

St Mary's Parish Church Kirkintilloch

Congregational Update – 24th November 2019

A lot has been happening since my last updates in August and this feels like an appropriate time to let you know how **activities have progressed and what our next steps are going to be. Four key topics:**

1) The Manse:

- This has been a slow process, but Charles has continued to work diligently with the Church of Scotland Law Department.
- Thanks to his efforts, we have reached the point where everything is in place to let us put the Manse on the market.
- Watch out for the **“For Sale”** sign the first time you are passing!

2) Presbytery Discussions:

- We have met with representatives of Glasgow Presbytery and the Central Church and presented our proposals for addressing our current shortfall. The meeting was very positive and our proposals were met favourably by all parties. The next step is for the Stewardship & Finance Committee, along with the Vacancy Procedure Committee, to make a joint recommendation to the December meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow.
- Our proposal, which has been approved by the Kirk Session, involves a relaxation of our reserves policy, as well as de-restricting funds that are currently held for specific purposes (primarily special projects).
- This will allow us to make a payment of £56,500 towards our deficit, leaving an outstanding balance of £60,000. We will undertake to repay this balance over a period of 5 years.
- In light of the above, our proposal includes requesting permission to call a new Minister. This call would be on a reviewable tenure, until the shortfall is repaid in full.
- Presbytery meets on the 10th of December. If the joint recommendations of the Stewardship & Finance Committee and Vacancy Procedure Committee are approved, **we would hope to be in a position to commence the vacancy process early in the New Year.**
- This is an exciting and incredibly positive place to be at this time. A big thank you to everyone that has helped to get us to this stage of our journey. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to our Interim Moderator, Ian Taylor, for his faithful support and continued guidance.

3) Advent Appeal:

- So we now have a coherent plan that will allow us to engage in the vacancy process and move forward in this new chapter of St Mary's life.
- And it is at this time that we need your help and support to deliver that plan.
- Whilst we have been able to clear a significant proportion of our deficit in this way, we will need to reinstate our reserves policy and replenish our restricted funds for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of our Sanctuary and halls.
- In addition, we still have a deficit of £60,000 which we need to repay as quickly as we can, but certainly within the next 5 years.
- With that in mind, we have agreed to launch our Advent Appeal, giving everyone the opportunity to make a personal financial contribution.
- Our plan is to launch the appeal with the December Parishioner, inviting you to make a significant contribution towards securing our future as a worshipping congregation at the very heart of Kirkintilloch.
- Please watch out for full details when the Parishioner is available. If you don't receive a copy, please just ask at the Church door from 8th December onwards.

4) Stewardship:

- ***“Christian stewardship is a way of living, in which we recognise that everything belongs to God. We are stewards of all that God has given us including our time, our abilities, our possessions and our money.”*** (Church of Scotland Website)
- As you know, we have established a Stewardship Team to look at our proposals for our long term Stewardship Programme.
- One of the activities within the group has been to investigate a new Stewardship resource from the Church of Scotland – **A Narrative of Generosity**.
- Next Sunday, 1st December, we will welcome Ashley Johnston to our Service. Ashley is from the Stewardship Department of The Church of Scotland and she will introduce us to this new resource, which we hope to adopt as the theme for our ongoing Stewardship Programme.
- We will also take the opportunity at this Service to share our proposals for Stewardship initiatives planned for the New Year.
- Just like our Advent Appeal, the success of our Stewardship Programme (and the future of our Church) depends on YOU! I have said it before – it will be the time, talent and money that we each contribute that will enable us to address our current situation and move forward in faith.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything you would like to discuss. With my thanks and kind regards,
Gordon.

Gordon Morrison, Session Clerk. Telephone: 0141 578 5887 email: morrisgo@sky.com

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