

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 5th September 2017 Summary

Presbytery started the 2017/18 session on Tuesday 5th September at Mannofield Parish Church, the church of the Moderator the Rev Keith Blackwood and some of the business was as follows:

Union of St Mark's and Queen Street

Presbytery approved the Basis of Union agreed by both Kirk Sessions and Congregations of Queen Street and St Mark's Parish Churches. After extensive discussions they had eventually decided by a sizeable majority that St Mark's be adopted as the name of the united charge.

St Mark's was chosen as the place of worship because Queen Street Kirk Session recognised that its building has substantial maintenance and repair issues. Also, its ability to fill key positions within the congregation had become severely limited. It is keen to see its building used for Christian/charitable purposes, ideally linked to City Centre ministry, or for the proceeds of sale to be used for the requirements of the new charge and furtherance of its ministry, or as Presbytery may otherwise approve.

Business Connection

Presbytery was addressed by Mr Jim Grimmer of Business Connection, a charity in Aberdeen, which he had set up along with three other businessmen who were inspired by their Christian faith to equip, encourage and empower Christians in the workplace. He was a police officer for 20 years before working in the oil industry. In recent years he decided to step out of fulltime employment to become a Business Pastor.

A Business Pastor was described as someone who has Christian values and seeks to care, listen and help, particularly staff who are experiencing challenges, for example, perhaps in relationships, family addictions, illness or work. They do not proselytise, serving people of faith and no faith.

More information about Business Connection and Business Pastors is available at:
www.thebusinessconnection.org
www.businesspastors.org

Report from representative on Council Education Committee

Presbytery received a report from the Rev Hutton Steel, the new Presbytery representative on the Aberdeen City Council Education and Children's Services Committee, about his experience having attended three of the Committee meetings. The "lay" representatives (a description that amused him) hold the balance on the Council and the Councillors were very friendly.

Business so far had covered items such as new schools and their location, progress on school building, oversubscribed schools, recruitment of teachers in Aberdeen, budgeting, refurbishment of the Art Gallery etc. Although having no role in the Children's Services part of the Committee he had been very impressed by a presentation of children from Kittybrewster on the UN Global Goals, the Children's Parliament Project and Aberdeen's Imagineers!

Planning and Deployment – New Post and Conference

Following the approval of the Principles of Presbytery Planning at the June meeting Presbytery agreed the termination of the current Mission Development Leader Post and approved the creation of a new full time Presbytery post with the remit to take a lead role in the future of Presbytery Planning as defined by Ministries Council.

Presbytery noted the Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) is preparing a conference, to be attended by representatives of Ministries Council, on November 25th to engage all congregations in

the realities of future planning for ministry and mission, which will involve new ways of working and new structures in collaborative partnerships across the church. Presbytery strongly encouraged all congregations to send at least one delegate to the conference. (Afternote: The conference is now to be held on November 18th)

Time for Creation

The new World Mission and Partnership Committee reported that from 1 September to 4 October, Christians from around the world are encouraged to pray for the care of creation. This time was set by the World Council of Churches and the European Ecumenical Assembly as the "Season of Creation." World churches are encouraged to observe 'Time for Creation' through prayers and actions. Leaders from many churches urge this to be a time to highlight the need for action on climate change.

Presbytery was encouraged to utilise the resources for the Season of Creation at oikoumene.org and Eco-Congregation Scotland has created a 4 week worship resource which can be found at <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/creation-time/>

World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel

The World Mission and Partnership Committee also reported that the annual World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel was from 17-24 September. The Church of Scotland is part of an ecumenical UK Working Group for WWPP. The theme for this year was 'Voices of the Young, Visions for the Future.' WWPP is a time when people of faith are encouraged to make a common witness through services, educational events and acts that support peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians. The committee and the Church of Scotland encouraged churches to mark the week in some way.

Ministries and Mission Contributions

At the March 2017 meeting of Presbytery, it was agreed that the Congregational Stewardship Committee assess bids for a reduction in Ministries and Mission contributions against the following priorities –

1. Mission Projects
2. Unexpected Repairs
3. Shortfalls in M&M contributions

Further to a letter issued by the Committee to all Aberdeen churches on 13th June 2017, the Committee felt that sufficient evidence was provided by two churches to merit a reduction in M&M contributions amounting to £8,000. Presbytery noted that the balance of available funding from the 5% allowance was £52,579 at September 2017.

The Committee Convener is to write to congregations with an unsuccessful request for support to seek more clarity.

Fresh Expressions Vision Day

Presbytery commended the Vision Day organised by the Fresh Expressions team at Oldmachar Church from 10.30 am to 4 pm on 11th November and encouraged congregations to register representatives to attend. The Congregational Support Committee reported that this event follows on from last year's event and would give those attending a chance to hear the stories of new missional ways of being church and to discuss how their own church can engage with sections of the parish in new ways. The committee was keen to ensure that every congregation in Presbytery hears about the conference and has the opportunity to be represented.

Booking is via the website at www.resourcingmission.org.uk/events.

Resources from Mission and Discipleship Council

LEARN Children and Young People is the latest addition to the resource material to be published by the Mission and Discipleship Council. Released in August, the new resource is available from St Andrew Press.

Presbytery commended this resource.

A further LEARN volume will be released in November, entitled Understanding Our Faith. This will also be available from St Andrew Press. In addition, a special conference has been arranged to coincide with the launch. The Understanding our Faith Conference is on 4th November at St Matthew's Church, Perth. Those attending will receive a free copy! Bookings need to be made by 15th October via the website www.resourcingmission.org.uk

Presbytery noted the forthcoming publication and commended the 4th of November conference.

Property Inspections

Presbytery noted that in future Presbytery professional property inspections will be undertaken every ten years, with interim inspections being carried out every five years by congregations themselves, if competent to do so.

It was agreed that from January 1st 2018 congregations should contribute to the costs of the ten year professional property inspection according to their income as follows: Congregational income up to £50,000: £300; Congregational income between £50,000 and £100,000: £600; Congregational income above £100,000: £900.

Presbytery Also:

- Noted with sorrow the death of the Rev Jim Davies at 60 years of age after a long illness. Jim was minister at St Stephen's Church and was a former Moderator of Aberdeen Presbytery. In more recent years he was part of the Church's Interim Ministry team and undertook the task of being Interim Minister at High Hilton with great skill and wisdom. Presbytery extended its sympathy to his family.
- Warmly congratulated the Rev Manson Merchant on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his Ordination on the 4th of June 1992.
- Noted that the Business and Finance Committee have agreed to take part in a pilot scheme initiated by the Legal Questions Committee and the Council of Assembly to trial a new Presbytery Review process.
- Received a report from the Rev Hugh Wallace about the progress with the Living Well Cafes and the Syrian Refugees in Aberdeen.
- Received a report from the Rev Kenneth Petrie highlighting the Cairns Counselling Annual Report. He expressed the view that Cairns Counselling is more than ever needed in Aberdeen with 4,758 appointments in a year.
- Welcomed and wished well the Ministry Candidates in Final Placement, Ibidun Darimola and Mary Whitaker.
- Thanked Dr Jim Merrilees for his contribution over many years to the work of Presbytery as a representative from the United Reformed Church.

Intimations included:

- Following discussions with the Presbytery Property Committee and the Church of Scotland CARTA (Committee on Church Art and Architecture), St George's Tillydrone has gained agreement and is now looking to re-home their pipe organ. The organ is single keyboard, five stops with electric bellows. It was built in 1857 and moved to St George's from the Episcopal Church in Fergie, Aberdeenshire in 1971. The organ can be seen and played at St George's by arrangement with Mr Bill Mitchell (MDS) on 07813488001. It is free for the taking and there are some photographs to be found at <http://tillydrone.church/organ/organ.zip>
- Each Friday, Saturday and Sunday, St George's Tillydrone host the Tillydrone Community Food Outlet for a source of fresh and affordable vegetables and fruit including the sale of "soup bags" along with some dried products. Open Friday and Saturday from 10 - 12:30 and Sunday noon - 1pm.
- Mrs Anne Smith, Congregational Learning Facilitator will host a Exploring Leading Funerals workshop at St George's Tillydrone on the 5th, 12th and 19th October from 7.30 – 9pm. Please register interest as soon as possible to Mrs Anne Smith via e-mail smithanneg@tiscali.co.uk alternatively, please contact the Presbytery Office.
- Ministries Council are to host recruitment events for Ministers and lay people who may be interested in the role of National Assessors for the Discernment process. There will be an Information Day, which will be held on Tuesday 24th October at 2pm in the Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh. A person specification for this role can be received from the Presbytery Office. Further information can be obtained from Ms Angie McNabb, via email at AMcNabb@churchofscotland.org.uk alternatively, please telephone Ministries Council on 0131 225 5722 or access the website www.tomorrowscalling.org