

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 1st September 2015 Summary

At the start of the new session Presbytery met at Holburn West Parish Church, the church of the Moderator, Rev Duncan Eddie.

Tribute

The Rev Barry Dunsmore led tribute to the Rev William M M Campbell who died aged 73 years on July 22nd 2015. Known to all as "Bill", he served in parish ministry before becoming Chaplain, Royal Cornhill Hospital. He was Moderator to Aberdeen Presbytery in 2004/5.

Presentation of Candidates in Final Placement

The Rev Dr Nigel Parker introduced the names of three candidates in Final Ministry Placement, Mrs Jean Boyd, Dr Peter Kiehlmann and Mr Joseph Somevi. Only Mr Somevi was able to be present and he was greeted with words of encouragement from the Moderator.

Retiral of the Rev Elizabeth Youngson

Presbytery had approved the demission of the Rev Elizabeth Youngson from Mastrick Parish Church on September 30th 2015 at its meeting in March 2015 and this September meeting was the opportunity to thank her for her four years of service at Mastrick. The Mastrick Session Clerk, Mr Brian Gauld, spoke on behalf of the Session and congregation when he said Elizabeth left with their best wishes and prayers. She had been a hard working, passionate minister who had regenerated contacts with schools and community. Sermons had been uplifting and thought provoking and the Mastrick congregation was sorry to see her go but wished her a long and happy retirement.

Gomel Trust

The Rev Eddie McKenna of St Nicholas South of Kincorth spoke of his work with the Gomel Trust as the representative of all the churches in Aberdeen. The Trust was set-up in 1991 and is composed of councillors, medical and scientific specialists as well as representatives of universities and churches. It aims to provide support, advice and training to Gomel City.

Gomel is the second largest city in Belarus and is located in the south eastern part of the country, around 188 miles from Minsk. It has a population of around 492,000 people. It was deeply affected by the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 and many of the twinning projects with Aberdeen reflect this.

Eddie saw his role as "building bridges" between the churches in Aberdeen and Gomel. He has visited on several occasions and encouraged contacts with and visits to Gomel from pupils at Kincorth Academy. After twelve stimulating and interesting years Eddie felt it was time to step aside to give someone else the opportunity to take on the role.

500 Year Anniversary

Presbytery heard that in 2017 all protestant churches and representatives from the Roman Catholic Church will celebrate the 500 year anniversary of the start of the Reformation by Dr Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany. The Church of Scotland, through the Ecumenical Relations Committee, invites and encourages as many Kirk members as possible to go to the 2017 Kirchentag in Berlin and Wittenberg, Germany to celebrate this great event with up to 200.000 fellow Christians from around the world. The Kirk encourages presbyteries to promote this event and to send members as a group to Germany. The Kirchentag usually takes place in May or June and lasts for about a week. More information is available from Ros Milne at the Kirk's Ecumenical Relations Committee. If a group from Aberdeen Presbytery wishes to go, Rev Markus Auffermann (as a German) would be more than happy and willing to help with the planning and even may go as well to function as "tour guide" and translator.

Training for Leading Funerals

The Congregational Support Committee is creating a short training course for elders or others, with the endorsement of their Kirk Sessions, to facilitate them in conducting funeral services with guidance on the pastoral visiting required to do so. Kirk Sessions were invited to consider whether there are elders or other church members who may find this a ministry in which they could participate.

The intention will be both to have a local person in a congregation who can offer funeral cover for the minister at times in which he or she may not be available to take a funeral and also to provide a number of "Presbytery Funeral Celebrants" who are available as a presbytery-wide resource for funeral directors in consultation with local parish ministers.

Congregational Learning Facilitator

A flyer entitled "Growing Church" had been produced outlining the support and facilitation available from the Congregational Learning Facilitator, Anne Smith. It was hoped the flyer would be circulated to Kirk Sessions and congregations. Included in what the flyer shows is the Facilitator will:

- Liaise with and support ministers, elders and church members in the development and provision of congregational learning
- Enable learning opportunities
- Create and provide resources
- Facilitate use of a variety of materials

Living Well Café

Living Well Cafés for people with memory loss, dementia and their family or carers will be available from the 29th of September. Cafés will run between 1 and 3 pm on Tuesday afternoons alternately at Newhills Church, Bucksburn and Oldmachar Church, Bridge of Don. On offer is:

- A friendly and hospitable space
- A creative and Expressive space
- A space for reminiscing

The Café co-ordinators have more information:

- Grace Doris at Newhills Church (07935733926)
- Priscilla Oh at Oldmachar Church (07935 745435)

Aberdeen Street Pastors

Presbytery heard a short talk about the work of the Street Pastors and their acquisition of a new Safe Space vehicle. The £70,000 refurbished NHS vehicle replaces the previous ageing truck used by the group. It will allow the Street Pastors to provide a safe area for their listening, caring and helping service. They provide everything from first aid for minor injuries to warm drinks for those who have overindulged in alcohol, as well as a safe space to talk.

In 2013 Street Pastors helped 993 people through their old vehicle, and countless more through the use of their mobile teams. The new vehicle will be situated on Belmont Street on Friday and Saturday evenings from 10pm.

Aberdeen divisional commander, chief superintendent Adrian Watson, was reported as saying that he was delighted that Aberdeen Street Pastors have a new Safe Space vehicle. "Street Pastors have become a familiar sight in Aberdeen over the last seven years and in that time they have provided reassurance, support and direction to thousands of people, many of whom have inadvertently found themselves vulnerable during the course of a night out."

Malawi Visit

On 1 July 2015 a small delegation from Aberdeen Presbytery travelled to Blantyre City in Malawi. The group was led by Rev Robert Smith, minister at Rubislaw Parish Church and Convener of the Aberdeen Malawi Partnership Committee. Members of the delegation were Rev Peter Johnston, minister at Ferryhill Church, Mrs Fiona Benzie, of Rubislaw Church and Secretary of the Aberdeen Malawi Partnership, Mrs Margo Mitchell of Midsocket Church and Ms Sheila Ogden of St Mary's Church.

During the visit, members of the delegation visited orphanages, feeding stations, field hospitals, women's centres, and a weaving factory for the disabled. They toured areas devastated by the flooding in January, and attended Sunday worship services at various churches. Rev Smith and Rev Johnston were kept busy preaching on Sundays and during the week at cottage meetings and led Bible studies, devotions, and prayer meetings. The other members, Fiona Benzie, Margo Mitchell, and Sheila Ogden also kept busy working with their twinned congregations in their Sunday Schools and various other programmes and also worked very hard at local orphanages and feeding stations.

The overall sentiment of the five members of the delegation was that the visit had been very successful. Many of the things felt most valuable were intangibles such as new friendships made and old ones re-kindled; the faces of children in the orphanages as they came to get a hug; the young people who took their faith so seriously and were dedicated members of their churches; the homes that were opened to them; the sense of great need due to crushing poverty. There were so many things they all wanted to do there that most, if not all, will at some point return.

A short film is currently being worked on about the Aberdeen Malawi Partnership. It is hoped it can be used to let people know the wonderful work that is going on between our Presbyteries and congregations to educate people about twinning and to raise the profile of the partnership.