

West Kirk of Calder Annual Stated Meeting

Sunday 8th March 2020

Minutes

The Congregation of the West Kirk of Calder met in the Church at close of worship on Sunday 8th March 2020, with the Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald, Minister, in the Chair. The Chairman thanked all of those who had stayed to participate in the Annual Stated Meeting.

1. The meeting was constituted with prayer by the minister.
2. The minutes of the 2019 Annual Stated Meeting were approved without further revision.
3. **Minister's Report for 2019, Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald**

For me 2019 was another amazing year for our congregation.

We welcomed new people into our congregation last year, and that makes me so excited about the future of our lovely church. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to well-loved members of our congregation too, some of whom have been members here for a long time and their presence and contributions are sadly missed by all.

I hope that being part of this congregation and being supported by their brothers and sisters in faith has made this difficult journey a little easier for all their families.

A few highlights from the past year were:

- Our fabulous Holiday Club, where around 80 kids and almost 40 volunteers had an amazing week in our very own Space Station at Polbeth Harwood Church.
- Our hugely successful Garden Fete in September, where the whole community enjoyed the hospitality we have to share here at our church.
- And the start of Teen Time, an opportunity for the teenagers in our congregation to talk about their faith and the Bible in a contemporary way, under leadership of our Ordained Local Minister.

I am truly thankful that the West Kirk and Polbeth Harwood work so well together. At the moment, as part of the Church of Scotland's "radical action plan", our Presbytery is looking into ways in which congregations can work in partnership. We have been doing this for a long time and I feel proud to say that we are setting an example of how to join hands and hearts when it comes to doing God's work in our communities.

A week in my life consists of doing pastoral visits in hospital and at people's homes, chaplaincy at Parkhead Primary, Bellsquarry Primary and West Calder High School, building links with our community, leading Church-without-walls services, Bible Blethers, and leading or attending all kinds of meetings to make sure that we are the best church we can be. I'm also the chaplain for Jak's Den, our local charity that supports children with cancer and their families.

During 2019 I conducted 2 weddings at the West Kirk, I had 1 baptism at the West Kirk and 4 at Polbeth Harwood, and I conducted 14 funerals at the West Kirk and 13 at Polbeth Harwood.

I attended monthly Presbytery meetings, I serve on Presbytery's Church and Society Committee and I'm a member of the Religious Observance Steering Group for West Lothian. I am grateful that our church is at the heart of our community, and I would like to thank all of you - the members and friends of our congregation - for all your support and commitment.

I want to give a huge shout-out to our ordained local minister, Rev Alison Quilter, who is making a tremendous difference in our church, as well as to Rev Suzanne Dunleavy, who is supporting me and our congregation in so many ways.

A special word of thanks to the members of the Board and Session, the Session Clerk (Stewart MacRae), Clerk to the Board (Alison McNaught), Treasurer (Karen Elliot), Property Convenor (Alistair Farquhar), Sunday Club Leader (Lorna Graham) and Admin Secretary (Liz Dyer) for all the time they give to make this Church the amazing place it is.

May God bless our Church in 2020, and forever.

There were no questions from the congregation

4. Session Clerk's report for 2019, Mr Stewart Macrae

2019 was another busy year in the life of our church and I just want to mention a few events that were different from previous years. In the early part of the year we had to manage without Nanda for a few weeks as she recovered from surgery and we were grateful for the support we got from Alison and Suzanne.

Liz Dyer retired as editor of The Link and our thanks go to her for carrying out this task over the years. It was great that Jennifer Stewart volunteered to take on the role and we can't thank her enough for doing this.

As part of our Stewardship Campaign on Talents it was good to see members of the congregation carrying out various duties on our Have a Go Sunday. In September we were fortunate to have great weather for our Garden Fete which was well supported by the congregation and the local community.

As well as the good times there were also the sad times and we were saddened with the death of some of our regular members, Sam Craig and George Stott in the early part of the year and Andrew Miller towards the end of the year.

As far as statistics go, the number of members on our Roll stands at 223 a drop of 14 compared to the previous year. This loss in membership does not apply to the West Kirk alone and the loss in membership for the Church of Scotland as a whole has meant that changes would have to take place. Changes have already taken place centrally with the merger of 4 church councils into 2 and the number of Presbyteries are to be reduced in number from 43 to around 10.

Last year elders attended conferences in Linlithgow and Edinburgh where discussions were held on the topic of having "well equipped spaces in the right places" and this year Presbytery is undertaking a review of all church buildings. We are being visited on Monday and we should hear the results of this review later this year.

I would like to thank Nanda, Alison and everyone else who work so hard for the church.

There were no questions from the congregation

5. Clerk to the Congregational Board's Report 2019, Mrs Alison McNaught

On 1st April 2019 three new members joined the Board: Matthew Dunleavy as a congregational member and Beryl Henderson and Evelyn Paterson as Session members.

We also appointed a new Hall Bookings coordinator in the shape of Stewart Munro. I would like to thank them all for giving up a little of their time to Board activities.

Also on the 1st of April West Lothian Council ceased to collect waste bins from all Churches in the Presbytery as for the time being we have been classed as Commercial enterprises. In the time since then we have had to arrange the disposal of all our own waste as well as having to ask our user groups to do the same. This has worked reasonably well despite having to remind folks from time to time of their responsibilities in this area. I would simply ask that we all think twice about placing our rubbish in the bins here in the church and hall. If we can we should take it home with us. This particularly applies to used nappies.

After a long delay, which I reported on last year, Presbytery were able to approve our Church Hall replacement project. In early September all trustees of the West Kirk, ie all Session and Board member, met to reaffirm our desire to go ahead with this project. We appointed architects, Bruach Design Consultancy, who in conjunction with Community Links Scotland are in the process of conducting a feasibility study which will make their recommendations known in the coming months. I will say a little more about this after I have finished my report for last year. The Feasibility report will, amongst other things, allow us to make grant applications to various bodies who may be able to assist with the financing of the project.

In November the Board conducted a long overdue review of the charges we make to our user groups. So far as I can tell it is more than 10 years since this was last done. Again I would like to say a little more about this once my report is finished.

The normal routine maintenance of the manse, church and hall continued throughout the year as well as a completed redecoration of the hall both inside and out and the completion of an asbestos survey which has resulted in some remedial work being undertaken in the hall boiler room.

As ever there is much work which goes on unseen by members of the congregation so on your behalf I would like to thank our finance and property team for their continuing devotion to duty.

There were no questions from the Congregation.

6. Treasurer's Report 2019, Mrs Karen Elliot

(In the absence of the Treasurer the report was presented by the Clerk to the Congregational Board)

I'm delighted to report that the West Kirk of Calder remains in a healthy financial state. The freewill offerings increased by 0.5% in 2019 (£37,981) compared with 2018 (£37,786). Gift aid recoverable from HMRC was down, but this is a timing matter as a claim is yet to be submitted for the period from April to December. We're training someone new to manage this ongoing, and the claim will be submitted early-2020 – don't worry, we won't lose out on any monies due.

The largest single payment was the Ministries and Mission Contribution, up £1,590 on 2018, at £37,068. Fabric maintenance, in respect of the Church, Hall and Manse, continues to be a large expense, with costs being £12,908 (which included heating and lighting at a cost of £2,947, Hall redecoration at a cost of £3,768, Church roof works at £386, Church boiler room works at £720 and an asbestos survey at £1,140). Unrestricted income (General & Fabric

Funds) increased slightly from £73,431 in 2018 to £73,607 in 2019. Unrestricted expenditure (General & Fabric Funds) decreased from £108,236 in 2018 to £68,119 in 2019. Investments exist in the Church of Scotland Investors Trust Growth Fund, in the Church of Scotland Consolidated Fabric Fund which generates income for the Revenue Account from which money can be drawn for any fabric related expenditure incurred and in the Church of Scotland Deposit Fund.

A total of £2,819 (including from the Sunday Club and the Guild) was remitted to nominated other Charities during 2019, including, but not limited to, the Christian Aid, Crossreach, Poppyscotland, DEC Mozambique Flood Disaster Appeal, Carers of West Lothian, The Larder, and South African Care Home). Generally, donations are received via retiring collections and envelopes from the Congregation as well as from disbursements approved by the Kirk Session.

It is the trustees' policy to hold reserves at least at a level to meet the reasonable foreseeable financial needs of the parish. This is in conjunction with the underlying expectation that payments will be managed at a level which will broadly equal receipts. To meet unforeseen circumstances, the aim is that unrestricted funds at the end of a financial year should be at a level which could meet a minimum of three (3) months' normal expenditure, and that funds restricted to fabric expenditure should be sufficient to meet an emergency repair.

I would like to thank the Congregational Board, Kirk Session and Members for their continued support, and also the Independent Examiner, Jim Spowart.

There were no questions from the Congregation.

7. Election of Congregational Board Members

This year the annual rotation of non-session Board members indicates that Alistair Farquhar and Margaret Greenhorn are due to either step down or stand again for re-election. Both have indicated that they are willing to stand again. As there were no further nominations Alistair Farquhar and Margaret Greenhorn were duly re-elected to serve for a further period of three years.

8. Close

There being no further business the meeting closed with the saying of the Grace together.

Chairman: **Clerk:**

Date: