

## **West Kirk of Calder Annual Stated Meeting**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### **Minutes**

The Congregation of the West Kirk of Calder met in the Church at close of worship on Sunday 19th March 2017, 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 2016 Annual Stated Meeting were approved without further revision.

#### **3. Minister's Report for 2016, Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald**

I would like to make use of this opportunity to thank God for calling me to be the minister of the West Kirk of Calder. 2016 was a busy and exciting year for our congregation. We welcomed 6 new members & 8 Adherents. Sadly we had to say goodbye to some well-loved members of our congregation as well. Let's just take a few moments to remember them.

As the minister, I do my utmost to represent the church in the community and to fulfil all my duties to the best of my abilities. I lead worship on Sundays, and have conducted funerals (22), weddings (4) and baptisms (5) throughout the year. I also lead "church without walls" services each month and undertake chaplaincy activities at West Calder High School, Parkhead Primary, Bellsquarry Primary and Polbeth Nursery. I am closely involved with the children and young people in the congregation including at the family fun day and Sunday Club.

I moderate Session and Board meetings, attend Presbytery meetings, serve on the Church and Society Committee and the Religious Observance Steering Group. Undertaking home and hospital visits takes up much of my week.

I am keen to see the installation of our new AV System which will make our worship more vibrant and inclusive.

We represent God here in our village – it's not me alone, it's all of us together! I would like to thank all of you the members of the congregation, as well as the Board and Session, for all your support and commitment. A special word of thanks goes to the Session Clerk, Stewart; Clerk to the Board, Alison; our Treasurer, Karen; Property Convenor, Alistair; Sunday Club Leader, Lorna and her team; and Secretary, Liz, for all the time they put in to make this Church the amazing place it is.

May God bless our Church. To Him be the glory for ever.

*There were no questions from the congregation*

#### **4. Session Clerk's report for 2016, Mr Stewart Macrae**

2016 was a particularly busy year in the life of our church. Copies of the reports from the various organisations and committees can be found in the annual accounts.

In the early part of the year our Stewardship Campaign was focussed on Talents and the Board and Kirk Session met with Polbeth Harwood's Board and Session for a Team Building exercise. Later in the year our Stewardship theme switched to "money" with a series of articles being printed in The Link and that Campaign ended last month when we had the exhibition and breakfast in the church hall.

It's easy to say this in a couple of lines but an awful lot of work went into the above.

The Kirk Session also had a special meeting in May to look at “growth” and a number of ideas were put forward and these are being put into practice. Invite members to District tea or coffee events with their elder and minister - This has started. Produce an information pack on church activities – this has been done. Hold a “why” service which will be planned and led by the children - held June 2016.

Some of the ideas concern our involvement in the community

- We wanted to hold more concerts in the church .... One held on Friday..... next 12<sup>th</sup> May
- Garden Fete planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> September

Subsequent involvement with the Community Development Trust

- We took part in the Christmas Fayre in the Square and we intend to do the same at the Easter one which will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> April
- Film show to be held this Thursday and hopefully more will follow

We also took part in the Simply Church event at Linlithgow which was organised by Presbytery and we are taking part in the Remembrance Services at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

Another time-consuming event was the Local Church review which took place towards the end of the year with a number of meetings with office bearers and a lot of reports to be completed and the visiting team’s report was presented to Presbytery at the beginning of this month.

Our church membership has been declining over the years as you are probably aware and at the end of 2016 it stood at 245. It is however encouraging to note that we have had some new members and there is a steady number of baptisms and weddings which shows that our church still has a role to fulfil in the community.

I would like to thank Nanda for all the time she has given to the church and the wider community. My thanks again go to all those elders and members of the congregation who continue to support the church in so many different ways.

Finally I just want to record our appreciation of the work of two of our members who are no longer with us. Jim Allan former elder and Session Clerk and Bill Russell former elder and Pastoral Care Convener. They are sadly missed.

*There were no questions from the congregation*

## **5. Clerk to the Congregational Board’s Report 2016, Mrs Alison McNaught**

The year began with the project to provide cushions on all downstairs pews. This was completed at a total cost of around £4,700 which was defrayed to some extent by donations from individual members of the congregation.

The Annual Stated Meeting for the year 2015 was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016 after morning worship. New Board members from 1st April 2016 were Alison Baxter and Michael Kirk replacing Jim Allan who had resigned due to ill health at the end of 2015 and Aileen Hull who moved away to Aviemore with her family. Sadly, by the time of last year’s ASM Jim Allan had died. Both Bill Arnott and Morag Stott were re-appointed for a period of three years.

During the year the hall letting system was revamped and all users signed new letting agreements based on the standard Church of Scotland template. The new on line calendar

has made the administration of this aspect of the church hall bookings much more transparent. Thanks go to Lorna Graham for undertaking this.

During the summer our local crime prevention officer conducted a review of the church and hall. Following her recommendations, we have installed a more secure lock on the side door and, where practicable, additional bolts are being installed to improve the security of the other church doors. Other suggested measures will be considered in due course.

Despite the fact that our minister does not live in the manse we continue to have to maintain it to an appropriate standard. During the year work was carried out on the garage walls along with other more routine maintenance and we are currently seeking quotes to upgrade both the bathroom and the shower room later this year.

In the church itself the only major activity was in and above the toilet where water had caused significant damage and resulted in around £5,300 being spent to repair the leaking roof and window.

Both sub groups of the Board, one looking at Audio Visual provision in the church and the other at the feasibility of a new church hall, have continued their work throughout the year and very soon we hope to see the first of the fruits of their labours.

In addition to these more significant matters there have been the usual minor repairs and activities resulting in another busy year for the Congregational Board and in particular the Property Convenor, Alistair Farquhar, whose tireless efforts are much appreciated. Thanks must also go to all the other Board members whose have worked in the background to ensure that we continue to have a beautiful church, functioning hall and habitable manse.

*There were no questions from the Congregation.*

## **6. Treasurer's Report 2016, Mrs Karen Elliot**

I think the most important thing you want to hear is that we're still solvent! From a financial point-of-view, 2016 was a fairly busy year, and I would like to highlight some points (copies of the full Annual Accounts & Report 2016 are available, if required):

Our M&M Contribution remains our highest expense. For 2016, our monthly M&M Contribution was: £34,945 (£3,494.50 per month over 10 months). An additional payment, of £3,494.50, was made in December, and 121 George Street reimbursed this amount to us in January 2017.

Our monthly M&M Contribution for 2017 is down slightly at £34,603 (£3,460.30 per month over 10 months).

Freewill offerings decreased by 3.9% in 2016 compared with 2015, from £34,276 to £33,003.

Most Members pay by Standing Order and this is appreciated. The FWO envelopes cost just over £200 last year. Bank Mandate Forms are available in the vestibule.

Under the Gift Aid and Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme we can re-claim relevant tax paid from HMRC, up to the maximum parameters per annum.

GA/GASDS claims looked down in 2016 from 2015, £6,333 compared with £8,911, however, this was largely due to a claim yet to be submitted for the last quarter of the year.

A submission, covering the last quarter of 2016 was submitted in January, and approximately £2.2k was received from HMRC in February.

Claims are submitted periodically – only where we have a valid GA Declaration in place – these must be renewed every few years. Therefore, if you've not returned/completed a GA

Declaration form un the past six (6) months, and you are a UK tax payer, we will NOT be able to re-claim tax paid on your donations.

GA Declaration Forms are in the vestibule, if required.

Costs in relation to the Church, Hall and Manse remain significant at £13,002 in 2016. This is around half of what our Fabric costs were in 2015, but that's as the Organ maintenance/overhaul in 2015 cost around £12k.

Heating & lighting costs for the Church and Hall were £3,213 in 2016, down slightly on 2015's £3,240 – we must have had a good summer last year ☺!

We donated a fantastic £2,090 to Charities during 2016, including, but not limited to the Church of Scotland Build-A-House Appeal, Christian Aid, Borderline (Homeless Scots in London), and Poppy Scotland.

The Annual Accounts & Report 2016 have been approved by the Congregational Board, Kirk Session and the Independent Examiner. A copy has been submitted to West Lothian Presbytery for review and approval and 2 copies to the Church of Scotland at 121 George Street, Edinburgh. On approval from West Lothian Presbytery, they'll be submitted online to Scottish Charity Regulator, OSCR (this needs to be completed by September).

Thank-you to the Kirk Session and Congregational Board for their support throughout the year and to you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact me direct should you have any questions.

*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, Margaret Greenhorn and Jean Pringle are due to either step down or stand again for re-election. Alistair and Margaret have indicated that they are willing to stand again. Jean is standing down and our thanks go to her for her work as a Board member.

Karen Elliot was nominated by Liz Dyer and Bill Arnott to be a Board member and as there were no further nominations all three were duly elected or re-elected to serve for a period of three years.

## **8. Close**

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

**Chairman:** ..... **Clerk:** .....

**Date:** .....