



## PROGRAMME

1430 Arrival – Refreshment

### 1500 **Welcome and Constitute**

Presbytery Moderator Rev Julie Rennick

### 1515 **‘Between the Lines’** - The Rev. Grant Barclay:

*The Rev Grant Barclay visited the Middle East to find out what life was like. He found people who were affected by the establishment and growth of the modern State of Israel. Mainly for Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel, the events of the past seventy years had brought about impoverishment, challenge and loss.*

### 1600 **‘Why is the Church of Scotland so Involved?’**

The Rev. Iain Cunningham

*In his report to the General Assembly the Rev Iain Cunningham took the opportunity not only to look back but also to take stock of the present and to check out a direction for the future. Why did the General Assembly instruct the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to bring a joint report to the General Assembly in 2017 on what might be appropriate to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration and what factors might make for peace and justice amongst the Israeli and Palestinian people?*

### 1645 – **Discussion Panel:**

Grant Barclay: Iain Cunningham: Val Brown (Christian Aid) and Fiona Burnett (Presbytery World Mission)

*Chaired by the Rev Calum MacDougall*

1730 – Refreshment

1815 – 1915

**Service of Prayer for Peace and Justice in Israel and Palestine.**

THE PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES



## AUTUMN CONFERENCE

2018

# THE MIDDLE EAST

24<sup>th</sup> October

Innerleithen Church

Conference Programme

1430 – 1730

**Service of Prayer for Peace and Justice in Israel and Palestine.**

1815 – 1915

## Guest Speakers

**Rev Grant Barclay** Ministers to Orchardhill Church. Giffnock.

*Formerly Convener of Council of Assembly Grant has a clear-sighted and strong strategic focus allied to an amazing capacity for absorbing and communicating detail with flair, grace, insight and humour. He originally trained and worked as a solicitor.. Grant was instrumental in encouraging staff to get out of the Church Offices and speak to people on the ground.*

**Rev Iain Cunningham** Ministers to Kirkton Church. Carlisle.

*Formerly Convener of the World Mission Council his sensitively chosen photographic images enriched Council's business; his musical gifts enlivened the Council's worship and social gatherings. Iain guided the Council through a re-imagining of its core tasks in its reworked strategy, and shared his considerable theological and practical capacities with the Council.*

**Val Brown** Christian Aid: *Formerly Vice-Convener of World Mission Council and Convener of the Middle East Committee Val guided the work of the Council and has taken a full part in delivering 24<sup>th</sup> of the month events all over Scotland to highlight the situation of our partners and to pray for Israel and Palestine, and the wider Middle East.*

THE PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES



## The Story

Presbyteries are encouraged by the General Assembly to learn more about and to pray for the situation in Israel and Palestine; and to mount a service dedicated to peace in the Middle East on the 24th of a month. Our World Mission Group proposed to Presbytery that we should hold such a service on 24th October as part of our 2018 autumn conference on the topic of The Middle East – so here we are!!

In 2017 the General Assembly 'instructed the World Mission Council, with the cooperation of the Church and Society Council, Council of Assembly and other relevant bodies within the church, to undertake a strategic review of the Church's presence in Israel/Palestine, and to consider what would be the most effective use of the Church's assets in the pursuit of a just peace in Israel/Palestine, and report to the General Assembly of 2019.' Deliverances associated with this strategic review date back to 1992; encouraging pilgrimage, twinning and education/information resources as part of the Church's breadth of support for the presence of the Christian Community in Israel and in Palestine.

The Middle East is seldom out of the news with Christians victim of persecution and the target of terror attacks. They live and work alongside people of other faiths, taking their place as part of the fabric of the Middle East.

Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, West Bank, Egypt, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine – place names with which we are all familiar, less so the wonderful work of Christian churches to bring hope and healing. But what can we do here in the Scottish Borders that might help to protect vulnerable people from extremist influences?



Christians are forced to leave because of the limitations on educational and employment possibilities and military occupation. What was needed, they say, was not fine sermons but practical action. Why do Christians in the Middle East want our support and not our pity? Why is the Church of Scotland so involved with the Middle East? Dr Becheleany, Acting Director of the Middle East Council of Churches stresses 'What Middle East Christians need is help to build citizenship, equality, education and to reconstruct towns and villages'.

The Church of Scotland has taken a strong stance for justice over recent decades. The World Mission Council oversees five functioning institutions in Israel, and owns property in Safed. Today we focus on Peace and Justice Issues, the squeeze on the Christian population and the difference between the Jewish community and the Israeli nation. In the autumn of 1917 the British Cabinet gave public support for the creation of a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of those then living there. For others, mainly Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel, the events of the past seventy years brought about impoverishment, challenge and loss. The General Assembly in 2016 sought a joint report on what might be appropriate to mark the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and in 2017 commended the Kairos Palestine Document urging the publication of resources to encourage all church members to engage with the document. So why should the Church of Scotland seek to remain in the land of Christ's birth and take such an interest in the affairs of the Middle East?



THE PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES

THE PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES