

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 5th December 2017 Summary

Queen's Cross Parish Church saw the return of Presbytery for its December meeting and some of the business was as follows:

Ecumenical Relations Committee Conference

The Rev Markus Auffermann, Presbytery Representative to the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Relations Committee, reported on his attendance at the Annual Conference of the Committee which was hosted jointly with Action of Churches Together in Scotland and held on Saturday, 4th November 2017 in the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church.

Within the Church of Scotland, the Ecumenical Relations Committee is responsible for encouraging and enabling an ecumenical vision in Scotland. Members seek to encourage ecumenical engagement through the councils, presbyteries and congregations of the Church of Scotland.

Markus spoke about three talks at the Conference: The first covered the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation and the role of Luther, the second concerned capturing a vision of the Church in 21st century Scotland and the third was from the Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, with the title "Shall We Dance?" which was about relationships in the Christian Church.

Presbytery agreed that the report be circulated to Presbyters.

Possible Union/Association with Presbytery of Shetland

At a consultation attended by Presbytery, Session Clerks and representatives from the Ministries Council and the Principal Clerk on 2nd September 2017, a consensus emerged for a radical reshaping of the church in Shetland. This would involve Shetland, over the next three to five years, becoming a single parish consisting of a cluster of congregations served by a team of Ordained Ministers and others; the Parish of Shetland would then become part of another Presbytery.

Presbytery noted that the Presbytery of Shetland has agreed to enter into conversations with others as appropriate with a view to exploring union or association with another Presbytery or Presbyteries.

Presbytery agreed to enter talks with the Presbytery of Shetland about possible union or association.

Presbytery Review and Conference

Presbytery noted that the Business and Finance Committee met with representatives of the Presbytery of Stirling on 22nd November 2017 as part of the Presbytery Review pilot exercise. Part 3 of the exercise invites Presbytery to look ahead and set out aims for the next five years. This will be the purpose of a conference on Saturday 20th January 2018 at Midstocket Parish Church from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm.

All Presbyters were invited to complete and return by 13th January 2018 a questionnaire on how Presbytery currently undertakes its business and how this might be improved, and were strongly encouraged to attend the conference in January.

Presbytery Service

Presbytery noted that the Right Reverend Derek Browning, Moderator of the General Assembly, will be making the annual visit to the University of Aberdeen on the weekend of 9th -11th February 2018 and that the Presbytery Service will take place on Friday 9th February 2018 at 7.30 pm at Mannofield Parish Church, when Long Service Certificates will be presented.

The Convener of the Congregational Support Committee, the Rev David Stewart, highlighted three items from his report:

Together We Pray

Resources and ideas including videos to encourage congregations to pray for the church are available from the "Together We Pray" section of the Church of Scotland website. "Together We Pray" was created as a response to the General Assembly call "for the Church of Scotland to pray that God will do a fresh work amongst us" and from feedback from the "On the Road" events in 2016. A National Day of Prayer was held on Saturday 25th November and further events are planned, details of which will appear on the website.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/together_we_pray

Presbytery commended the "Together we Pray" website and encouraged congregations to consider how they can respond to the call to prayer for the Church.

Understanding Our Faith

The latest addition to the LEARN Resource library has now been released. LEARN: Understanding Our Faith is available from St Andrew Press. It will be of use for new members' classes and for Bible Study groups as well as for other groups in churches. <https://standrewpress.hymnsam.co.uk/>

Elders Conference

A three-day conference for elders has been arranged at the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan Castle, from 27th to 29th April 2018, entitled "A Journey of Discipleship". The conference features five keynote talks plus thirty workshops covering all areas of eldership. The cost of the conference is £150 (£120 for elders from priority areas).

Details are on the Church of Scotland website:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/events/elders_conference_2018 Booking and further details are available at the Church's eventbrite webpage:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/elders-conference-2018-tickets-39511186021>

Presbytery commended the LEARN Elders Conference "Journey of Discipleship", and encouraged congregations to offer to support elders who wish to attend.

Presbytery Planning Congregational Conference "Ministry Hubs and Our Shared Future"

The Conference held on Saturday 18th November was the response of Presbytery to the instruction from the General Assembly 2017, "*to work with Ministries Council in developing a planning framework which supports and enables a locally focused missional approach taking into account the statistical trends of availability of Ministers, the viability of congregations over the next five years, and acknowledging that further radical downward adjustment is not necessarily the appropriate response.*"

83 delegates attended with only one church in Presbytery having to make apology for being unable to attend. Keynote speakers were Alison Meikle (Convener) and John Thomson (Clerk) of the Ministries Council Presbytery Planning Task Group. Delegates were asked to begin to explore ways in which partnership working could address the challenges of reducing resources and how collaborative ministry and mission could enable transformation in what it means to be the national church of the future.

Presbytery noted the very good attendance at the conference and instructed all Kirk Sessions to participate in discussions about "Our Shared Future" between January and May 2018. Resources to support the discussions are to be produced by the Planning and Deployment Committee.

Centre for Ministry Studies

On 31st October, the Ministries Committee Convener, Rev Dr Nigel Parker and his counterparts from the Presbyteries of Gordon, Moray, Kincardine & Deeside and Buchan met with Rev Dr Ken Jeffrey, co-ordinator of the Centre for Ministry Studies (CMS) at Aberdeen University. The purpose of the meeting was to explore ways in which the CMS could help equip the ministering Christians of the North East presbyteries to serve the church.

A training event was suggested which would include all five Presbyteries and everyone associated in ministry such as youth workers, parish assistants etc. Consequently the Acorn Centre, Inverurie was provisionally booked as the venue for a conference on Saturday 8th September 2018.

Presbytery encouraged the Centre for Ministry Studies in its desire to serve the North East of Scotland Churches and also encouraged all ministry personnel to reserve 8th September for the conference.

World AIDS Day/Souper Sunday

World Aids Day was on 1st December, prior to the Presbytery meeting. The World Mission Council had put together resources for use in worship on the day but they can be used at other times. Presbyters were encouraged to look at and utilise the Souper Sunday/Sundae Sunday materials and plan an elder-led service with soup lunch after to raise awareness and monies for the Church of Scotland HIV project.

The 2018 resource packs are now available on the World Mission Council site.

Presbytery Also:

- Sustained the call from Cults Parish Church to the Rev Shuna M Dicks, Minister of Aberlour Parish Church and agreed to meet for her induction at Cults on Thursday January 25th at 6.45 pm.
- Received Local Church Review Reports on Ferryhill Parish Church and Midsocket Parish Church.
- Noted that a flat bequeathed to Presbytery at Hilton Drive, Aberdeen had been sold and that the money will be used to create a fund to support candidates within the Presbytery in training for all forms of Ministry who may need support to pay for their accommodation.
- Welcomed the positive responses from MSPs to proposed "Meet the MSPs" events in 2018.
- Commended the City-wide Prayer Gatherings to congregations throughout 2018.
- Will welcome the new Syrian Refugees as they arrive in Aberdeen, and encouraged congregations to engage with practical and caring expressions of compassion to help their integration into the city and its life.
- Noted the Presbytery "Twinning Day" Conference on Saturday 14th April 2018 at Rubislaw Church Centre to inform congregations how to twin, the benefits of twinning and to share more of the world of the World Mission Council.
- Noted that three ministers recently serving in Aberdeen have moved: The Rev Graham Deans has transferred to the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, the Rev Ewen Gilchrist to the Presbytery of Perth and the Rev Marian Cowie to the Presbytery of Glasgow.

Intimations included:

- Mrs Anne Smith, Congregational Learning Facilitator, will host a training day on Saturday 24th February 2018 at South Holburn Parish Church from 9.30am – 3pm to which all are welcome to attend. The title of this workshop will be “In a Strange Land: Understanding and Enabling Christian Spirituality within Dementia. Please register by e-mail to Mrs Smith at smithanneg@tiscali.co.uk or through the Presbytery office on tel. 01224 698119.