

Virtually, on Tuesday 5 May 2020 the **Presbytery of Lanark** met in virtually due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and was constituted in prayer.

Sederunt: Rev George Shand, Moderator and Rev Bryan Kerr, Clerk along with others as in the Sederunt Book – in all 11 Ministers, 14 Elders, 1 Corresponding Member and 1 visitor.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Revs E Clelland, Minister; A Boag, J Sinclair and D Waters, Elders.

Constitution of Presbytery

The Moderator led the Presbytery in praise and prayer and constituted the meeting.

Welcome to Visitors

The Moderator welcomed visitors attending the Presbytery meeting, especially Mr Neil MacLennan from Sanctus Media who was assisting with the running of the meeting and taking feedback to the Principal Clerk who has constituted a group to look at online meetings.

Approval of the Order of Business

The Order of Business as circulated was approved.

Decisions taken under delegated powers

Presbytery noted that no decisions had been taken under delegated powers

Correspondence

The Clerk informed members that all items of correspondence had been notified via email and that a number of pieces of correspondence had been received and remitted to appropriate Committee Conveners or passed on by e-mail to Ministers, Session Clerks and members of Presbytery.

Good News Stories

Rev Elspeth MacLean, Forth: St Paul's spoke of the positive impact the Zoom Worship has had on the congregation.

The Clerk thanked all ministers for the work they had undertaken to ensure services of worship and community work was still ongoing during the Covid Lockdown.

The Moderator expressed the thanks of Presbytery to the Clerk for the coordination work and support he has given throughout the lockdown.

Group Discussion

The Presbytery split into breakout rooms and discussed the following questions:

- I. Thinking about the church, your congregation, or more generally ...
 - a. What's worst about this for you at the moment?
 - b. Has anything surprised you?
 - c. What matters most to you right now?
 - d. What are some of things you are hoping for?
 - e. What is getting you through?
 - f. What are you most anxious about?

Feedback was offered which include:

- Don't lose the important of physical contact and context.
- Concerns over economic issues and domestic violence levels in communities

- Concern that children are now living in an adult world with resulting loss of friendships.
- People are missing worship – a big hole in people
- A hope that churches do not automatically return to the way things were
- Difference between contact and presence – we can be present with people but still distant
- Worries about people's anxiety over safety when moving back into churches
- Difficulty of funerals
- Surprise over the kindness of people when explaining things are not the same in churches

Report of the Presbytery Support Committee

The Presbytery called for the Report of the Presbytery Support Committee which was given in by Mr. Scott Paget, Convener.

It was moved, seconded -

The Presbytery:

1. Receive the report.
2. Commend the ministers, elders and members of the congregations within Presbytery for their leadership, creativity and determination to provide worship, care and practical support to the communities of Clydesdale during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
3. Homologate the decision taken on 23rd March 2020 that, with immediate effect, no church building in Lanark Presbytery are should be open for individual prayer until further notice and until this decision is revoked by Presbytery.
4. Grant powers to the Clerk, Depute Clerk, Moderator and Presbytery Support Convener to interpret advice from the government and church offices in relation to the closure and re-opening of church buildings and issue decisions on when churches in Presbytery may reopen, in line with the decision of Presbytery of 23rd March 2020.
5. Remind all congregations that should continue to remit Ministry and Mission contributions to the church offices but if they find themselves in financial difficulty during the COVID-19 closure and beyond, to speak to the Presbytery Clerk in the first instance.
6. Note that the 'Student Sunday' collection is postponed until a suitable time in the calendar can be found following a return to congregational worship in churches.
7. Note that congregational accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 should be in the hands of the Clerk and sent to the Church Offices in Edinburgh as soon as it is practically possible.
8. Agree that the attestation of congregational records will take place at a date to be determined when it is safe to do so, and encourage clerks and office bearers to have records collated in order that they can be brought for attestation at short notice.
9. Note that the General Assembly of 2019 has been cancelled and agree to the rota for 2020 being moved to 2021 to allow charges to be represented.
10. Note that the HIV/Aids Walk at New Lanark for May 2020 was postponed and a revised date for an event in the future will be arranged in due course when current restrictions are lifted.
11. Note that the Fischy Music event for May 2020 has been postponed and a date for the event will be circulated when it has been able to be determined.
12. Remind congregations of the deadline of 14 August 2020 for applications for the Ministry and Mission Variance Allowance to be submitted to the Presbytery Support Committee.
13. Note that the Clerk will be sending Elder Commission Forms to Session Clerks in the coming days to enable the appointment of a Presbytery Elder for the 2020/2021 Session and that all Kirk Sessions will be expected to meet in some form to appoint.
14. In respect of Lesmahagow: Abbeygreen
 - a. Note that Rev David Carmichael demitted the charge and his status as a Minister of the Church of Scotland on 26th March 2020.
 - b. Note that, without exception, all communicant members of Lesmahagow: Abbeygreen resigned their membership of the Church of Scotland as of 26th March 2020.
 - c. Note that members who were on the Supplementary Roll will be moved to the Supplementary Roll of Coalburn and Lesmahagow and that contact will be made, by letter,

- inviting individuals to either re-establish contact with the Parish Church or have their membership removed.
- d. Note that the buildings were sold to the new congregation for the sum of £335,000.
 - e. Note that the car used by the minister was sold to the minister for the sum of £6,000.
 - f. Agree that the funds held by Abbeygreen pertaining to groups, The Ark Parent and Toddler (£866), Midweek Fellowship (£92), Youth Fellowship (£14) and Youth Club (£2) would be retained by said groups at the levels in the account on 31 March 2020 as declared in parenthesis.
 - g. Note that with all bills being settled a sum of £2516.06 will likely be transferred to Coalburn and Lesmahagow.
 - h. Note that the new congregation have become a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland.
 - i. Thank the Assessor Elders appointed to Lesmahagow: Abbeygreen for their graciousness and willingness to serve, and discharge them as at 26th March 2020.
15. In respect of the union between Coalburn and Lesmahagow: Old and Lesmahagow: Abbeygreen
- a. Note that the union took place on 27th March 2020 and that the Law Department have informed OSCR of the change.
 - b. Note that Mr Alan Grant was appointed as Interim Moderator in the charge as of 27th March 2020.
 - c. Declare that the Vacancy Procedure and Advisory Committees previously constituted in respect of Coalburn and Lesmahagow: Old become the Vacancy Procedure Committee and Advisory Committee in united vacancy.

It was moved, seconded and agreed to insert a new section 6 “Grant permission for Rev Paul Grant to undertake part time chaplaincy duties at the NHS Louisa Jordan in Glasgow as part of the Covid-19 response and assure Mr Grant and the congregation of Law of the prayers of Presbytery in this vital work.

The deliverance as amended was agreed.

Intimations

The Clerk reminded members of the live Installation of the Moderator of the General Assembly to take place on Saturday 16 May at 11am and Heart and Soul due to take place on Sunday 17 May at 2pm

Adjournment:

The Presbytery adjourned to meet for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 7 pm in Greyfriars Parish Church, Lanark (or online should that be the official advice).

Closure

The Moderator closed the meeting by offering a prayer of blessing.

Moderator

Clerk