

**1. Congratulations on your appointment as Moderator of Aberdeen Presbytery. How do you feel about having been chosen?**

A bit taken aback that Presbytery has the confidence that I am up for the task! But like anything else concerning a commitment in life, there is a job that needs doing, so I'll do it to the best of my ability, knowing that I'm part of a great team. Generally past Moderators have been Ministers, but I am the fourth Elder Moderator of Presbytery and also the fourth ever woman! I think it's significant that in this important year for women, I should have been asked, and for that reason alone, I had to give serious prayerful thought to accepting the invitation and stepping up to the mark!

**2. What is the role of the Moderator?**

First and foremost the Moderator chairs the business of the eight ordinary meetings of Presbytery during the year, and any other business meetings arranged. Besides that it's a case of representing the Church of Scotland at any other meetings or events that take place during the year such as the Kirking of the City Council, which is the first engagement of the Moderatorial year. There are regular events such as the dedication of the Nativity Scene at the Mither Kirk, the annual visit to Aberdeen of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (who this coming year is also a woman), and worship events such as the World Day of Prayer.

**3. What would you like to achieve during your term of office?**

The Church of Scotland is going through a time of dramatic change. There are a lot fewer ministers, fewer younger folk involved in the life of congregations, more being therefore demanded of the older generation, many of whom are less able than they'd like to be. The church is for ALL in the community, a spiritual home offering firstly worship, and also comfort, friendship, response to community need, support and inspiration. So I'd like to speak up for the Church of Scotland in Aberdeen, motivate people to find out what's going on in their local church in an age when people are seeking clearer meaning in life, and show that the presence of Christ is just around the corner (in our case at the top of the hill!). I'd like to play my part in welcoming new seekers to the church communities across our city.

**4. You will have a busy year ahead. What are you most looking forward to?**

At present there are several congregations without ministers in Aberdeen, and it would be lovely to take part in the welcome of a new minister to at least one of these churches. There are always things to celebrate across the churches in Aberdeen and I'd love to share and affirm whatever my fellow Christians are doing in their parishes for their communities.

**5. Is there anything you are apprehensive about?**

Not really. I know that there are controversial issues within the church, but I believe in listening and learning where people's views come from, in being gracious and respectful, explaining my position and looking for common ground so that we can work together where we are in agreement.

**6. Do you think that the role of women in the church still needs to change?**

Despite the past 100 years of change, there is still a way to go before women and men are indistinguishable in their status, roles and responsibilities. It being 50 years since the historic decision to ordain women as ministers in the Church of Scotland is a special celebration for us. Women no longer work away in the church behind the scenes; they play a full part in decision making at local and national level, and I hope that they are treated with equal respect. However we know that there are still issues in society of pay and status inequality, and even in the Church there are still some pockets of resistance to women receiving equal treatment. Christ chose women to be his disciples, maybe not as Apostles, but as a significant part of his ministry. What was the case two thousand years ago should be even more true today.