

Summary of Presbytery Meeting

Tuesday 23rd June 2026 at 7.00pm.

INSTALLATION OF THE MODERATOR AND ASSOCIATE MODERATOR FOR 2026-2027

The Presbytery confirmed its decision to appoint the Rev Brenda Elwell Sutton as Moderator for 2026/27 and, after prayer, she assumed the office of Moderator. The Presbytery further confirmed its decision to appoint the Rev Fraser Penny as Associate Moderator for 2026/27. The outgoing Moderator, the Rev Drew Barrie, installed Brenda and Fraser. The new Moderator thanked the Drew for his distinguished service. She was grateful to members of Presbytery for their support and encouragement as she took up her new position. Brenda is an Ordained Local Minister based at Dundee Northeast Church. Fraser is minister at Dunkeld Cathedral.

INTIMATIONS

Presbytery Retreat – The Rev Dr Valerie Allen highlighted the forthcoming retreat for Ministers and OLM's to be held at Kinnoull Monastery from the 11th – 13th August. Those who were able to attend but who had not yet booked a place were encouraged to contact her as soon as possible.

Leading Worship – A Study day would take place on Saturday 26th September at St John's Kirk, Perth, and was open to all those who led worship.

Conference - A School Chaplaincy conference is planned for Wednesday 9th September 2026.

ADDRESS FROM THE RT REV IAN PATON

Bishop Ian Paton addressed the Presbytery. He described the wide geographical span of his diocese, stretching across much of eastern and central Scotland, highlighting the challenges of covering such a large area. As an Episcopalian bishop speaking to a largely Presbyterian audience, he reflected on his mixed religious heritage, which included many Presbyterian family members. He pointed to significant progress in recent times, particularly the signing of the St Andrew Declaration of Friendship in 2021 between the two Churches. He emphasised that this act of friendship was meaningful and served as a strong foundation for continued cooperation and improved relations between the traditions. The declaration was significant in that it formally recognised each Church as such for the first time. It also committed both to practical and spiritual cooperation: praying for one another, welcoming members, addressing theological differences honestly, and working together. These commitments came at a time of major change in Scottish Churches, creating new opportunities for collaboration. He highlighted existing local partnerships and noted that there was much more potential for joint work in various communities, encouraging both churches to actively live out the declaration in practical, cooperative ways.

The Moderator thanked the Rt Rev Ian Paton for his encouraging words and wished him well in his forthcoming retirement.

2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORTS

Arran Walker presented the Youth report. This year's General Assembly theme, "Walk in all his ways" (Deuteronomy 5:33), called for renewed confidence in discipleship. Amid declining membership and attendance, the Church faced uncertainty and recognised that past approaches were no longer effective. Reports highlighted weak congregational discipleship, with too much focus on maintaining structures rather than following Jesus. Proposed solutions included strengthening prayer, Bible reading, and intentional discipleship, while encouraging members to speak more openly about Jesus. Christians were reminded that their lives reflected the gospel to others. True renewal lay in reclaiming identity as followers of Christ, trusting God's ongoing work, and boldly sharing the good news.

The Rev Chris Barlas presented a report. The General Assembly met from 15–18 May in a new long-weekend format, which proved effective overall. The Rt Rev Gordon Kennedy was installed as Moderator, succeeding the Very Rev Rosie Frew, and Lady Elish Angiolini represented the King. Key discussions included Ministers' sick pay, deferred for further study, and a significant formal apology for the Church's historic role in slavery. Financial pressures led to leasing the Scots Hotel. While challenges such as decline remained, there were signs of hope, especially among younger people. CrossReach's vital work and improved communication were highlighted, reinforcing a sense of cautious optimism for the Church's future.

GUILD REPORT

The Guild Convener, Renee Riddell presented the report which had previously been circulated.

She highlighted the Guild's ongoing work in its second year of the strategy "*Let Us Build a House*," focusing on the 2025–26 theme "*Living Stones*." This theme encouraged members to strengthen faith and community by building on Jesus Christ and using their gifts locally and globally.

Key activities included a successful Annual Gathering in Perth, featuring worship, international connections (notably Malawi), and the installation of Kay Coull as National Convener. The new venue and hybrid access improved attendance and inclusivity.

The Guild's transition to a new regional structure has been positive, fostering wider connections and collaboration. Events such as large regional gatherings and a nationwide Guild Quiz had boosted engagement and fellowship.

Project partnerships remain central, supporting causes in Scotland and abroad, including:

- Aid for persecuted Christians in Egypt
- Expanded perinatal counselling services in Scotland
- Support for vulnerable families and children
- Church planting in Bulgaria
- Bible distribution to children (750+ reached)

Over £225,000 had been raised for these initiatives. The Malawi partnership continued to grow, with £20,000 raised for a maternity unit. The Guild also supported younger adults through LIFT (ages 18–40), promoting faith development and mission.

Challenges included ageing membership and structural changes, but the Guild was addressing these through a forthcoming five-year strategic plan focused on diversity, relationships, and growth.

Overall, the report reflects strong engagement, impactful partnerships, and a commitment to future development despite current challenges.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business committee

Rev Drew Barrie - At the conclusion of his year as Moderator of the Presbytery of Perth, the Business Committee expressed sincere gratitude to Rev Drew Barrie for his dedicated service. Throughout ordinations, inductions, union and linkage services, regular meetings, and visits from the General Assembly Moderator, he demonstrated diligence, experience, deep faith, and a gracious, encouraging manner. His leadership and commitment greatly benefited the Presbytery during his term of office.

Rev Ian Petrie – The Convener noted, with sadness, the death on 6th May 2026 of the Rev Ian Petrie, former minister at St Andrew’s Church in Dundee. He placed on record gratitude to God for a long and faithful ministry in Aberdeen, East Kilbride and Dundee, followed by many years as a locum in various congregations in Fife.

Review of the Moderator of the General Assembly Visit – The Business Committee noted that the recent visit of the Very Rev Rosie Frew to the northern part of the Presbytery of Perth had been much enjoyed. Thanks were expressed to the Clerks and all others who helped in the organisation of this event. Total costs for the visit were approximately £2,000.

Overture - The Business Committee noted that the Overture submitted in the name of the Presbytery of Perth concerning the payment of locum and pulpit supply fees to congregations awaiting permission to call a minister, was accepted by the General Assembly and wished to place on record its gratitude to the Presbytery Clerk for his preparation and presentation of

the Overture.

Instructions from the General Assembly – The following instructions from the 2026 General Assembly were noted:

- The requirement to ensure compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding for Ministers by the 30th September 2026, or thereafter within one month for newly inducted Ministers.
- The Implementation of a Sabbatical Scheme for ministers as outlined in Appendix 8 in the Report of FAPLT.

Rev Scott Brown - Scott has decided to leave the Church of Scotland to become a priest in the Episcopal Church. He reflected on this life-changing event that renewed his sense of purpose and calling. He expressed deep gratitude to the Church of Scotland for being his lifelong spiritual home, shaping his faith and ministry. Acknowledging the emotional cost, he noted the loss of familiar people, language, and traditions, alongside new experiences ahead. He looked forward to continued ecumenical cooperation and invited others to his forthcoming ordination, affirming shared faith and mission.

New Treasurer - The Rev Prof Lesley Stanley welcomed Ian Roy as treasurer and thanked Martin Dunsmore for guiding the Presbytery through major financial transitions. She highlighted a vacancy on the Finance committee following Ian's appointment and called for volunteers, noting the current lack of Ministers on the team.

New Presbytery Plan Implementation Officer – Presbytery welcomed the appointment of Dan Rous as Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Officer and noted that he would commence working for Presbytery from July 1st 2026.

Vacancy Procedure Committee

Presbytery agreed to grant Strathmore Parish Church an extension of one year to Call a minister on the Basis of a Seven Year Reviewable Tenure, noting that the Planning Committee should review the situation in June 2027 if a minister had not been called by then. It was also noted that powers were used to agree to the appointment of the Rev Margaret Steele as Interim Moderator at Cargill Burrelton linked with Collace from June 30th 2026 to replace the Rev Jim Stewart.

Planning Committee

The committee was currently undertaking work in relation to the following Congregations/Charges:

- Aberfoyle
- Alloa Ludgate and St Mungo's
- Almondbank and Methven

- Alva and Menstrie
- Alyth, Rattray and Kirkmichael
- Auchterarder and Aberuthven
- Bendochy Cargill Burrelton, Collace, Coupar Angus, Kinclaven, Scone
- Bertha Park Presbytery Mission Initiative
- Bridge of Allan and Logie
- Craigie Moncrieff
- Crieff and Mid Strathearn
- Dundee Westgait
- InTogether Presbytery Mission Initiative
- Perth North and St Leonard's-in-the-Fields
- Perth St Matthew's and St John's

Aberfoyle - Presbytery was asked to approve a report in relation to Aberfoyle, and in particular that:

- The Guardianship be sustained for a further 4 years until June 2030, at which point a review would take place.
- There would be a buildings review in June 2028.
- The committee commended the impressive work and ecumenical cooperation in Aberfoyle, and asked the Presbytery to convey this to Aberfoyle Church of Scotland, St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church Aberfoyle, St Andrew's Episcopal Church Callander, and to the Rev Jon Connell and Dan Gunn, the Interim Moderator.

Presbytery agreed to the Guardianship continuing for another four years.

The Rev Jon Connell, Episcopal Priest in Aberfoyle and Locum at the Church of Scotland congregation, addressed the Presbytery. He described how helping a congregation without a minister led to a growing friendship between churches under the St Andrew Declaration. Joint worship and collaboration followed, with a shared aim to serve the communities together. He emphasised the importance of trying new approaches in faith, valuing effort over inaction, and asked for continued prayers.

Alva and Menstrie - The Kirk Sessions and Congregations had voted on and agreed to a deferred Basis of Union. This was approved by Presbytery.

Locally Vested Properties and Properties Vested with the General Trustees - The committee had consulted the Church of Scotland Law Department and General Trustees on the benefits of vesting properties with the General Trustees rather than locally. The following observations were noted:

“[Properties which are] General Trustees vested or locally vested with Assembly Control clauses can access the Consolidated and Central fabric funds for repairs and upgrades. The GTs may offer grants or loans for works to buildings which are vested in them or subject to Assembly Control. Locally vested cannot, however the session can spend their locally held fabric funds on larger projects without having to get permission from the General Trustees, however Presbytery consent is still required. If there are issues with health and safety, fire, leasing, etc then the congregation may not have access to the professional assistance they would have, if it was a GT building. There are substantial legal responsibilities in being the title holders which the General Trustees carry for the General Trustees-vested properties. In summary the only benefit of locally vested properties is the ability to spend money on a building or sell it without an extra level of scrutiny however that scrutiny is applied to protect the congregation”.

Although locally vested properties could use external solicitors for conveyancing, Church of Scotland property transactions often required specialist expertise, making it advantageous to use the Church’s own Law Department.

Rev Dr Karen Fenwick – The Rev Dr Karen Fenwick had stepped down as Convener of the Planning Committee, a role she had held since the formation of the Presbytery and previously in the Presbytery of Angus. Her contribution had been marked by exceptional energy, passion, commitment and expertise. She had guided the Presbytery Mission Planning process with careful attention to legal requirements, alongside a strong conviction that planning should serve the Church’s mission and embrace necessary change. Whilst she remained a committee member, the committee expressed its sincere gratitude for her outstanding and dedicated service.

Property Committee

Stirling: North - Stirling North Church proposed to upgrade their toilets and kitchen at a cost of £122,573. The Buildings Officer had visited this Church and was content with the works. They had a large community use of their premises in this area of Stirling and would also improve their mission outreach. This was approved, subject to approval from the General Trustees.

Manse Memorandum of Understanding - All congregations are instructed to put in place the Manse Memorandum of Understanding (Section 3 of the Manse Handbook) with inducted ministers in post no later than 30th September 2026, or within one month of an induction of all new ministries or new manse provision. All Manse Memorandums of Understanding to be sent to the Property Convener, Ian McVean by 31st October 2026, who would make the Presbytery Report to the General Trustees.

Westgait – It was noted that the Kirk Session of Westgait, Dundee, had agreed to dispose of the former Dundee West building and approved the disposal and sale.

Church in Community

Perth Prison Visitor Centre - A draft Memorandum of Understanding for a partnership between CrossReach and the Presbytery of Perth to support the Perth Prison Visitor Centre had been welcomed, however, clarification was required on the roles and responsibilities of the Partnership, Steering, and Friends groups. It was expected that these details would be clearly explained before the next Presbytery meeting.

Scottish Parliamentary Elections – The committee noted that some congregations hesitated to engage in politics before Scottish Parliamentary elections. Given conflicting views, especially on immigration, there is a role for churches in creating safe spaces for discussion, encouraging listening and sharing of personal stories. Such dialogue could support understanding and potentially foster ecumenical collaboration. The committee sought resources to help churches facilitate these constructive, respectful conversations within their congregations and wider communities going forward effectively.

The Church of Scotland's Annual Stamp Appeal - The Church of Scotland's Annual Stamp Appeal had ended, after many years supporting projects worldwide. However, charities like Bone Cancer Research, the Alzheimer Society, and the Brittle Bone Society collect used stamps. Yvonne Grant of Monifieth Parish Church was prepared to speak about the Brittle Bone Society and welcomed invitations from congregations.

Local Authority Education Committees – The Rev Chris Hay of Arbroath attended the National Ecumenical Conference for church representatives on Local Authority Education Committees. Her appended report (See appendix D) highlighted key updates, including new legislation on the right to withdraw from Religious Moral Education (RME) and Religious Observance.

Prisoners Week Scotland – The committee noted that Prisoners Week Scotland would run from the 15th to 22nd November 2026. It encouraged prayer for prisoners, staff, victims, and families, urging congregations to remember those in prison. This year's theme was "Show Mercy." Further details are available on the Prisoners Week Scotland website <https://www.prisonersweek.org.uk>.

General Assembly Summary - There was disappointment that no replacement existed for the former Life and Work General Assembly summary, which provided accessible highlights. Consideration was given to finding alternative ways to share key outcomes and discussions from the General Assembly more widely among church congregations.

Mission

Committee Membership - The committee recognised it was largely made up of members from the former Perth and Dundee Presbyteries and sought broader representation from other areas to strengthen local mission knowledge across the Presbytery.

Inspiring Mission - The next '*Inspiring Mission*' event would take place on the 7th July and would focus on Youth work. This would be an opportunity for congregations to share their experiences of youth work, both good and bad, and to be encouraged by each other as the Good News of Jesus was taken to the young people across the Presbytery. It was planned to host a face-to-face youth event over the summer.

Bertha Park Presbytery Mission Initiative - The Bertha Park core management team met to consider the future of the Bertha Park PMI and noted with disappointment that no further applications had been received for the leadership role. Despite this, the committee remained confident that God had significant plans for this rapidly growing area of Perth. The Core Leadership Team, Mission Committee, and Planning Committees would work together through prayer, scripture, and joint meetings to discern God's will in the months ahead.

Digital Resources - Karen Kelman was currently developing digital worship and devotional resources for Presbytery wide use. The committee were looking to develop these resources further in the coming months in partnership with Sanctuary First to enable them to launch personal devotionals, group bible studies, prayer groups and worship events on-line.

Mission Fund Grant Project Details

Dundee: Northeast - In 2025, £3,000 in funding enabled the employment of a sessional worker to support a youth group and pilot a midweek "Ark" club. Both initiatives succeeded, expanding outreach to over 80 young people weekly through additional school-based groups and activities. Strong engagement had encouraged plans to make these permanent and expand further. Despite limited resources, this work had significantly impacted vulnerable young people, and there was hope for continued growth through future funding and wider congregational involvement.

Dundee: Stobswell Trinity - Stobswell Trinity Church would run a three-day summer holiday club for primary children, offering games, crafts, songs, Bible stories, snacks, and a take-home lunch to address holiday hunger. A low-cost donation ensures accessibility for local families in deprived areas. Timed to fill a gap during community centre closures, it was promoted in local schools to reach non-churched families. Supported by church volunteers, the club built on previous success and strengthened community engagement.

NEXT MEETING

The Presbytery would next meet on Tuesday 1st September 2026 at 7.00pm at St Matthew's Parish Church and online for the conduct of ordinary business.