

5 OCTOBER 2021. On Tuesday the fifth day of October 2021, the Presbytery met by Zoom at 7 pm for Ordinary Business. The meeting began with a reading, Ruth 1:1-9 and 16-17, given by Mr Graeme Donald, following which the Moderator, Rev. Victoria Linford, gave some thoughts on the famous painting by Jean-François Millet, "Harvesters Resting", featuring Ruth and Boaz, which she screen-shared. She reflected on how Jesus was descended from Ruth through King David, how this season of harvest thanksgiving makes us realise that God is always at work, and that at this time of great change we also need to rest. She then constituted the meeting in prayer.

**SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES:** There were present 10 ministers and 25 elders whose names were recorded by the Clerk in the attendance book. The names of corresponding members in attendance were also noted, as were apologies. The Moderator reported the sad news of the death of Col. Andrew Campbell, who has done so much for Presbytery over the years. Formal tribute to Andrew will be paid at a future meeting of Presbytery.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2021 (pp. 128-129) were submitted and approved as circulated.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:** The Order of Business was approved as circulated, including one additional item, a short report from the Property and Stewardship Committee.

**BUSINESS COMMITTEE:** Prof. Murray Campbell, Convener, presented the Report of the Business Committee, which Presbytery received.

1. Church Courts Act Overture. Presbytery appointed an Order of the Day at 8 pm during the meeting of Presbytery on Tuesday 2 November 2021 to consider the Overture, after which a postal ballot will be held.

2. Solemnisation of Same-Sex Marriage Overture. Presbytery appointed an Order of the Day at 8.30 pm during the meeting of Presbytery on Tuesday 2 November 2021 to consider the Overture, after which a postal ballot will be held. Presbytery noted that guidance notes on the Overtures and the ballot process had been prepared by the Clerk and were included with the Presbytery papers. The Moderator reported that she has received some comments on the suggested three-minute limit on speakers, and reminded Presbyters that if they indicated in advance of the meeting that they wished to speak, this would help in planning how much time would be available for discussion.

3. Request from Galashiels Church of Scotland. Presbytery noted that the Clerk received a request from Galashiels Church of Scotland to extend beyond December 2021 the permission granted to call a minister. The Business Committee considered this request and recommended that an extension be granted to allow Galashiels Church of Scotland more time to find a new minister following the union of the three Galashiels Churches in May 2021. The Business Committee acknowledged that its 2019 Presbytery Plan, which provided for the union of the three churches in Galashiels and the appointment of a minister to the united charge, has lapsed since the decisions of the General Assembly of 2021. It acknowledged that Presbytery needs to agree a new Presbytery Mission Plan by the end of 2022 and that, in addition to the adjustments already set out in the 2019 Plan, a further reduction of one full-time ministry post is required in the new Mission Plan. Buildings will also have to be considered in the Mission Plan. However, given that significant adjustment has already taken place in Galashiels, with the three previous churches having taken the bold step of uniting to form one Galashiels Church, there is no realistic possibility of any further adjustment taking place in that part of the Presbytery in order to agree the new Mission Plan. In coming to the decision to unite the three former Galashiels congregations, mission was very much the driving factor, with the desire to serve the town of Galashiels as one Church of Scotland congregation being more important than any desire to remain as separate congregations. The united congregation still has three church buildings, but it has been proactive in recognising that not all three places of worship can remain open. Outside advisers have been engaged and there is a plan for the buildings being actively developed, which includes the possible disposal of one building. It is hoped that a new minister will be appointed soon to the new charge and can take his or her part in determining the exact pattern of worship and of the use of buildings in the new charge. Presbytery approved an extension of the permission granted to Galashiels Church of Scotland to call a minister beyond December 2021 and agreed to make an application to the Faith Nurture Forum for such extension to be granted as an exceptional permission as referred to in section 31 of the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum to the General Assembly of 2021. Presbytery remitted to Mr David Brackenridge and the Rev. Dr David Donaldson the responsibility for making such an application to the Faith Nurture Forum with the information required in terms of the Permission to Call Protocol.

**VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE:** Rev. Margaret Steele, Convener, presented the report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee. Presbytery received the report and noted the decision of the Committee to sustain the call to Rev Dr Tony Foley, who is the choice of the majority of people (134 voting for with 11 voting against). Presbytery also noted the decision of the Committee to allow the Rev. Dr Foley to use his own house until the Manse is ready to be occupied. Presbytery further noted the date for the Service of Induction on Monday 25 October 2021 at 7 pm in West Linton: St Andrews Church, with Presbytery meeting at 6.45 pm on that day. The Moderator will conduct the service with Rev. Fraser Edwards preaching. The Convener announced requirements relating to the Meeting of Presbytery and Service of Induction. Members of Presbytery who intend to be present are asked to confirm this by email by Friday 22nd October with contact phone number. Social distancing requirements have been removed in the Church, but face masks will need to be worn during the service. Prof. Campbell reported that plans to video the Service for the benefit of those unable to attend it in person were being prepared, and Presbytery agreed to this.

**PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN COMMITTEE:** Mr Graeme Donald, Convener, said he was delighted to be invited to convene the Committee, but somewhat daunted by the task in hand. He was pleased to report that the Committee now had six enthusiastic and experienced members: from the Governance Committee, Mr Robert Turnbull and Miss Linda White, from Property and Stewardship, Mrs Isobel Hunter and Mr Keith Simpson and from Mission and Service, Mr Tom Burnham and Mrs Rosalind Pyatt. He thanked the Conveners of those Committees for persuading such experienced Presbyters to serve such a challenging purpose. He stated that the Church of Scotland's Presbytery Mission Plan Act requires mission to be more explicit than was the case in previous Presbytery planning, and outlined the ways in which the Committee would be guided. He concluded by inviting all members of Presbytery to speak to members of the Mission Plan Committee and emailing him with thoughts on how we should define and address mission. The Moderator thanked Mr Donald for his report, which was received by Presbytery.

**PROPERTY AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:** Mrs Isobel Hunter, Convener, reported on an issue that had recently arisen. Galashiels Baptist Church has recently appointed a new minister starting on 23rd October. He had hoped to purchase a house locally, but the sale has fallen through. The Interim Moderator of the Baptist Church had enquired about the possibility of letting the now empty Trinity Manse to the new Baptist minister and family on a short lease. It was decided to keep that Manse empty in case there was a problem with the availability of Old Parish and St Paul's Manse, which has been designated the Manse of Galashiels Church of Scotland, but is currently being let. However, the tenants there have been given notice to leave by the start of December, and it is felt that such a short term let of the Trinity Manse should carry little risk and could engender good will with another denomination, as well as raising much-needed funds. The General Trustees and a local letting agent will be involved in ensuring that a suitable short-term lease will be drawn up. However, before this can happen the General Trustees need to know that Presbytery and the Galashiels Church of Scotland Kirk Session agree with this plan. Following some discussion which weighed up the possible risks and benefits of such an arrangement, Presbytery agreed that the General Trustees and the Kirk Session of the Galashiels Church of Scotland, with advice from a local letting agency, should investigate, and if deemed suitable, proceed with the proposed letting of the Trinity Manse.

**COMMITTEE ON RE-OPENING OF CHURCH BUILDINGS:** Mr Keith Simpson, Convener, reported that Lyne had now re-opened, leaving only one Church still closed: Maxton. However, it was anticipated that the Kirk Session of Dryburgh District Churches would apply to re-open Maxton by the end of the year. The Moderator thanked the Convener for the ongoing work of his committee.

**PRESBYTERY REFORM STEERING GROUP:** Prof. Murray Campbell reported that members of the Steering Group have been meeting regularly with representatives of five other Presbyteries: Edinburgh, West Lothian, Duns, Jedburgh and Lothian. Although there had been some pressure to consider one large Presbytery, it has since become apparent that there was a majority view opposing that idea. At a meeting on 26 August, it was clear that majority opinion was in favour of two large Presbyteries: one consisting of Edinburgh and West Lothian and the other a grouping of the Border Presbyteries with Lothian. Representatives of the Border Presbyteries have already met with representatives of Lothian to start scoping things out. The Moderator thanked those Presbyters who had already submitted their thoughts on Presbytery union, with all in favour of the two groupings proposed rather than the one big Presbytery, and invited further comments. Fan Heafield reported a feeling of relief, positivity and excitement about the outcome of the discussions, with which the Moderator agreed.

#### INTIMATIONS:

1. The Presbytery website is currently unavailable: this is because for some unknown reason the ownership of the domain name was not transferred with the other assets in February 2021, and as soon as this is rectified the website will be restored.
2. The Presbytery Yearbook has been updated and was included with these Presbytery papers.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet at 6.45pm on Monday 25 October 2021 prior to the Service of Induction for Rev. Dr Tony Foley at West Linton: St Andrews. Presbytery will next meet by Zoom for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 2 November 2021, of which public intimation was made, and the sederunt was closed with the saying of the Grace.

Moderator

Assistant Clerk

**WEST LINTON 25 OCTOBER 2021.** At West Linton: St Andrew's Parish Church on Monday the twenty-fifth day of October 2021, the Presbytery met *in hunc effectum* at 6.45 pm and was constituted in prayer by the Moderator, Rev. V Linford.

**SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES:** There were present 5 ministers and 6 elders whose names are recorded in the attendance book. Apologies are also recorded in the book.

**SERVICE OF INDUCTION:** Presbytery was reminded that, at its meeting on 5 October 2021, Presbytery had resolved to meet on Monday 25 October 2021 for the induction of Rev. Dr Tony Foley to the vacant charge of West Tweeddale.

The Moderator handed the Call to Dr Foley. The Interim Moderator of the charge confirmed that the prescribed edicts had been duly circulated. No one having appeared to object to the life or doctrine of Dr Foley, Presbytery proceeded to the Church where the Moderator conducted worship and Rev. Fraser Edwards preached an appropriate sermon. A brief narrative of the proceedings in the vacancy was then read by the Assistant Clerk. The Moderator put to Dr Foley the prescribed questions, which he satisfactorily answered, and he signed the Formula. The Moderator by prayer inducted Dr Foley to the pastoral charge of West Tweeddale and gave him the right hand of fellowship as did other members of Presbytery present, and representatives from the Kirk Sessions within the charge. Suitable charges were then addressed to Dr Foley and the congregations. Presbytery, continuing its meeting, resolved to add the name of Dr Foley to the Roll of Presbytery and the Assistant Clerk was instructed to intimate his induction to the Faith Nurture Forum. Presbytery expressed its thanks to all who took part in the service, and the *sederunt* was closed with prayer.

Moderator

Assistant Clerk