

PRESBTERY of MELROSE and PEEBLES  
Report on MISSION and SERVICE – September 2019.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Throughout the past 18 months reports from the Mission and Service Committee focussed on our Malawi partnership and parish twinning; the need for active mission and discipleship work across Presbytery and the need for learning opportunities. Mission and learning are partly in response to the 2019 report to the General Assembly on Radical Change. (Flexible education, training and support programme for every person in the church including material on leadership and – the provision of support at a regional/local level including buildings expertise, safeguarding, financial accounting, staff employment, developing effective partnerships).
- 1.2 In the current absence of settled, revised committee membership the Mission and Service Committee Convener drafted this report focussing on the proposed three year Learning Programme which, in itself, is an example of active mission and discipleship work.

**2. Current Aspects of Learning**

- 2.1 Assessors: In March 2018 Presbytery noted the need for Worship Leader Assessors. Five volunteers were appointed as Assessors in 2018 with only a general briefing session to guide their efforts. Their experiences were discussed in March/April 2019 by Ministers in Charges, course participants and assessors. Professor Rennie McElroy has offered to lead a one day learning opportunity/conversation for aspiring Assessors who may be required to assess people and practices including and in addition to those associated with the Worship Leaders' Course. This conversation would lead into principles and practicalities of assessment; the role of assessment in advising the course participant; consistency and how well the participant achieved what s/he set out to do. Once again the need for assessors is recorded. Please intimate interest in this role from within congregations to the Committee Convener.
- 2.2 Consideration should be given to such a learning opportunity for those likely to be called as part of a Local Review Group.
- 2.3 In November 2018 Presbytery agreed to formally recognise Authorised Worship Leaders in accordance with the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles Scheme for the Selection, Training and Authorisation of Worship Leaders, by presenting those who completed the 2018 course successfully with a certificate at the December meeting of Presbytery and, at that time, recording appreciation of the work of the assessors. Arising from informal discussion in preparation for the second course for Worship Leaders suggestion has been made that such presentations should take place only within churches. Presbytery is asked to make a decision on the presentation of certificates of attendance and successful course completion across all learning opportunities.
- 2.4 Worship Leaders' Course: In February 2019 Presbytery agreed to offer a second course for worship leaders before the summer break. However, there was insufficient interest at that time such that in March 2019 the course was postponed until this autumn. Twelve participants have now begun the course. As an experiment in self – sufficiency four ministers and seven participants from the first course are working alongside the Rev Linda Walker, who is tutoring the course, with a view to offering a similar course in 2020 facilitated by our own tutors.
- 2.5 In February 2019 Presbytery invited anyone with an interest in assisting the Worship Leader course tutor this year to co - tutor our Worship Leaders' course in 2020/21 or become an Assessor of Worship Leaders, or interest in the planning and delivery of training programmes. There was no positive response. This request was repeated in May 2019.
- 2.6 Away Days: The Mission and Service Committee provides advance notice of the dates for our two annual 'Away Days' and seeks approval from Presbytery for the themes and programmes. 'The God Question' is the theme already agreed (March 2019) for our October 2019 conference. The main speaker will be the Rev George Lind, Grasping the Nettle's Liaison Officer. It is recommended to Presbytery that this conference be held in Innerleithen Church from 3pm – 6pm on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. It is further recommended that one or two representatives from each of the Borders Secondary Schools be invited to join with us on that occasion given the donation of 'The God Question' resources to all secondary schools by this Presbytery. Applications to attend to be with the Convener by the October meeting of Presbytery.  
In March 2019 Presbytery urged School Chaplains and Ministers to indicate to the Mission and Service Convener where schools are making use of 'The God Question' resource and thoughts on a celebratory event for young people associated with the church. There was no response at that time but may be relevant during the October conference.
- 2.7 It has become practice for our June 'Away Day' to be held on the first Saturday in June. This would be 6<sup>th</sup> June in 2020. It is recommended to Presbytery that the theme on this occasion should be 'The Characteristics of Creating and Deepening Discipleship' and to include 'The Role of the Elder.' The programme facilitated by Mr Ron Clarke of the Mission and Discipleship Council.

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- 2.8 It is further recommended that for October 2020 the theme might be associated with implementation of the Presbytery Plan together with a programme of 1.5 hour discussion options on themes identified by Kirk Sessions, including the role and restructuring of Presbyteries and the national church and how members can become involved with the regional and national church,
- 2.9 In November 2018, as remitted by the General Assembly, Presbytery supported raising awareness of the national church structure across Kirk Sessions during 2019 with a view to including support for nomination to national councils and committees as part of an education and training programme.
- 2.10 Given the ongoing changes across most of the courts and committees of the church throughout 2019 and 2020 perhaps this Deliverance could be held over until the latter part of 2020.
- 2.11 Study Leave: Ministers are encouraged to seek Study Leave. Funds are available for ministers but, in time, Presbytery might consider extending available funds and eligibility to accommodate learning opportunities for all; for example, attending the University of Edinburgh Worship Leaders course. Continuing education is a really important part of formation. Those who have applied successfully to the fund have found benefit both personally and professionally.
- 2.12 Application: The Rev Victoria Linford has applied for Study Leave support from 20 January to 2 February in order to join a Study Tour to Holy Land (22-29 January) plus time for reflection and reading. A total of £914.50 is requested to cover all costs. Ministerial and Pastoral cover is in place. The funds are available as is, on request, a detailed summary of why Rev Linford has chosen this opportunity. The Committee is minded to support this application.
- 2.13 National Study Leave: The Rev Rosie Frew applied successfully to the national fund for support in her quest to a) experience personally walking one of the traditional pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. b) gain a better understanding of the motivations and experiences of those who choose to walk to Santiago c) help develop support for, and interaction with, those who walk the St Cuthbert Way.
- 2.14 In 2017 the General Assembly affirmed the place of pilgrimage, recognising that it offers a genuine and meaningful spiritual pathway for modern-day Christians. The Rev. Frew plans to walk the 240km Camino Portugues from Porto in Portugal to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, walking every day and staying in the traditional albergues de peregrinos at night, sharing basic facilities and basic pilgrim meals with fellow walkers. The Rev Frew intends to attend the special pilgrim services along the way, culminating in worship at the Cathedral in Santiago, and a chance to see the botafumeiro swinging across the nave dispensing incense.  
While Ministries Council has approved this application for Study Leave and funding, it is for the Rev Frew to appoint an external person as a mentor and for Presbytery to approve the time away from the parish: from 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 until 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019.

### **3. A Three Year Learning and Development Programme**

- 3.1 In November 2018 Presbytery invited the Mission and Service Committee to design a three year education and training programme (2020-2023) for consideration by Presbytery in November 2019, the draft programme to include 'Developing Eldership' and 'LEARN' programmes; planned in tandem with the Presbytery Planning Task Group where appropriate. In March Presbytery noted the need for further thinking on a locally focussed missionary approach and welcomed a co-ordinated radical approach to reviewing and planning any adjustment of congregations within the bounds through Parish Appraisal and the Presbytery Plan.
- 3.2 In November 2018 Presbytery accepted the content of the Outreach/Local Mission section of the report and agreed that this theme within the remit of the Mission and Service Committee should form part of the proposed three year training programme rather than a dedicated piece of work at that time.
- 3.3 In March 2019 Presbytery welcomed progress on the preparation of a three year education and Training Programme and encouraged presbyters to seek out those interested in the planning or delivery of courses and make names known to the Convener. To date there is no positive support.
- 3.4 In June 2019 Presbytery again noted and approved progress in designing a three-year learning (nb not 'training') programme, with mission as a central feature, to meet the expressed needs of churches within the Bounds of Presbytery as previously discussed. (November 2018)
- 3.5 Also in June 2019 Presbytery approved inclusion in the learning programme of a combined mission and discipleship module for study by all elders, tutored locally in charges or church groupings, wherever possible, by the parish minister.

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- 3.6 Involving Others: On request by the Business Committee the Mission and Service Convener set about making contact with several people during the summer months:  
Duns and Jedburgh Presbytery Clerks: Both Clerks indicated interest and asked to be informed of decisions made by Melrose and Peebles Presbytery and the opportunity to attend courses.  
Edinburgh and Lothian Presbyteries: Rev Bill Wishart and Rev Robin Hill are actively involved in the organising and tutoring of courses in Worship and in Pastoral Care. Interest in attending their courses – usually held in Edinburgh St. Martin’s Church - would be welcomed. Copies of the dates, course work and lecture notes have been made available to Melrose and Peebles.  
Professor Rennie McElroy: On raising awareness of Principles and Practices of Assessment.  
Edinburgh University: On access to their new course, created in partnership with the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church, to be launched in January and possible remote links to access the course from Border towns.
- 3.7 Borders College: Senior IT and Business Development Staff: On access to their conference and digital facilities to facilitate remote learning across the Scottish Borders and in accessing national courses streamed to the Borders including the possibility of participative learning. A Project Development Plan to facilitate self-study remote, and ‘elearning’ was discussed as a template for consideration in the future. The College remains open to developing links with Presbytery.
- 3.8 Mr Ron Clark: Mission and Discipleship Council: On available resources including LEARN materials; the tutoring of courses/ learning opportunities identified by Melrose and Peebles Presbytery in the questionnaire completed during the June ‘Away Day’ (Appendix A)
- 3.9 A copy of the proposed outline programme for initial consideration by Presbytery is attached as Appendix A.

**4. Learning and Development Officer:**

- 4.1 In June 2019 Presbytery instructed the Business Committee to make all arrangements for the appointment of a part-time Learning and Development Officer, if possible in partnership with neighbouring Presbyteries. Presbytery instructed the Business Committee to appoint a Learning and Discipleship Reference Group to support the Learning and Development Officer.
- 4.2 Neither Duns nor Jedburgh Presbytery is interested in a shared post at this time nor is Edinburgh or Lothian Presbytery. Lothian already ‘employs’ a Minister to lead their training programme through a financial contribution from Presbytery to his church.
- 4.3 There are perhaps five ways of establishing such a post. a) Through application for funds from the Mission and Ministry (5%); decided by Presbytery; b) Through application in January 2020 to the Church of Scotland ‘Growth Fund’ c) Through the appointment of a very part time voluntary Programme Administrator with a financial contribution to their church or d) through the secondment of a willing officer currently based in ‘121’ and e) appointment of a volunteer.

**5. Financial Arrangements:**

- 5.1 In Sept 2018 and again in Nov 2018 Presbytery encouraged the Mission and Service Committee to seek funds from the Mission and Ministry Fund in support of a Worship Leaders Course 2019, the two annual conferences, Elder/Kirk Session communication and the planning of a three year programme of Elder/Member Training Opportunities. In June 2019 Presbytery instructed the Business Committee to seek the necessary funding to meet the costs of the programme. The Treasurer made arrangements for such costs.
- The Business Committee may now wish to consider more fully the application criteria associated with the growth Fund to ascertain if the Learning Officer and the three year programme could be both funded from that source; seek an alternative funding source or delay the appointment meantime.

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**6. Deliverance:**

- 6.1 Presbytery receives the report
- 6.2 Presbytery approves the application for Study Leave by the Rev Victoria Linford from 20 January to 2 February 2020 in order to join a Study Tour to the Holy Land (22-29 January) plus time for reflection and reading. The full cost is £914.50; the funds are available.
- 6.3 Presbytery approves the absence from her parish: from 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 until 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019: to facilitate the Rev Frew's successful application for National Study Leave.
- 6.4 Presbytery notes the proposed learning opportunities as referred to in Appendix A (Initial outline programme suggestions) and invites Presbyters and Kirk Sessions to offer comment and suggestions on improving the content of the programme by 23 October.
- 6.5 Presbytery urges Ministers, Presbytery Elders and Session Clerks to actively support Creating and Deepening Discipleship learning opportunities (paras 3.4 and 3.5 and Appendix A) with a view to engaging with the initial conversation and a course on the 'Characteristics of Discipleship', that can in turn be utilised in the participant's own church context.
- 6.6 Presbytery urges Ministers, Presbytery Elders and Session Clerks to continue the search for course tutors, organisers and assessors to assist with the delivery of the three year learning programme.
- 6.7 Presbytery considers a) presentation of certificates at a Presbytery meeting or b) presentation of certificates in local church. (nb where award of certificates is appropriate).
- 6.8 Presbytery agrees to hold the October 'Away Day' from 3pm – 6pm on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. It is agreed further that one or two representatives from each of the Borders Secondary Schools be invited to join us on that occasion.
- 6.9 Presbytery notes that applications to attend should be with the Convener by the October meeting of Presbytery.
- 6.10 Presbytery agrees to hold the summer 2020 'Away Day' on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June.
- 6.11 Presbytery encourages the Business Committee to bring to Presbytery in October their recommendation on the funding and the appointment of a Learning and Development Officer (See 4.3 above).

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APPENDIX A

An Outline Programme of Learning Opportunities 2019/2023

This outline programme is in a very, very early draft form. The final version for approval of Presbytery will be presented to the November meeting of Presbytery. Comments and suggestions very much welcomed by the convener by the October 'Away Day' please.

Note: Many learning opportunities will include an initial envisioning session providing opportunity to engage in conversation about the theme and any subsequent course.

**2019**

August – October

1. Worship Leaders:
2. Annual October Conference: The God Question.

November

1. Bereavement Care/Conducting Funerals/Introduction:
2. Assessor Conversation
3. 'Creating and Deepening Discipleship – Introduction: Open to Ministers and an elder from each church.

**2020**

March – May

1. Developing Worship – A conversation
2. Social Media and elearning.
3. Moderating the Kirk Session
4. Safeguarding?
5. Local Review

June

1. The Characteristics of Creating and Deepening Discipleship: "Away Day" 6<sup>th</sup> June? To include 'The Role of the Elder'
2. Pastoral Care
3. Conducting Funerals

September

1. Leadership and Change: Forward Planning
2. In Dec 2018 Presbytery invited Kirk Sessions to consider a Presbytery 'celebration' event for young people around Easter 2019 and to forward ideas to the Mission and Service Convener. This idea was not pursued. 'Developing Ministry with Children and Young People' could contribute to our work with young people and perhaps link with a School Chaplains' Conference.
3. The national Scene – nomination procedures.

**OCTOBER**

1. Follow up on Creating and Deepening Discipleship
2. Administration and the role of the Session Clerk
3. Leading Worship – Christian Festivals/Developing Worship Further.

**2021**

March – April – May

1. Preparing for Leading Worship (a level as introduction to Presbytery's Worship leaders' Course)
2. Property and Fabric
3. Community Links/Mission and Resilient Communities.

**2021 (cont.)/2022/2023** would continue the pattern as above depending on evaluations from course members/conversations and introduce, where appropriate progressive levels of learning.