

## **PRESBYTERY of MELROSE and PEEBLES**

The Presbytery will meet at **Innerleithen Church** on Tuesday 1 May 2018 at 7pm for ordinary business.

Victoria Linford, Clerk

### Business

1. Constitute
2. Sederunt and Apologies
3. Minutes (pp70-72)
4. Admission of new member – Rev David Donaldson
5. Commissioning of Commissioners to the General Assembly 2018
6. Speaker – Crystal Cryer, 24-7 Prayer Scotland
7. Order of Business
8. Business Committee
9. Forum Discussion – General Assembly reports:
  - (a) Westminster Confession of Faith – Overture from Presbytery (pp4-5)
  - (b) Council of Assembly Strategic Plan – Blue Book section 7, appendix 1 timescale (pp6-7)
10. Standing Committee Reports:
  - (a) Governance (p8)
  - (b) Mission and Service (p9)
  - (c) Property and Stewardship (p9)
11. Intimations
12. Correspondence
13. Adjournment

**[TEA/COFFEE WILL BE SERVED DURING A BREAK IN THE MEETING, AFTER THE REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE]**

### Business Committee

1. Presbytery nominates Rev Julie Rennick and Mr Mark Wands for the Commission of Assembly for 2018-19.
2. Presbytery notes that Elders' Commissions for 2018-19 should be returned to the Clerk by 1 June 2018 (p3).
3. Presbytery invites nominations for Presbytery-appointed elders for 2018-19; nominations should be made to the Clerk by 1 June 2018.
4. Presbytery notes the Business Committee's nomination of Rev Julie Rennick as the next Moderator of Presbytery.
5. Further to the report of the Presbytery Prayer Co-ordinator in February 2018, Presbytery notes that there will be an ecumenical prayer event for the church, to be held in Galashiels: Old and St Paul's Church on Friday 18 May 2018 from 6-9pm. Members of churches within Presbytery are required to welcome people and act as ushers at the prayer event, and anyone able to help should speak to the Clerk. Leaflets will be available at Presbytery and members of Presbytery are asked to promote this event.
6. Presbytery notes the proposal that a Middle East event be held within Presbytery on Wednesday 24 October 2018 as the theme for our autumn "Away Day". The programme would run from 3-8pm with the afternoon session led by a key speaker on Israel-Palestine relations, followed by worship including prayer for our sisters and brothers in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who have called for an ecumenical prayer vigil across the globe on the 24th of every month.
7. Presbytery approves the following as Presbytery Worship Leader Assessors: Rev John Hunter from Ormiston, a retired minister, Rev Milton Cashman, Rev Rachel Dobie, Rev Dr Miller Milloy, and Mrs Marie White, an elder from Channelkirk and Lauder Church.

### Intimations

1. From Rev Michael Scoular: "The BGH Chaplaincy possesses a Yamaha Electric Organ which it would be happy to "give to a good home", for perhaps a token donation. Any congregation that might be interested would be welcome to come and look at it for themselves, not least because transportation may be a slight challenge!"
2. Heart and Soul events: Please can Presbytery members note the following Heart and Soul 2018 events and encourage interested people in their congregations to attend – details will be sent out by email and some flyers will be available at Presbytery:

- a. **Made for More** – Youth Concert, Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. Saturday 19 May, 7-9pm. (Free).
  - b. **Heart and Soul** – in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. With family picnic area and lots of Year of Young People activities. Sunday 20 May, 12.30–6pm.
  - c. **Walking Together** – a Youth-led evening of Celebration and Inspiration. Monday 21 May, 6–7.30pm. Assembly Hall, The Mound, Edinburgh.
  - d. YoYP Social Media campaign in May – young people and church members can share their “**Dream for my church #YOYPchurchdream**”.
3. General Assembly events: This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women; the actual anniversary occurs on Tuesday 22 May; on this day there will be a rally and march up the Mound (starting at 1.30pm) to the Assembly Hall, where there will be a special service to celebrate this significant date. On Assembly Sunday at Heart and Soul (see 3b. above), the worship will be led by women in ministry including Rev Julie Rennick; worship begins at 5pm.

### Correspondence

1. Christian Aid Book Sale: the annual book sale will be held at St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church, Edinburgh from Saturday 12 May until Friday 18 May 2018. Flyers will be available at the Presbytery meeting with times and further information.

## **PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES**

### ELDERS’ COMMISSIONS 2018-19

Elders’ Commissions should be returned to the Clerk by **1 June 2018**. **Email returns are acceptable.**

**Ministers and Elders will normally be asked to serve on one Presbytery Committee as well as attending Presbytery meetings.**

All elders appointed by Kirk Sessions should ensure that the Kirk Session completes the Elder’s Commission below.

---

### **ELDER’S COMMISSION TO PRESBYTERY** (to be returned to the Presbytery Clerk by 1 June 2018)

At \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2018, the Kirk Session of \_\_\_\_\_ met and was constituted with prayer by the Moderator, the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_  
Inter alia, the Session appointed \_\_\_\_\_ a bona fide acting Elder of the Congregation, to represent it in the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles during the year ending 30 June 2019.

Extracted from the Records of the Kirk Session by \_\_\_\_\_

Session Clerk

**N.B. The elder's address (including postcode), telephone number and e-mail address are:**

**OVERTURE TO BE MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018  
IN THE NAME OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES PRESBYTERY  
ANENT THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH**

Whereas:

1. 'The Westminster Confession is justly regarded as one of the most impressive of all the Confessions framed by the Reformers or their successors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...Yet the status it enjoys has also provoked searching questions about the theological adequacy and continuing relevance of its teaching – questions which began to come to the surface in the eighteenth century, grew acute in the nineteenth and are still with us today.' (Professor Alasdair Heron – Introduction to *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*, Saint Andrew Press 1982);
2. The Confession was drafted in 1646 by an Assembly of English parliamentarians and clergy, with assessors from Scotland, against the background of the English Civil War and moves to unite the Churches of both countries under Presbyterian government;
3. The Confession was adopted by the General Assembly of 1647 as 'most orthodox and grounded upon the Word of God' and further approved by the Scottish Parliament in 1649 as 'the public and avowed Confession of the Church, containing the sum and substance of the faith of the Reformed Church';
4. Through these measures the Westminster Confession effectively superseded the Scots Confession drawn up by John Knox and others and approved by the Scottish Parliament of 1560;
5. Over succeeding centuries varying formulae of subscription were required of candidates for ordination and holders of certain public offices. These ranged from seeking recognition of the Confession as a statement of the Church's faith to its acceptance as an expression of personal belief;
6. By the late nineteenth century serious unease was being expressed over aspects of the Confession's teaching, in particular the doctrines of divine decrees (double predestination), election and limited atonement. This led the United Presbyterian Church in 1879 and the Free Church in 1892 and 1894 to pass Declaratory Acts, qualifying adherence in respect of such doctrines and allowing liberty of opinion on matters 'not entering into the substance of the faith'. These Declaratory Acts continue as 'leading documents' in the Church of Scotland's constitution in the area of doctrine;
7. The Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual, appended to the 1929 Uniting Act, declare the Westminster Confession to be 'the principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland...approved by the General Assembly of 1647 (and) containing the sum and substance of the Faith of the Reformed Church.' The associated formula of subscription requires ordinands to affirm their belief in 'the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church';
8. In the General Assembly of 1968 significant concerns were raised over the Confession's accessibility and practical usefulness as a 'subordinate standard' in articulating the Church's faith in a language and style relevant to contemporary theological challenges;
9. Over the next four years the issues were debated at kirk session, presbytery and Assembly levels with the General Assembly of 1972 adopting an Overture recommending certain amendments of the Declaratory Articles. These involved introducing references to the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as 'declarations of the faith of the Universal Church' and to the Scots and Westminster Confessions as 'historic statements of the faith of the Reformed Church.' Reference to the Westminster Confession as 'subordinate standard' was removed. In addition it was proposed that a short statement of faith be included in the Preamble read at services of ordination, with ordinands required to subscribe a revised Formula declaring their belief in 'the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith affirmed in the Preamble';
10. In terms of the procedure for amending the Declaratory Articles these recommendations were referred to presbyteries in two successive years where they received the required approval of more than two-thirds of presbyteries in both years. Notwithstanding this support further debate ensued in the General Assembly of 1974 leading to the rejection of the amendments in favour of a counter motion to depart from the matter 'until a new Statement of Faith is accepted by the General Assembly';
11. Over subsequent years efforts were made to produce such a Statement, with some seeking a simple, credal formula while others argued for a more substantial and detailed text. In 1978 the General Assembly drew attention to the first Declaratory Article as 'an authoritative guide in any statement of Christian belief' and in 1982 a collection of essays was published under the title *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*. Over the next two years further amendments of the Declaratory Articles, Preamble, Questions and Formula were considered but failed to find the necessary support. Eventually, in 1992 the General Assembly, following consultation with presbyteries, approved the Statement of Christian Faith which is printed inside

the back cover of *Common Order* 1994. The question as to whether this met the conditions of the successful 1974 counter-motion for re-visiting the matter remains open;

12. In 1986, in response to a petition from Dr Kenneth Stewart, an elder from Stirling, the General Assembly passed a Declaratory Act dissociating itself from the intemperate language employed by the Confession when referring to the Pope, the Mass and the Roman Catholic Church, declaring that it no longer affirmed such terms. The petitioner successfully argued that such expressions were 'beyond modification except by their exclusion', though they remain in the text of Confession;
13. In recent years questions have continued around the role of the Westminster Confession as an effective 'Standard' for the Church, both in terms of its accessibility to those required to subscribe it and its practical usefulness as an exposition of the Church's faith for today's members and enquirers;
14. Last year's Reformation 500 commemoration offers a timely opportunity for reaffirming our catholic, reformed, evangelical and ecumenical identity alongside other Churches, perhaps through a broader set of confessional documents;
15. In 1983 the Presbyterian Church USA published a *Book of Confessions* containing twelve statements of faith beginning with the ancient creeds, continuing with a number of Reformed texts (including the Scots and the Westminster Confessions) and concluding with contemporary affirmations of faith. Revised and updated editions have been issued in subsequent years. Arguably, a similar publication for the Church of Scotland, in print and/or on-line, could prove a valuable resource for church members and enquirers;
16. Much valuable theological work was undertaken in the years following the 1968 General Assembly and the various reports and verbatim records of Assembly debates remain readily available as a basis for fresh analysis and study;

It is humbly overtured by the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles, to the Venerable the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that the General Assembly instruct the Theological Forum:

- (1) to review the reports and debates on the role of the Westminster Confession of Faith arising from the General Assembly of 1968 and the years following;
- (2) To give fresh consideration to the issues raised therein in light of developments within Reformed and ecumenical theology since 1646 in which the Church of Scotland has been actively involved;
- (3) to advise the General Assembly on the continuing role of a 'Subordinate Standard';
- (4) to look afresh at the wording and terms of reference of the Formula of subscription used in services of ordination;
- (5) to explore the possibility of producing a Book of Confessions, in print and/or on-line as a teaching resource for office-bearers, members and enquirers;
- (6) to report to the General Assembly of 2020.

Or to do otherwise as to your Venerable Court may seem good.

Proposed deliverance:

### **The General Assembly**

1. Receive the Overture;
2. Instruct the Theological Forum
  - (1) to review the reports and debates on the role of the Westminster Confession of Faith in the Church's life arising from the General Assembly of 1968 and the years following;
  - (2) to give fresh consideration to the issues raised therein in light of developments within Reformed and ecumenical theology since 1646 in which the Church of Scotland has been actively involved;
  - (3) to advise the General Assembly on the continuing role of a 'Subordinate Standard';
  - (4) to look afresh at the wording and terms of reference of the Formula of subscription used in services of ordination;
  - (5) to explore the possibility of producing a Book of Confessions, in print and/or on-line as a teaching resource for office-bearers, members and enquirers;
  - (6) to report to the General Assembly of 2020.

Report of the Council of Assembly.....	07
<b>Appendix 1</b>	
<b>STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS TIMELINE</b>	
By 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that <i>all</i> congregations have regular opportunities for nurture, prayer and bible study; people will demonstrate deepening spirituality and a desire to learn and share more about faith.</li> <li>• High quality resources for study and learning will be made available and used to support growth and service for all ages.</li> <li>• The Council of Assembly, in cooperation with Presbyteries and other Councils, will develop criteria to enable identification of appropriate places for new and emerging congregations, for growing congregations, for places where the goal is ongoing sustainability and where congregations have no long term future.</li> <li>• The General Trustees and Council of Assembly will have in place an integrated strategy for the appropriate development and disposal of buildings, leading to the optimum number of sustainable, better-equipped and affordable places for future mission.</li> <li>• Significant steps will have been taken towards the regional structures of the Church being more effectively resourced to enable key support to congregations and strong links to national structures.</li> </ul>
By 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integrated training programme, with flexible access, which covers all aspects of lay and ordained ministerial education and training will be in place, providing excellent preparation and ongoing support for developing ministry teams.</li> <li>• The national offices will be fit for purpose and sustainable, either in a renovated George Street building or in alternative premises.</li> <li>• The Church will achieve and maintain a balanced annual budget which fully supports its priorities.</li> <li>• Governance structures will be streamlined to enable effective implementation while maintaining compliance with charity regulations.</li> <li>• A national Workforce Plan will have been drawn up and implemented ensuring appropriate levels of staffing to meet the strategic priorities of the Church.</li> </ul>
By 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be evidence of increased, positive congregational involvement in local community issues, particularly in relation to justice, the alleviation of poverty and social inclusion.</li> </ul>
By 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All congregations will have completed a Local Church Review process, producing a mission plan for their Parish.</li> <li>• Strong links will be established with ecumenical and global partners, sharing good practice in nurturing discipleship and missional engagement.</li> <li>• Congregations will develop a clear focus on becoming sustainable and growth-orientated with targets appropriate to context, including the presence of multiple generations of people.</li> <li>• There will be evidence of improved wellbeing and resilience within the workforce that comprises the ministries of the church.</li> <li>• National guidelines on ways of maximising income generation will have been drawn up and implemented.</li> <li>• The framework of Church Law will be rationalised, ensuring clarity, accessibility and equality of application.</li> </ul>

By 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people will take up learning opportunities which deepen faith and increase awareness of the Church in the community.</li> <li>• Every Presbytery will have forged links with local partners, including CrossReach services, and global partners with a view to enriching the lives of congregations within their bounds.</li> <li>• All congregations will have completed a full cycle of stewardship activities, with a particular focus on the purpose of Christian giving. A clear process for ongoing stewardship should be in place.</li> </ul>
By 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be clear signs of congregations becoming sustainable and growth-orientated with multiple generations and backgrounds of people present.</li> <li>• New congregations will be planted and established reflecting the communities which they serve in terms of background, age, gender and variety, especially in new areas of opportunity.</li> <li>• We will ensure an appropriate level of contribution from the Church locally, nationally and internationally, to debate and activity in the public square.</li> <li>• Well-prepared ministry teams, drawing on experience from experimental programmes, will be in place across the country, offering excellent local leadership.</li> <li>• All Presbyteries will have drawn up and begun implementation of a plan for the use, development or disposal of all buildings within their bounds.</li> </ul>

### **Melrose and Peebles Presbytery – May 2018** **Governance Committee**

Victoria Linford and I represented Presbytery at a recent Presbytery Planning Conference organised by the Ministries Council. Much of what we heard is contained in the Council's report to the General Assembly. (Available from the Church of Scotland website at:

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/50223/Blue\\_Book.pdf](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/50223/Blue_Book.pdf) )

**3.5.2.4** ... 'The best estimate is that in 2023 the number of ministers available to serve as parish ministers will be in the region of 20% lower than is currently the case.

A 20% reduction for Melrose and Peebles would take us to **11 full time equivalent ministries**.

This 'advisory number' is for Presbytery to recognise and work with.

The report continues:

**3.5.2.6** The Council recognises the reality that in some Presbyteries, more than one-third of the charges have no minister. This places a burden on ministers and elders alike. A reducing number of ministers means the number of vacancies will rise and the length of vacancies will increase. Almost one in four congregations are without an inducted minister. Some Presbyteries may choose simply to implement a 20% reduction whilst for others, additional contextual issues may require a different approach. What is clear is that Hub-style ministry (see section 1.3.10), is a possible model for responding to a shortage of ministers. In other contexts, it may be appropriate to develop the use of locally trained worship teams. For others, a Fresh Expression of Church or Pioneer Ministry approach, whether lay or ordained, may be the way forward.

**3.5.2.7 A challenging planning round cannot be avoided**, although different Presbyteries may wish to take different approaches within the broad and flexible parameters of the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII, 2003, as amended) and the planning principles in Schedule 1 to the Act.

It will be interesting to hear how the General Assembly responds to this report. In the proposed deliverance Commissioners are simply being asked to 'note the advisory figures'.

Attached to this report is an update of previously prepared statistics for this Presbytery for your information.

At the Presbytery Planning Conference it was said several times, 'the answers are going to come from the local'. With that in mind this is how we propose to take things forward.

1. Congregations are invited to send 'forward thinking, visionary' representatives to a presentation / discussion on the afternoon of Saturday 2 June in Galashiels: Trinity to hear the details of our present situation, the Ministries Council report, the response from the General Assembly, and to start thinking about the future. Mindful that 'the answers are going to come from the local'. We can't hide our heads in the sand..... The status quo is not an option.
2. A further conference is to be arranged later in 2018 / early 2019 to bring together ideas, once congregations have had a chance to talk and plan and dream!

There is obviously a concern for the situation of those in reviewable charges and in vacant congregations. Presbytery will have to consider how we give them assurance without 'tying our hands' and making any future adjustment more difficult.

Rev Rosie Frew, Convener

### **Deliverance:**

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery notes that a 20% reduction in ministry numbers is 11 full time equivalent ministries.
3. Presbytery invites congregations to send representatives to the meeting on 2 June 2018 in Galashiels: Trinity Church.

9.

## **MELROSE AND PEEBLES PRESBYTERY** **MISSION AND SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT - MAY 2018**

### **Activity Updates:**

Presbytery is invited to read the leaflet information as distributed and to complete the attendance slip for the School Chaplains' Conference in May and the Presbytery "Away Day" in June. Further information is available from the Convener - graeme.donald@btopenworld.com.

### **Study Leave:**

Presbytery is asked to approve leave of absence for Rev Sheila Moir from 20 – 26 August 2018 so that she may attend The Centre of Ministry Studies Summer School. Application to attend this School as part of the national study leave scheme has been approved by Ministries Council.

Presbytery is asked to approve the Presbytery Study Leave costs from Rev Sheila Moir who attended the Spring Harvest Conference in Harrogate from 2 – 8 April 2018. As this application was received on 16 March Presbytery is asked to approve reimbursement of the £298.90 attendance costs.

### **Nomination of Ministry Candidate:**

The Convener requests that Presbytery nominates Pamela Kennedy as a candidate in training for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament (Ordained National Ministry) and to instruct the Clerk to send an extract minute of this decision to Ministries Council.

### **Deliverances:**

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery approves the attendance by Rev Sheila Moir at The Centre of Ministry Studies Summer School in August 2018, and notes that national study leave funding has been approved by Ministries Council.
3. Presbytery approves an application for Presbytery Study Leave costs of £298.90 for Rev Sheila Moir in respect of her attendance at the Spring Harvest Conference in April 2018.
4. Presbytery nominates Pamela Kennedy as a candidate in training for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament (Ordained National Ministry) and instructs the Clerk to send an extract minute of this decision to Ministries Council.



-----

## **Report from Property and Stewardship Committee - May 2018**

Presbytery has already agreed that the visit from Malawi and the Lebanon will be partially funded from the Presbytery 5% rebate. The deliverance below confirms the amount.

### **Deliverance:**

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery approves the use of funds from the Ministries and Mission rebate to meet expenses of £7,250 in support of the Presbytery arranged visit of young people from Malawi and the Lebanon.