

# **The Presbytery of Perth**



## **Visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly**

**The Right Rev Rosie Frew**

**October 2025**

## **Introduction**

The Presbytery of Perth was formed on January 1st 2023 and is made up of the geographical areas covered by the former Presbyteries of Angus, Perth, Dundee, Dunkeld & Meigle and Stirling. It is a diverse Presbytery, made up of three of Scotland's cities, a large number of towns and villages, along with many rural congregations.

The Presbytery meets for ordinary business five times per year in Hybrid format (in person and via Zoom) at St Matthew's Parish Church in Perth and it also meets at other times (e.g. for conferences, ordinations and inductions of ministers etc.) as determined by the Presbytery.

The Presbytery of Perth comprises of 105 congregations. It covers an area of 9,715 sq km and is the third largest Presbytery geographically.

The Presbytery employs a Clerk, Depute Clerk, Finance Officer, Communications Officer, Safeguarding Officer and has a Buildings Officer funded by the General Trustees. It employs three chaplains for all in Ministry.

Its committees are:

Business

Mission

Ministries

Church in Community

Congregational Support

Stewardship and Finance

Property

Planning

Vacancy Procedure

Date	Event	Driver
<b>Wednesday 1st October</b>	Moderator to arrive at Dunblane Hydro Hotel at 9.45am	Ed Morton
	10.00am—Reception for Moderator at Lecropt hall.	Ed Morton
	Noon—2pm—Comrie Connections lunch	Ed Morton
	2.00pm—4.00pm—Comrie ‘Sing a long’	Ed Morton
<b>Thursday 2nd October</b>	10.00am—Noon—Visit to ‘StartUp’ Stirling Foodbank	Ed Morton
	2.00pm—5.00pm—Visit to Ardoch and Blackford Guild and discussion with Rev Mairi Perkins	Ed Morton
<b>Friday 3rd October</b>	10.00am—1.45pm—Visit to Stirling Prison with lunch courtesy of Forth Valley ilnclusion.	Dan Gunn
	2.00pm—4.00pm—Dementia event at Dunblane Cathedral – ‘Music and Memories’	Dan Gunn
	7.00pm—9.00pm—Visit to Boys’ and Girls’ Brigade	Dan Gunn
<b>Saturday 4th October</b>	9.30am—10.45am—Visit to Kippen Parish Church for 200th anniversary	Dan Gunn
	11.15am—12.30pm—Visit to Drymen and East Loch Lomond. New Union and Linkage and new Minister.	Dan Gunn
	1.10pm—3.00pm—Visit to Aberfoyle with lunch. St Andrew’s ecumenical initiative.	Dan Gunn
<b>Sunday 5th October</b>	10.30am—12.45pm—Moderator to preach at Stirling: St Mark’s.	John Ferguson
	5.00pm—Dinner with Colin & Eilidh Renwick	Rosie Frew
	6.30pm—9.00pm—Songs of Praise at Dunblane Cathedral with presentation of long service awards.	Rosie Frew
	9.15pm—Moderator returns to Edinburgh.	Rosie Frew

### **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October**

Moderator to be collected from the Hilton Dunblane Hydro at 9.45am and taken to Lecropt Church hall arriving at 10.00am

#### **Welcome and introduction to the Presbytery of Perth.**

Rev Dr John Ferguson to present an overview of the Presbytery of Perth with its aims and objectives; challenges and successes.

**11.30am** – Travel to Comrie

**Noon – 2.00pm – Connections Lunch** with short address of encouragement from the Moderator. The lunch will conclude with a short act of Communion led by the Rev Craig Dobney.

**2.00pm – 4.00pm – Comrie Sing a long**

**Key Personnel – Rev Craig Dobney** was ordained on 18th November 2020 to serve the congregations of Comrie and Dundurn. Before entering ministry, he spent 22 years as an RAF aircraft engineer, followed by a decade as Business Manager at Air Service Training in Perth.

He's married to Donna, and together they have four children and four grandchildren. Outside of church life, he enjoys football, golf, and darts—and brings joy to others by DJing for charity under the playful title "Minister of Sound."

**Mairi Philps** - Born and raised in Comrie, Mairi is a dedicated church elder and the enthusiastic leader of the Sing-a-Long group. A former midwife with a heart for service, she recently celebrated donating her 100th pint of blood to the NHS. Known for her warmth and generosity—and her fabulous baking skills—she's a cherished member of the community.

**4.00pm** – Return to Dunblane Hydro hotel.

## **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October**

Moderator to be collected from the Hilton Dunblane Hydro at 9.40am and taken to **StartUp Stirling** arriving at 10.00am

### **StartUp Stirling**

31 years ago, in 1994, the home starter pack service commenced. The congregations of three local churches in Stirling were concerned about the number of people who were receiving keys to new tenancies after a period of crisis, homelessness, or leaving care or the prison service, who had nothing to put in their home, making it much more likely that their tenancies would fail.

Over the years, the number of services that are provided have increased, but the one thing that has remained central to what we do is that we treat all of our service users with dignity, respect and confidentiality.

Start Up Stirling supports individuals and families throughout the Stirling Council area - a geographical area of 844 square miles.

With only 8 part-time members of staff and 1 full time staff member, Start Up Stirling volunteers are the backbone of the charity. **Without the 110 dedicated, trained volunteers that we have, we could not provide the level of service that we do currently for the 400 people that we support each week.**

**Key Personnel – Julie Christie** has been the Communities and Fundraising Manager with Start Up Stirling for almost seven years. She has held various roles within the third sector over the past twenty-five years throughout the Forth Valley area and Northumberland. Julie is a member of Stirling Baptist Church.

**Amanda Monaghan** has been with Start Up Stirling for one year. She spent over 20 years as a Civil Servant holding various roles at the Department for Work and Pensions before transferring to Food Standards Scotland in Aberdeen. There Amanda dealt with food legislation and policy, providing advice to food business operators and consumers on food hygiene, labelling and allergens. Amanda is an active member of The Allan Church in Bannockburn.

**Andrew Ireland** is Start Up Stirling's General Manager. He has been responsible for managing the overall day to day running of the charity for the past 6 years. He is a former first class rugby union referee.

**Gerry McPeake** is the Warehouse Manager, who oversees the maintenance of the warehouse, safety and training of warehouse volunteers, the health and safety of everyone within the warehouse, as well as working with suppliers, dealing with food deliveries and food from supermarket donation stations.

**Margaret-Anne Ewart** is the Crisis Food Support Worker who speaks with every individual and family who have been referred for crisis food assistance, and co-ordinates whether they attend a food bank,

community hub, or have a rural home delivery. She makes sure that everyone receives as much support as SUS can provide, to help to make life easier.

### **Outline of Visit**

10:00 - The Moderator Arrives

10:10 - Introductions to principal contacts for the day - Julie, Amanda and Andy.

10:15 - Tour of Start Up Stirling's Warehouse

11:00 - Volunteering activity - crisis food parcel creation, checking and labelling tins

11:20 - Refreshments, with the opportunity to meet some of the staff and volunteers

11:45 - Pictures for social and local media, visit pack presentation and final questions

12midday - The Moderator departs.

### **Planned stop for light lunch**

Arrive at Blackford Church at 2.00pm to visit the Guild where the Moderator will be asked to **rededicate the Guild** and present 7 certificates and a few words of encouragement.

This will be followed by a discussion with the Minister, the Rev Mairi Perkins and her involvement as **Project Lead for Adults with Learning Difficulties and Autism**.

**Key Personnel – Rev Mairi Perkins:** Married for 28 years with one son, she has followed God's call through caring roles—firefighter, nurse, OLM, and now ministry. A life-changing pastoral encounter deepened her purpose. God has placed a passion for those with autism and learning difficulties on her heart, guiding her to ensure their full inclusion in faith.

**Heather McDonald:** Born in Braco, she studied Home Economics but found her calling in care work at Eastwoodhill. Made an elder in Busby 30 years ago, she later served as presbytery elder. Now back in Ardoch, she is an elder again. Heather and her husband run a B&B, and family remains church-connected.

**Lyndsey Thomas:** Originally from Lancashire, she moved to Glasgow for university, where she met her husband. Now living in Blackford, Lyndsey has been a speech and language therapist for 29 years. Her faith has guided her through challenges, and she now leads a church Makaton sing-and-sign group, promoting inclusion through communication and music.

Depart at 4.00pm and return to Dunblane Hydro hotel.

### **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Moderator to be collected from Dunblane Hydro at 9.40am and taken to the **Stirling Prison** arriving at 10.00am. Following the visit, there will be an informal light lunch at Stirling Visitor Centre with Forth Valley Inclusion (FVI) Trustees volunteers and staff.

#### **Purpose of Visit**

This is a new prison for women and young women (18-21) replacing HM Institution Cornton Vale which opened in 1975. It is built on the same site which historically was owned by the Church of Scotland. Capacity is 117 and currently includes remands and convicted. The design is viewed as exceptional based on a number of small housing units each named after a flower. The grounds are generous and attractive with a strong focus on creating an environment which will aid mental health and well-being.

**Key Personnel – Paula Arnold**, the prison Governor is a very experienced manager having worked in various Prisons and Headquarters.

**Rev Margaret Shuttleworth, Prison Chaplain** - who was formerly chaplain at Perth Prison and before that Minister of Sauchie and Coalsnaughton.

**Mrs Marilyn Stenhouse** who is a Deputy Lord Lieutenant, an elder at Bridge of Allan parish church, a Trustee of Prisoners Week, an Independent Local Monitor and vice chair of Forth Valley Inclusion (FVI).

**Dan Gunn** - Dan, a retired prison governor, chairs FVI, serves as elder at Dunblane St Blane's, Interim Moderator for Aberfoyle, and a member of the Business Committee. He's involved in multiple church committees including Presbytery Partnership Support Planning group (PPSPG) and locally is a Trustee of Leighton Library.

Drive to Dunblane Cathedral

2.00pm – Arrive at Dunblane Cathedral for the **Music and Memories Dementia event**. This will involve singing along to popular tunes from the 50's and 60's.

**Key Personnel – Rev Colin Renwick** – Colin has been Minister of Dunblane Cathedral since April 2014. In May 2024, the Cathedral united with Kilmadock and Blairdrummond Parish Churches. A keen musician, Colin has been precentor at the General Assembly for a number of years.

**Jenny McPherson** - Beginning as a primary teacher, Jenny adapted through global moves, focusing on adult education and EFL. In Munich, she supported refugees through church work. Retirement in Dunblane led to enriching church involvement, especially with older adults, co-developing Music and Memories—a joyful initiative for both participants and volunteers.

**Alison Wright** – Alison is a member of Dunblane Cathedral and its Kirk Session since 1990, she has drawn on years of experience in amateur musicals to support the ministry and pastoral care provided through the Music and Memories programme. This creative background has enriched her ability to connect with others through music and shared memory.

Depart at 4.00pm for Dunblane Hydro

7.00pm – 9.00pm – Visit to the Boys' and Girls' Brigade – Dunblane

**GIRLS' BRIGADE (Visit 7.00 – 8.00pm)**

**Jacqueline Neilson** – Jacqueline is Captain of the Girls' Brigade. She has been involved in Girls' Brigade for over 50 years, leading in Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dunblane. GB empowers girls through teamwork, creativity, and leadership, teaching respect, resilience, and independence. They are inspired to be a light in the world and think for themselves.

**Other leaders** - Mary Rennie, Jane Skinner and Kirsten Black have been auxiliary helpers for over 15 years. Freya Fleming is a new Trainee Leader who also progressed through Brigade from P1.

**BOYS' BRIGADE (Visit 8.00 – 9.00pm)**

**Key Personnel – Fraser Boyd** - Fraser Boyd is Captain of 25th Stirling (Dunblane) Boys' Brigade, overseeing all sections, safeguarding, and charity compliance. He teaches primary six in Scone, serves as an Elder and is secretary for Stirling & District Battalion, actively supporting youth, education, and faith-based leadership across his community.

**Drew Leslie** – Drew is Officer in Charge of the Company Section since 2018, began volunteering with Boys' Brigade in Orkney in the 1990s, earning his Queen's Badge. He is Head of Infrastructure at Stirling Council, bringing expertise in construction project management to his leadership and long-standing commitment to youth development.



## **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October**

Depart the Dunblane Hydro hotel at 9.00am and travel to Kippen Parish Church.

9.30am – Arrive at Kippen Parish Church where they are celebrating the **200<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of worship in the Kippen area.

- Welcome from Iain Armstrong the OLM working in the charge. The Session Clerk will be there, but Iain is the one who is much more involved in the life of the congregations.
- Talk by Tom Begg about the history of Kippen Church
- Formal meeting of nominated members with the Moderator
- Words from the Moderator
- Refreshments

**Key Personnel – Rev Iain Goring** – Iain was recently appointed as Interim Moderator for the congregations of Kippen and Norrieston linked with Gargunnock linked with Port of Menteith during the compassionate leave of the Minister, the Rev Ellen Larson Davidson. Now retired, he was latterly an Interim Minister.

**Tom Begg** - Retired College Lecturer. Author of 'The Kingdom of Kippen' and 'The Story of Kippen Parish Church and its Treasures'. Elder of Kippen Church for 51 years. Son of Rev. Robert Begg, Minister of Kippen Church for 25 years.

**Archie Paterson – Archie** was born in Thornhill, Stirling. Worked as a painter and decorator for 52 years. Scout Leader for 25 years. Norrieston Church, Thornhill, Sunday School teacher, Bible Class leader, Youth Fellowship leader. Elder for 47 years, Clerk to Congregational Board for 6 years, Session Clerk for 35 years. Kippen and Norrieston Church, Session Clerk 1.5 years.

**Rev Iain Armstrong – Iain** was Ordained in 2023 and inducted as OLM in the Carse Churches 2024. He has been a Sales Rep in the Music Trade since 2007 and is 50 this year! He is married to Jill and has three children: James, Grace & Fraser.

**Margery Stirling – Margery** was raised near Kippen, served 37 years at the University of Stirling, led Scottish Summer Schools, guided Brownies as Brown Owl, and held long-standing roles as Elder and Treasurer in Kippen and Norrieston Church communities.

**Margaret Black – Margaret** is a devoted farmer's wife and was a District Nurse for 21 years, has been a member of Norrieston Church for 63 years. She's an Elder, Guild member, pastoral visitor, and current Presbytery Elder for Kippen and Norrieston Church.

**Alan Simpson** - CVO OBE FRSE, **Alan** is a retired civil engineer, has served as church Elder for 40 years and led restoration at Port of Menteith Church. He chairs the MacRobert Arts Centre, Lake of Menteith Fisheries, and formerly served as Lord-Lieutenant of Stirling and Falkirk.

**Audrey Birrell** – Born and raised in Gargunnock, Audrey was active in Sunday School and Bible Class, later teaching and becoming a Home Economics teacher. After serving on the Congregational Board, she became Session Clerk post-retirement and was ordained as an Elder in 2005.

**Johan Mailer** - Johan was born and raised in Gargunnock. She attended Sunday School and Bible Class. Involved with Life Boys and Sunday school teaching. On her return from Stepps, in the early part of her marriage, she took up the position of organist and choir-mistress and has served for 53 years. Elder for 26 years.

Depart Kippen at 10.45am and travel to Drymen Parish Church arriving at 11.15am.

## **Arrive Drymen Parish Church 11.15am**

### **New Union – Linkage - Minister**

The linked Congregations of Drymen and Buchanan united on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 to become Kippen and East Loch Lomond Church of Scotland. On the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the linked congregations of Balfron and Fintry united, and these two united congregations linked thereafter. The Rev Alex Smeed, formerly Locum Minister to Drymen and East Loch Lomond was Inducted as Minister on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The discussions to be held with representatives from the two linked Charges will set out their aims and objectives, and how the process of readjustment has been effected.

**Key Personnel – Rev Alex Smeed:** Alex, raised in Dunbar, found faith at 14 and later studied Social Anthropology and Theology. After ministry roles in Glasgow and Haddington, he settled in Balfron with his family, ran a Lego business, and worshipped at Drymen Church. In 2022, he returned to ministry and now serves as Minister of the two linked Charges of Drymen and East Loch Lomond, and Balfron and Fintry.

**Ian McVean – Ian** has been an Elder for 46 years, served 25 years as Fabric Convener at Balfron Church, then 15 years as Session Clerk, including one year jointly for the new Union. Ian oversees property and finance, and became Property Convener of the Presbytery of Perth in 2023.

**Mairi Van Looy – Mairi** has been a member at Drymen since 2003 and became an elder in 2007. She took on the role of Session Clerk in October 2024. Her real passion lies in working with our younger members (especially teens), leading prayer, offering pastoral support, and playing in the worship group.

**Meg Duckworth – Meg** is a long-time resident of Fintry, Stirlingshire, has lived there for 57 years. In this remote village with limited amenities, she became deeply involved in Fintry Kirk, serving as an Elder and, from 2012, as Session Clerk. She is married with two grown-up children.

Depart Drymen at 12.30pm and drive to Aberfoyle

### **Aberfoyle – St Andrew's Initiative – Ecumenical Partnership**

Arrive at Aberfoyle at 1.10pm for lunch at St Mary's Episcopal Church Parish room. Arrive at Aberfoyle at 1.10pm for lunch at St Mary's Episcopal Church Parish room.

Here is a very new ecumenical partnership under the St Andrew's agreement which Church, which is the first agreement of its kind in the Presbytery of Perth. The discussions will centre around the aims and objectives of this initiative and the challenges faced along the way.

Aberfoyle, formerly linked with Port of Menteith, entered guardianship in 2024 after an amicable dissolution. Strong informal ties with St Mary's SEC led to monthly shared services starting in January 2024 and, in August 2025, the appointment of Rev Jonathan Connell as locum—a pioneering move. The Interim Moderator was supported throughout by the clerk and Dr McPake. A light lunch at St Mary's will introduce key figures, possibly including Bishop Ian. The Moderator will also honour Janet MacCallum's 46 years of service as an Elder and latterly as Session Clerk and present her with a long service certificate

**Key Personnel – Dan Gunn** - Dan, a retired prison governor, chairs FVI, serves as elder at Dunblane St Blane's, Interim Moderator for Aberfoyle, and active Presbytery convener. He's involved in multiple

church committees, is a Trustee of Leighton Library and a member of the Presbytery business committee.

**Janet MacCallum** - Active in Aberfoyle Kirk since the late 1960s, Janet joined after marrying there in 1970. Originally Anglican, she became a member by Kirk Session resolution. She was ordained an Elder in 1979, became Clerk to the Congregational Board in 1981, and Session Clerk from 2002 onward.

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### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October**

Depart Dunblane Hydro hotel at 10.15am for travel to St Mark's Parish Church in Stirling.

#### **Worship in a Priority area Church**

Arrive St Mark's at 10.30 where the Moderator will meet the Rev Barry Hughes (Minister). The service begins at 11.00am where the Moderator will preach the sermon and pronounce the Benediction. Following the service, there will be an opportunity for the congregation to meet the Moderator over tea and coffee.

**Key Personnel – Rev Barry Hughes** is the Minister of St Mark's a congregation in a priority area. He was inducted in December 2018.

**David Russell – David** and his wife Fiona are both originally from Edinburgh and became part of the St Mark's family shortly after their marriage in 1980. David has had the privilege of serving as temporary Session Clerk for the past 14 years, while Fiona has faithfully carried out the role of Treasurer for even longer.

12.45pm – Depart for Dunblane Hydro

5.00pm – Moderator to make her own arrangements to drive to the Dunblane Cathedral manse where the Rev Colin Renwick and his wife Eilidh will entertain her for a light dinner.

#### **Dunblane Cathedral – Songs of Praise**

6.30pm – Moderator and the Rev Colin Renwick to walk to the Cathedral for a '**Songs of Praise**' service beginning at 7.00pm. During the service, the Moderator will be asked to present **long service awards** to members of various congregations, and to give a few words of encouragement.

**Key Personnel – Rev Colin Renwick** - Colin has been Minister of Dunblane Cathedral since April 2014. In May 2024, the Cathedral united with Kilmadock and Blairdrummond Parish Churches. A keen musician, Colin has been precentor at the General Assembly for a number of years.

**Rev Drew Barrie** – Drew became a Christian when he was at secondary school and felt a call to the ministry in his teenage years. He studied Civil Engineering at Strathclyde University and Theology at Aberdeen University. He then served as a parish minister for over 40 years. His first charge was a rural linkage on the Isle of Arran. He then moved to Westpark church Denny and after that to Trinity church in Rothesay. His final charge was St. Serf's church in Tullibody. Drew is married and has two adult children. He enjoys walking and cooking and does some pulpit supply.

8.30pm – Following the service, tea and coffee will be served in the Cathedral halls.

9.15pm – Moderator departs for Edinburgh.