

PRESBYTERY SUMMARY

Kinross Parish Church on Saturday 2nd November 2024

The Presbytery met for the first time in the Moderator's church at Kinross.

TRIBUTES

The Moderator gave thanks for the life and witness of those who had died recently and upheld them in prayer: the Rev June Cloggie; Miss Dorothy Kinloch OBE; the Rev James Lawson and the Rev James Landels.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Moderator welcomed the Rev Mark Foster (inducted to Blair Athol and Struan linked with Pitlochry) and the Rev Lorna Tunstall (inducted recently to Broughty Ferry) (both in absentia), and also the Rev Eddie McKenna and the Rev Louis Kinsey, (both in absentia), from the Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles.

PRESBYTERY REVIEW PILOT

The Rev Moira McDonald, Convener of a Presbytery Review Committee, addressed the Presbytery. Accompanied by the Rev Jim Teasdale and the Rev Margaret Mateos, the committee was formed under the remit of the Legal Questions committee and it seeks to establish the progress made by newly formed Presbyteries. Their remit did not concern the Presbytery Mission Plans, but rather the impact of adjustments on the Presbytery and congregations. The committee further sought to engage with around six congregations in order to gauge how well the Presbytery was being run.

RETIREMENT

The Rev Mike Erskine is retiring on December 1st 2024 and a written tribute to Mike and his Ministry at Alyth Parish Church was issued by his congregation to the Presbytery. Mike addressed Presbytery and thanked the Session Clerk of Alyth for his warm tribute, and the Presbytery for all their work. It had been a privilege to serve his congregation and he thanked them for their kindness and support over the years. The Moderator thanked Mike and wished him God's richest blessing for the future.

INTERIM MODERATORS

A few changes were noted:

- The Rev Tim Podger replaced the Rev Graham Crawford as Interim Moderator at Balgay from September 5th 2024 and Graham was thanked for his services.
- The Rev Jim Stewart will replace the Rev Gillian Munro as Interim Moderator at Cargill Burrelton linked with Collace from November 15th and Gillian was thanked for her services
- Mr Lorimer Gray was appointed as Interim Moderator at Fortingall, Glenlyon, Kenmore and Lawers from November 1st 2024 and at Rannoch from December 1st 2024. He will replace

the Rev Robert Nicol and the Rev Grace Steele, who were warmly thanked for having served as Interim Moderators for many years.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH OVERTURE

This Overture came back to the Presbytery a second time under what's known as the Double Barrier Act. This means it has to go through two General Assemblies and be sent down twice to Presbyteries for approval. The Business Convener, the Rev Fraser Penny presented an overview of the Overture, and following questions and comments, the Presbytery voted 129 in favour and five against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business

The convener, the Rev Fraser Penny, presented the Report.

Team Ministry: Team Ministry is becoming more common and a meeting was held at St. Madoes on September 5th 2024 for those involved in, or developing teams, led by Ken Russell and Alison Britchfield from our Ministries Committee. While this is under the remit of the Ministries committee there are procedural issues which need addressed. It is clear that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to how teams are organised and run but people are finding ways that work for them. However, it is apparent that legislation needs to keep up with developments and the legal framework requires revision. Comments had been forwarded to the Principal Clerk and the Convener of the Legal Questions committee.

Presbytery Review: The General Assembly had stipulated that Presbyteries, like congregations, required to undergo regular review. A pilot was in progress with two Presbyteries, Edinburgh & West Lothian and Perth. A small group met with the visiting team on Friday 25th October 2024. This is not to be seen as a top-down, heavy handed approach but rather one of encouragement and mutual learning. It should give an opportunity to look afresh at how Presbytery operates and consider ways to improve.

Finance and Stewardship Committee: Mrs. Elizabeth Kidd had submitted her resignation as Convener of the Finance and Stewardship Committee. Elizabeth had served as Convener in the Presbytery of Perth since its start in January 2023. The Convener thanked her for her valuable service and wished her every blessing in the years ahead. Rev Professor Lesley Stanley has been appointed in her place.

Meeting with General Trustees: The Convener had attended a meeting with staff from the General Trustees on 17th September. It provided an opportunity both to communicate issues from the General Trustees and for them to listen to the views of Presbyteries. The meeting was addressed by a member of staff from the Church of Scotland Insurance Company which was particularly important given that more buildings were being closed and lying empty for a long time. The main points were:

- That it has been agreed to freeze insurance premiums for the first year a building is unoccupied.

- Congregations need to be fully aware of the requirements in an unoccupied building. (a monthly prayer meeting of two people does not count!)
- There is a need to prepare congregations for the insurance implications in unions.
- Unoccupancy supervision is essential to validate the insurance, should something happen (and the records of inspection should not be kept in the building! If it goes on fire, you also lose the evidence that it was inspected!)
- Congregations tend to forget unoccupied buildings as all their focus turns to the future and using what will be the buildings for the future.
- The insurers should be kept informed of any changes in circumstances.

Connections - Following the successful lunch gatherings in the Spring, a small *ad hoc* Networks Committee had agreed three similar gatherings in different parts of the Presbytery.

Retreat – A successful retreat for Ministers, Deacons, AMs and OLMs was held at the Bield, Blackruthven. The Convener thanked the Presbytery Chaplains Valerie Allan, Anne Redpath and Carleen Robertson, who devised and delivered the programme based around the theme of encouragement. It proved to be a valuable two days for those who attended with much prayer, support and laughter.

Salaries - Presbytery staff salaries had been reviewed and the Business Committee proposed that all staff salaries should be increased by the same percentage as ministers' stipends, which was 2.5%.

Faith Action Programme Leadership Team: The Rev Dave Rankin was appointed as Presbytery's representative on FAPLT.

Safeguarding – It was agreed that the work of Presbytery Finance and overseeing of Safeguarding should be split into two distinct roles. The Congregational Support Officer would now have responsibility for financial support and the current holder of the position, Rhona Nicol, would be contracted for the same number of hours as at present. A new post of Safeguarding Officer was agreed, consisting of 10 hours a week, to support congregations and trainers and coordinate training opportunities for congregations.

Church in Community

The Convener, Marjorie Clark, presented the Report.

Christians and Climate Change: The conference held at St Matthew's Parish Church, Perth had attracted 33 attendees. The Convener was grateful to all who gave their time to make the conference both informative and inspiring, and to all who attended. Congregations were encouraged to use the "Pathway to Net Zero" resource on the Church of Scotland's website.

Prisoners' Week 2024: - The Convener reminded Presbytery that resources were available and the national launch service will be held once again within the bounds of Perth Presbytery, on Sunday November 17th at 3.30p.m in Perth Letham St Mark's Church.

Middle East - The Moderator of the General Assembly had recently issued two statements relating to the ongoing conflict. The first referred to how churches could offer help via the C of S partner church, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), while the second included prayers and prayer points supplied by ministers in Israel, Stewart and Muriel.

The Convener commended the initiative of the Rev Peter Gill, who was organising an Interfaith service in Balfour Church on Sunday 17th November, which would include contributions from a Jewish Rabbi and a Moslem Imam.

16 Days of Activism: 25th November – 10th December, against Gender-based Violence. There were a number of activities being organised for the 16 days, which church members could be encouraged to support locally. Congregations were encouraged to find out more about the 16 Days of Activism and what might be happening in their own communities.

Mission

The Convener, the Rev Grant MacLaughlan, invited Hilary Lacroix, Mission Development Coordinator from Prospects Across Scotland (PAS), to give a presentation. PAS worked with 20 congregations and sought to welcome people with learning disabilities and to tell them about Christ, noting that a church that was more accessible to those with learning disabilities was more accessible to everyone. Congregations could help by ensuring that they offered:

- Welcome
- Simple songs
- Makaton
- Movement
- Prayer
- Short readings
- Drama
- Photos or visuals

The Moderator thanked Hilary for a most interesting presentation.

Mission Incubator: The project sought to get congregations to engage with their communities and the committee offered support for ways of sharing faith in the workplace, gym or local pub. Do you or someone you know have an idea for how your congregation might engage with your community? Do you think you have a missional idea but unsure how to get it going? Are you thinking about ways of sharing faith in your workplace, gym or local pub? Do you have a dream but maybe need some support to make it a reality? Please submit your ideas and dreams to the Mission Incubator so that as a presbytery we can support and encourage you in developing your ideas by December 1st. A brief summary of the idea is all that is required.

Presbytery Worker: Subject to attaining financial support, the committee was given approval to seek a Project Lead for adults with learning difficulties and autism. They hoped to identify two congregations in the Presbytery to partner in the development of Ministry & Mission to

those with learning difficulties/ disabilities and autism; to explore and develop a New Worshipping Community for those living with learning difficulties/disabilities and autism; and to be a point of contact for people across the Presbytery who were looking for advice and resources.

Learning and Training Needs: The Mission Committee wished to hear from Kirk Sessions and congregations about what their training and learning needs were at this time as they seek to engage with their communities. Members of Presbytery were asked to engage with the committee so that they could explore and plan ways of supporting the Mission of the local Church.

Growing Young: This was a contemporary piece of research conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute in America. The strategies identified to Growing Young may be helpful to engage with and translate into our Scottish culture. The Proposed Partnership over a 2-year period would mean that a group of six to eight churches would receive coaching, training and support. This coaching would be delivered by two people from Presbytery who would be trained by Growing Young. There would be over the two-year periods, webinars and seminars, some of which would involve congregations from other presbyteries.

Cairn Learning Communities: Cairn was “A network of Church Planters, Church Leaders and Missional Practitioners across all areas of Scotland and Ireland”. It offered a Learning Community which was a 2-year, coached, change management process that helped Churches build a discipleship process, create a leadership development pipeline and then launch missional projects and activities. There would be a free taster day on Saturday 30th November, at the Madoch Centre in St Madoes, near Perth from 10am to 1pm, with lunch available from 1pm onwards. The Very Rev Martin Fair, Pathways to Ministry Manager in the Church of Scotland’s People and Training Team, would explain why congregations getting involved in Learning Communities was something the Kirk is calling for.

Ministries

The Convener, the Rev Mike Goss, presented the report.

Initial Ministerial Education: The People and Training Team gave a presentation to Presbytery representatives in September of the changes that had been brought in to Initial Ministerial Training (IME) in the Church of Scotland. This required a new training course for Presbytery Supervisors (Regents for Readers in Training), Formation Partners and Presbytery Assessors, which would initially be rolled out for new appointments but would be spread out to cover existing Presbytery appointments over the following three years. Anyone interested in any of these rolls should contact the Convener for further details. Regents were now urgently required for our new Readers in Training: Val Rose; Graham Leese; and Gavin Berry. Training would be offered from the People and Training Team. Those Presbyters with experience in training or working with Readers or who were experienced Readers themselves will be particularly welcomed.

Worship Leaders: - Beth Trainer, Aberlemno Church and Denver Chalmers, at Balfron Church had both conducted services in their own church on Sunday 29th September. Assessors had attended both services and recommended that Beth Trainer and Denver Chalmers should be recommended for Accreditation as a Worship Leader in Presbytery. The Committee had approved these recommendations under powers. Certificates would be presented at their own congregations.

Training Courses: The Leading Worship course, scheduled for 19th October, 9th and 30th November had been cancelled. It would be rescheduled for early next year. The other courses, Eldership and Pastoral and Bereavement Care, would be held at a venue in Perth on a date to be advised.

Conversations in Worship: Conversations in Worship was a series of conversations that helped to share stories about how we experience and encounter God. The conversation would take place on November 28th at 7.00 pm at St Matthew's and last around 90 minutes and would be facilitated by Phill Mellstrom (Worship Development Worker for the CofS).

Property

The Convener, Ian McVean, presented the report.

Dunkeld: The congregation of Dunkeld was looking to launch a major renovation project at Dunkeld Cathedral, with an estimated cost of £2.9m, funded from external sources. Presbytery approved the works, noting that the congregation would send six-monthly updates to the Property Committee on funding for the Development.

Broughty Ferry Parish Church: Permission was given for emergency roof repairs at a cost of £53,994.

Stirling Park Church: Permission was given to replace and upgrade audio visual equipment for the Church at a cost of £57,307.

Planning

The Convener, the Rev Dr Karen Fenwick, presented the report.

Presbytery agreed to meet for a Specific Purpose Meeting on Tuesday January 14th 2025 to agree an Approved Mission Plan, following the first Annual Evaluation and Development of the Presbytery Mission Plan.

The following was also noted:

- On Sunday 25th August 2024, the congregations of Dundee: Camperdown Church of Scotland, Dundee: Lochee Church of Scotland, Dundee: Logie and St John's (Cross)

Church of Scotland, Dundee: Menzieshill Church of Scotland and Dundee: West Church of Scotland voted in favour of a Basis of Union and a Basis of Team Ministry.

- On Sunday 6th October 2024, the congregation of Dundee: Balgay voted in favour of a Basis of Dissolution.
- On Sunday 20th October 2024, the congregations of Ardoch Church and Blackford Church voted in favour of a Basis of Union.
- On Sunday 20th October 2024, the congregation of St. John's Kirk of Perth voted in favour of a Basis of Guardianship.

Finance and Stewardship

The Convener, Elizabeth Kidd presented her final report.

There had been 131 sets of 2023 Congregational Accounts received for Attestation. The deadline for submission to OSCR was 30th September however 7 were still awaited although Rhona Nicol, in her role as Presbytery Treasurer/ Congregational Support Officer, was providing assistance.

There had been a disappointing result to an appeal for independent examiners.

The Rev Prof Lesley Stanley had undertaken a task to gather information on funders to help congregations to access applications for funding appeals. It was an immense job requiring hours of investigation. Although Lesley had hoped to present an interim report to Presbytery, her employed work had to take priority causing a delay.

Congregations were reminded that 2024 Accounts should be in Presbytery hands for attestation by 31st March 2025.

A copy of the gross figures for congregational Giving to Grow had been received by Presbytery and would be forwarded to each congregation in due course.

Order of the Day – Conversations in Assisted Dying

The Presbytery met in conference in the afternoon. The Clerk, assisted by Libby Milton from Marie Curie, showed a video which gave an introduction to this sensitive and difficult topic. Those present in-person dispersed into 6 discussion groups and those on Zoom were allocated breakout rooms. Following the various discussions, all present reassembled for a time of further discussion. The Assisted Dying Working Group would be giving their final report to the 2025 General Assembly.

Date Of Next Meeting: The Presbytery would next meet for a Specific Purpose on Tuesday 14th January 2025 at a venue to be advised, to receive the amalgamated Presbytery Mission Plan, and thereafter on Saturday 1st February 2025 at St Matthew's Parish Church for the conduct of ordinary business.