



A wee update from Stewart McPherson

Since my introductory comments in the various congregational Newsletters, I have continued to meet with different people to hear your stories and identify the next steps, while attending a variety of meetings and worship in the four churches. One change is that I am now taking over from Place for Hope in **Chairing the Strategy Team** in order to provide continuity while releasing Iain McLarty from the work and time he has given to the churches here - *from the initial cluster meetings into the current team with reps from the four congregations*. He and his colleagues (especially Penelope Smirthwaite) step back with our blessing and gratitude for all they have done, while we know they are always there to call on when we think their support might be appropriate. I have also begun to attend the **Working Groups**: Finance, Property, and Transition, in order to offer guidance while it will help inform my work among you. Meanwhile my **national work** as an Interim Minister has also taken me to such exotic destinations as Dundee, Glasgow, and Dalkeith to lead reviews of Interim and Transition Ministries there.



Visioning Day Saturday 12th August
Pathhead Church Hall
9.30am—Coffee 10am—Conference 12.15pm—Lunch

This is open to all who would like to attend from the four churches, as it is important that all voices are heard and your ideas shared.

We will be focusing on our Vision for the future of our new united congregation. *What will be our mission? What might be our priorities? What kind of leadership will we require?* All this will help inform our future as well as what we are looking for in our Ministry Team?

Obviously, it would be helpful to know numbers so that the caterers know how much water to put in the soup.

So, please let your Session Clerk know if you would like to come along.



Team Work

The three joint groups created by the Strategy Team involve a mix of people from the four churches. Currently they are focusing on ...

Finance Team—The financial situation and accounts from each of the congregations have been collated in a draft form and are being explored by the team as to how best they might be blended into one charitable account for the new congregation. It is now focusing on a draft budget and expenditure.

Property Team—All the properties are being assessed including the appropriateness of the current available manses (*Abbotshall & Bennoch*). It will be important to ensure good energy-efficient housing for any minister of word & sacrament. We still await word from the National Review Panel on the request to review the future of the Linktown church building.

Transition Team—The process is now moving forward to decide on a name for the new united congregation with wide involvement, and will be focused on the period between August and October. Plans are also afoot to hold a joint Autumn social event to enable people to get to know each other better. There will also be an event to explore Worship and how that might be shaped in the future with consideration of its traditional format and also fresh expressions.

Kirk Sessions

The Strategy Team took some time to explore possible shapes of new **Governance** when the Union takes place, in particular discussing the size and structure of the Kirk Session and how that might function. I met with the Session Clerks and we produced a draft paper of a possible model which each Kirk Session will discuss.

This will be supplemented with an Autumn meeting of all the elders to review **the role of eldership**.

Interim Moderators

In discussion it was agreed that the Interim Moderators continue with the **administrative oversight**, while I focus my time and energy on the task in hand of helping the move towards union. I will also seek to lead or participate in worship when possible in each of the churches.

Contact

Please get in touch with Stewart if there is something you would like to have a chat about.

n.b. I will be on holiday 17th—31st July.

07814 901429
smcpherson@churchofscotland.org.uk



Prayer

Please remember and pray for all involved in the planning and shaping of our journey towards union to which many people are giving much time and energy. Pray for gracious, open, considered, and focussed conversations and goal setting, so that Christ's ministry may continue and his glory revealed through us in this corner of his Kingdom.