast on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Angus Council**

It was noted that the Rev Chris Hay had been appointed as the Church of Scotland representative on Angus Council's Children and Learning Committee.

### **Church in Community Committee**

The Interim Convener, Marjorie Clark, said that the Committee saw its role as helping Presbytery to monitor, explore and engage with current and topical issues, both nationally and internationally. It covered areas which other committees may not reach, including,

ecumenical issues, interfaith, focused chaplaincies, education, climate change and eco-congregations, the work of aid agencies and partners overseas and issues of poverty and justice in this country.

The committee commended the weekly Roundup messages highlighting opportunities and available resources. They would also welcome contributions and suggestions for areas which should be explored and / or highlighted.

Marjorie highlighted the national launch of Prisoners' Week, which would take place at Letham St Mark's Church on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 3.30p.m. to which all were invited. That same Sunday had been designated CrossReach Sunday; the Perth Prison Visitors' Centre was one of their projects.

There followed a presentation by the Rev Anne Stewart, Prison Chaplain, and an interview with Elaine Waugh, coordinator of the Perth Prison visitor centre run by CrossReach. The Presbytery was impressed with the excellent work which is being undertaken in the prisons in our area, which are HMP Stirling, HMP Glenochil, HMP Perth, HMP Castle Huntly and HMP Bella.

### **Mission Action Committee**

The first set of grants were approved by the Mission Fund Committee. The purpose of these grants was as follows:

**Coupar Angus Abbey Church** to support a community Café.

**Forfar East & Old** were supported in two separate projects: days away or indoor activities in the Church for families and a community café.

**Steeple Kirk in Dundee** were supported in two separate projects, a parish nurse scheme which worked with people with many needs including addictions and other particular and special needs, and a community café with a particular focus on refugees and asylum seekers.

**Perth: Riverside** were supported for running Martha's Kitchen community Café.

**Prayer** – It was hoped to set up a group of Prayer Promoters to encourage prayer in Presbytery by means of regular meetings, and further to have Prayer Promoters in each congregation.

**Training** - The first Pastoral and Bereavement Care course of the year was held in Perth on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October and was attended by 19 people.

The presentation of certificates to those who had completed training as a Worship Leader had caused some confusion. Those who were presented with certificates at the last Presbytery had completed courses in the legacy Presbyteries but did not receive a certificate before the changeover, this had been a tidying up exercise. For the avoidance of doubt those who successfully completed Worship Leadership courses in the legacy Presbyteries would be recognised as accredited Worship Leaders at that level in the Presbytery of Perth.

**Under 40's** – It was hoped to support those working with this age group. (Youth/Children and Families Workers/Pioneer Ministers etc.) The Presbytery of Perth Connections and Networks group had worked to compile a list of those employed locally in such roles. There were plans for a Pizza and Praise Night to begin to develop a network of people employed to work with under 40s.

The committee aimed to equip and disciple those under 40 within the Presbytery of Perth by planning an event specifically for the 18 – 40's to take place around Pentecost. It was hoped that this would enable those who come along to begin to make connections with other people from across Presbytery and an opportunity to share experiences.

**Intergenerational** – The committee aimed to develop a strategy to encourage Intergenerational Church. Graham Duffin currently co-ordinated ‘*Growing Young*’ cohorts in Scotland and the group discussed the viability of running a Presbytery of Perth cohort in the future. ‘*Growing Young*’ was a book which was produced by Fuller Youth Institute and ‘*Growing Young*’ cohorts worked through a range of seminars, group discussions and coaching sessions to bring about change within their Church culture and grow young. It was based on research which recognised that where churches invested in their younger people, it brought overall vitality to their whole congregation.

#### **New Post**

It was noted that the Rev Beverly Stevenson was appointed as Mission Project Coordinator for the Stirling Area, that the aim of this post was to help congregations work together in mission.

### **Planning and Deployment Committee**

#### **Central Dundee**

The Presbytery approved the Basis of Dissolution for St David’s High Kirk Dundee on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, the congregation having already agreed to it. The Moderator spoke of the sadness of such a decision having to be made and wished all involved God’s blessing.

#### **Other Changes**

The committee had approved the following using powers:

Carnoustie: Panbride, Carnoustie and Barry had voted on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September in favour of a Basis of Union and Basis of Team Ministry to form Carnoustie Trinity Church of Scotland.

Holy Rude and Viewfield Erskine had voted on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September to form Stirling: Holy Rude Viewfield Church of Scotland.

Craigiebank, Douglas and Midcraigie, Whitfield and Fintry, in North East Dundee, had voted in favour of a Basis of Union and a Basis of Team Ministry on 24<sup>th</sup> September to form Dundee North East Church of Scotland.

Perth: St John’s and St Leonards in the Fields had voted on a Basis of Severance on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

Aberdalgie and Forteviot with Aberuthven and Dunning had voted on a Basis of Severance on Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>.

The congregations of Aberdalgie and Forteviot and Dunbarney and Forgandenny had voted on a Basis of Linking on Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Safeguarding Committee**

The Rev Mike Goss presented his report.

#### **Safeguarding Conference**

The central Safeguarding Committee held a conference for Safeguarding Contacts and Trainers on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The morning programme was on Spiritual Abuse, which used religious authority or religious language as a means of abusing or controlling other people. It was an area to which the whole Church needed to be alert. The afternoon programme was on changes coming through the new Disclosure (Scotland) Act. Among the changes was one to membership of the PBG scheme – this would become mandatory, and all roles would require renewal every five years – although it was anticipated that this would take a number of years to roll out - beginning in 2025.