

Scottish Presbytery APC Report 2016

The year began under the chairmanship of the new Moderator, Rev Donald Macaskill. There has been much to challenge us but also encourage us as we go forward as a Presbytery. As the years go by we are grateful to the Lord for all who have given of their time and talents to the work of the APC. Some over long years of service. At the beginning of the year that was highlighted to us when two of our ministers intimated their intention to retire by the end of May 2016; the Rev Donald Macaskill and Rev Archie McPhail. We have been blessed as a denomination with decades of gospel ministry from these men alone and the congregations for whom they served so faithfully will no doubt be sad to see them go. We wish them the Lord's blessing as they move forward to new spheres of influence and ministry. At that time we were also made aware of the Rev Gordon Murray's departure and we are thankful for the contribution that he made whilst he was in our midst.

Change is inevitable in the Church and the APC is certainly no exception. We are a small denomination with congregations spread out over a vast geographical area and serving some of the remotest parts of Scotland. Such complexities are compounded when man power and resources are stretched and it is felt acutely by our ministers. Presbytery meetings in such times as these are not just a gathering together to do the business of the church but are an encouragement to us as we meet with one another. It was also good for us to come together last autumn when the Presbytery organized a retreat for its members in Aviemore. This proved to be a useful time of gathering to think, pray, discuss and enjoy fellowship with each other.

Change can present difficulties but it can also come with the Lord's blessing. The gospel continues to be preached in our pulpits. We rejoice that we have a new minister in Dundee. The Rev John Davidson and his family are well established now and we trust that he will build on the previous ministry. We also are pleased to have Mr Carl Peet working in Lairg, Kinlochbervie and Rogart as resident supply. The folk there have been encouraged and appreciate his ministry amongst them. In addition we have had preachers serving our vacant pulpits from different places and denominations some who have come and led our services while enjoying a holiday time in the manse. And we are blessed to have so many who come to us to do pulpit supply and we are thankful to the Lord for so many who are committed to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The annual APC Youth Camp is always such a highlight for the young people in our congregations and also for some who come from other churches. There is a lot of organisation in running the camp and there are so many involved and we are grateful for the dedicated team. These times have been blessed to many young lives and we hope and pray that the 2016 camp will be no different.

The committees of the Presbytery continue to serve the Lord's people in our congregations and to work for the interests of the Church along with all our office

bearers and treasurers. We are indebted to our conveners and to the members of the committees who give of their time in such a way. Particular mention needs to be made of Mr Laurence MacKenzie who does so much for us in the Business Committee and as General Treasurer. We are thankful for his input and for the time that he invests at both a local and Presbytery level. Laurence has forecast a deficit for this coming year and has encouraged us to think about our giving to the Church as we go forward with faith in Christ who is Lord of all.

There has also been the work of the 'Church Relations Committee'. They have over the years encouraged talks with other denominations and through the Committee's initiative of the Scottish Reformed Churches Forum. As a consequence of the Forum we have had discussion with the Free Church more recently about the possibility of union and these are ongoing. There is a biblical mandate for such discussions whatever comes from them. We must continue to work for the advancement of the gospel and to take the role that the Lord has given us in Scotland seriously. There are still large areas of Scotland without gospel ministry.

The APC News and Website Committee is responsible for the publications of the denomination and for the APC News which has been going since 1989. There have been various editors over the years who have all brought their own gifts and focus to the magazine. Our most recent editor is Catherine MacKenzie who has taken on the role since the beginning of the 2016. The publication has a new title and it is now called 'The Door'. We are thankful that Catherine has agreed to do this work and hope that she will know the Lord's blessing as she does it.

There are changes and challenges as we go forward but we do so looking to the Lord who has been most faithful ~ *The Lord of us hath mindful been and he will bless us still* (Psalm 115:12).

Rev J. R. Ross Macaskill - Presbytery Clerk –
May 2016

Canadian Presbytery Report 2016 - Vancouver Congregation

The past year has had its challenges, and will continue so through 2016. We also see that throughout the church in the western world. The words of Jeremiah (chp14 v19) seem to speak to us today as they did of old: Have you utterly rejected Judah? Has your soul loathed Zion? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing and behold trouble! But we understand the cause as did Jeremiah; “for we have sinned against thee.” The church in the UK and Canada can pray as Jeremiah prayed, “Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us.” God’s covenant blessings, covenant mercies and the glory of his name, is the reason Jeremiah pleaded for the restoration of Zion. Judgment was to come and then salvation, God’s covenant promises may take decades to fulfill, but he is faithful to his covenant, and the glory of his name.

Regular worship services continue at Cityview Baptist Church at 2pm and 4:00pm each Lord’s Day and a meeting for prayer and Bible study on Wednesday at 7pm. Rev. Matandika has continued his ministry to the congregation, with weekly preaching, teaching, and witnessing in the community from January through to the mid- summer when he went to Malawi. The youth group met at two week intervals and Miss Carmel Epp, is also meeting with the young women in the congregation on a fortnightly basis. Over the summer months, when Rev. Matandika was in Malawi we had Rev. Stephen Roberts his wife and young children with us. Steven is an energetic pastor and diligent evangelist. Following his time with us he moved to Wisconsin as an assistant pastor.

At the beginning of September Rev. Matandika took a leave of absence from the congregation. In January, 2016 Rev. Matandika informed the Presbytery that he wished to resign from the pastoral duties of the Vancouver congregation. The Presbytery accepted the resignation with regret; please remember the Matandika family as the Lord opens new opportunities for his ministry. The congregation is currently looking for a new minister.

In December we were saddened to hear of the illness and passing away of the Rev. T. Atkinson. He has had a connection with the congregation and denomination for decades. His faithful independent ministry in Italy and Greece influenced many young people from the 1960’s into the 21st century. His visits to Vancouver were always appreciated.

The work in Malawi continues unabated, with church growth continuing in Dzuwa and in a village about 5 km away from Dzuwa. JJ Matandika, Elliot Kembo and the elders minister to the folks in the congregation. JJ is currently visiting churches in the USA to raise funds for continued expansion of the work in Dzuwa. He is planning to pursue ministerial studies at Westminster Seminary and Lord willing will arrive in the US in the early summer. The school continues to expand and there is desire to set up a maternity ward. More information can be found at the Joy to the World website: <http://www.joytotheworldministries.org>.

We would ask that you continue to pray for the folks and God’s work in Vancouver and the work in Malawi. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with

you all. To God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever. We send our love to you all in the Lord.

**Mr Hugh Fraser – Presbytery Clerk
– 2016**

Below is the Loyal Address given by the 2016 - 2017 Moderator, Rev Archie McPhail.

**To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty
The Loyal and Dutiful Address of the General Assembly of the Associated
Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Canada**

We, the General Assembly of the Associated Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Canada, met in Inverness this 24th day of May 2016, desire to express our humble devotion and loyalty to Your Majesty, Queen of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth.

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the peace and prosperity we enjoy under Your Majesty's long reign over us. We acknowledge the Lord's kindness to Your Majesty in granting You 90 wonderful years of health and strength in graciously carrying out all Your duties in a most efficient and elegant manner. We rejoice that the Lord has given Your Majesty such good health and amazing strength to attend to so many engagements and perform so many public duties over such a long period of time. Your Majesty's devotion and commitment is a wonderful testimony to God's grace and goodness to You.

We have been privileged to enjoy a strong Christian heritage under Your Majesty's reign which has enriched our lives and the lives of all those who have sought refuge in our United Kingdom. God has blessed us in many and varied ways under Your Majesty's reign. We have become known as 'Great' Britain because God has made us great through granting us His Word to guide us as a nation and people. We praise Him for His Word, the Word which King David said was "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" [Psalm 119:105].

In Your Coronation vows Your Majesty promised to defend the Christian faith against all heresies and falsehoods which run counter to Biblical standards. We thank God for the way that Your Majesty has personally confirmed Your faith in Jesus Christ in Your Christmas Messages to the nation over the past few years. It has truly rejoiced our hearts to hear it. May God strengthened and increase Your faith in Him and grant Your Majesty the joy and peace which Jesus Christ alone can give.

We pray that Your Majesty's government may be able to do as much as is reasonable and possible, to help the many victims of terrorism and ethnic cleansing which has resulted in so many migrants taking enormous risks, for themselves and families, in seeking a place of rest. It

is a testimony to Your Majesty's government over the years, that so many seek to come within the bounds of our Constitution.

In that regard, we would respectfully express our concern at the erosion of our Christian culture. Our past prosperity came under God and many of the problems that we face today are here as society distances itself from His Word. We particularly regret the recent trend in undermining the holy state of marriage being only between a man and a woman. The fact that in our United Kingdom there have been those who have been apprehended and punished for simply stating their belief in this millennia old conviction, is a very worrying aspect for those of us who submit to the teaching of the Holy Bible.

We pray earnestly that Your Majesty may enjoy continued health and strength and courage to defend our Constitution. We pray that the laws, regulations, values and ideals which the Holy Bible teaches, and which have made our nation great will be revived and incorporated into Your government's statute book. As wise King Solomon said "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" [Prov 14:34]. We finish by repeating the Aaronic blessing: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" [Num 6:24].

On behalf of the Assembly,

Rev Archie McPhail
Moderator of
Assembly