

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 3rd May 2016 Summary

Queen's Cross Parish Church was again the venue for the Presbytery meeting and the business included the following:

Installation of Moderator for 2016/17

The Rev Ian M Aitken of Stockethill Parish Church was installed as Moderator of Aberdeen Presbytery for 2016/17 in succession to the Rev Duncan Eddie of Holburn West. As is traditional, a version of Scripture of his choosing was presented to the new Moderator by Audrey Skinner on behalf of the Scottish Bible Society Aberdeen Branch.

Tribute

The Rev Kenneth Petrie led tribute to the Rev Walter Gordon Beattie who died in November 2015 aged 83. He often reminisced about his boyhood years spent in Aberdeen and remembered vividly the day when German bombs dropped close by demolishing houses opposite. A graduate of Aberdeen University, Walter's first charge was at Sorbie, Whithorn in 1957. He moved to the West Parish Church in Fraserburgh in 1962 and in 1977 to his final charge Arbroath Abbey Church from where he retired in 1995. Walter was a very caring and conscientious minister. He had a particular concern for those suffering from addictions and set up branches of Alcoholics Anonymous in both Fraserburgh and Arbroath.

Guild Presbyterial Council

Mrs Jane Dargie, Convenor of the Church of Scotland Guild Aberdeen Presbyterial Council, spoke about the six projects supported by the Guild in a three year themed cycle of work which had completed its first year.

The six projects running from 2015-2018 are:

- Street Pastors
- Care for the Family
- Christian Aid
- Feed the Minds
- Mission International
- Prospects

Guild members have achieved record levels of givings of £154,520.20 so far for the projects.

Presbytery received a preview of the Guild tartan to be introduced at the General Assembly.

Annual Congregational Statistics

The statistics for 2015 showed an annual reduction in membership of the Church of Scotland in Aberdeen of 600. The Presbytery Clerk pointed out

that compared with 2014 the fall was less and more funerals had been carried out.

Presbytery Office

It was reported that work to refurbish the Presbytery Office was complete. Mrs Cheryl Marwick-Watt, Presbytery Administrator, was thanked for her forbearance during the time of upheaval. Presbytery was also indebted to James Roy (architect) who had given his time free and to Cults Church who provided space for a temporary office during this project.

Cove New Charge Development (NCD)

Presbytery received a joint report from the Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) and Cove New Charge Commission regarding Cove NCD and noted that:

- The Rev David Swan, minister of Cove NCD, wished to demit from his charge from June 30th 2016
- The Leadership Team at Cove NCD intended to resign on June 30th 2016
- A 'Terminal Review' of Cove had been undertaken by the Ministries Council and that the conclusions of this Review would be passed on to Presbytery in due course
- The Planning and Deployment Committee are exploring options for the future ministry in Cove and hoped to bring proposals to the June meeting of Presbytery.

Refugee Crisis

Presbytery welcomed the arrival of a number of refugee families and individuals from Syria to Aberdeen. Churches across the city were encouraged to support their integration into local communities and Aberdeen Community Partnership was commended for its work in helping the refugees. Early indications showed that the children are settling into schools and adults are learning to adapt to a very different culture and way of life. The various partners involved in the welcome are using their experience from the first wave of refugees to help with the next arrivals due in August or September.

Donations Account

To help with the resettlement of the Syrians, Aberdeen Presbytery has now set up a Donations Account in collaboration with NESCU (North East Scotland Credit Union). Anyone wishing to donate by cheque should make it payable to North East Scotland Credit Union Ltd. and sent to their Head Office, 24 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DR.

Donations can be made by bank transfer or on-line transfer quoting the following Sort Code: 60 - 83 - 01 Account No: 20139906 Our Ref: 10020/1

The name of the person making the payment for on-line transfers should also be included.

City-wide Prayer Gatherings

The monthly city-wide Prayer Gatherings continued to draw together Christians from across the city and from across the denominations to pray for the persecuted church particularly in Syria and Iraq, and to pray for the city of Aberdeen. The next meetings are at The Citadel, Castlegate on 20th May; Dyce Church, Victoria Road on 17th June; Cults Parish Church on 15th July; and City of God, Holburn Street on 19th August. They start at 7.30pm and finish at 9pm.

Malawi Bikeathon Fundraising Event

In November 2015 the Aberdeen Malawi Partnership Committee rolled out this event to raise funds for Malawi. They invited congregations in the Presbytery to take part in an Aberdeen to Malawi Bikeathon covering about 12,000 miles. This effort was taken in support of the Committee's desire to raise money to assist poor rural churches in Blantyre City Presbytery.

Presbytery noted the fantastic result of the Bikeathon and commended all congregations who took part in raising over £15,000.

As part of the fundraising effort, the Committee decided, in the interest of healthy competition, to give a prize in recognition of the congregation whose members tallied the most miles. Midstocket Church, with the highest total of 3,000 miles, was awarded the "Golden Pedal".

Film

Presbytery saw a short trailer of UBALE, a new film telling the story of the 10 year partnership between Aberdeen Presbytery in Scotland and Blantyre City Presbytery in Malawi. The film premiere is at Rubislaw Church Centre on Tuesday 21st June 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Presbytery Also:

- Warmly thanked the Rev Tom Richardson for his many years of excellent service in organising and overseeing the Inspection of Congregational Records
- Appointed Mr Iain Hunter as convener of the Stewardship Committee and the Rev Hutton Steel as convener of the Property Committee from June 1st 2016
- Thanked Mrs June Morrison, Miss Alice Merrilees and Dr Graeme Roberts as outgoing committee conveners for their time and service to Presbytery.
- Agreed to the transfer of the Rev Mary Whittaker, minister to the deaf community, from the Presbytery of Moray to the Presbytery of Aberdeen.