

St Mary's Parish Church Kirkintilloch
Congregational Update – 12th January 2020

Once again, we are at a time when there is a lot of news to share with you.

Four key topics:

Advent Appeal:

- Our Advent Appeal was launched with the Parishioner on 8th December 2019. My thanks go to the members of the Publications Committee who made this possible by collating all of the material that was enclosed with the magazine – a huge task carried out diligently – very much appreciated.
- We have been greatly encouraged by the response to our appeal. As of Sunday 5th January, 119 envelopes have been returned, corresponding to donations totalling **£31,500**. The vast majority of those donations also qualify for Gift Aid, which will increase the total to date to a figure in the region of **£38,675**.
- This is a truly wonderful response and an extremely positive message for the future of St Mary's. We agreed with Presbytery that we would repay our deficit within a period of 5 years, but we are already almost two thirds of the way there, after a period of only four weeks.
- Our grateful thanks go to everyone who has contributed to date. Contributions are still being received and we propose to continue the appeal for a period of time, to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to participate.
- I could not have imagined a better start to our fundraising efforts, but of course we still have more to do. As well as reinstating our reserves policy and replenishing our restricted funds, we still need to reach our target of £60,000 for the Presbytery of Glasgow. **Is this within our grasp?**
- **The First Challenge:** If we could, during January and February, raise even 50% of what we raised in the first 4 weeks of the appeal, we would be in a position to meet our deficit in full. The significance of this is that we would be able to ask Presbytery to remove the limitation of a call on a restricted (reviewable) basis and seek a new Minister for St Mary's on an unrestricted tenure. This time last month, I could not have imagined being in this position. But when we consider what we have achieved in such a short period of time, it does feel like it is within our grasp.
- **The Second Challenge** is for us to return to the practice of meeting our Ministries & Mission contributions in full, to avoid being in the position of accumulating a deficit. To do this, we need to increase our income by around 10%, so I would ask that we all give due consideration to our level of regular giving. Gift Aid and paying by Standing Order are also both very effective ways for us to increase our income. Please speak to Hugh Biggans or John Thomson if you would like any information in this regard.
- **THANK YOU**

Presbytery Discussions:

- The Joint Report from the Stewardship & Finance Committee and the Vacancy Procedure Committee was presented to Presbytery as planned and **unanimously approved** at the meeting in December 2019.
- This means that our repayment plan has been approved and we are also granted leave to call on a restricted (reviewable) basis (until the deficit is repaid in full).
- This is an immensely positive way for us to move into the New Year - my thanks go to everyone involved in getting us to this stage. Plenty of hard work lies ahead, but the building blocks are all in place to ensure we keep moving forward.

The Manse:

- We received a considerable level of interest in the Manse, allowing us to set a closing date of 13th December. At closing, we received six offers, although one was subsequently withdrawn.
- The property is currently **“under offer”**, with the offer subject to the proposed purchaser selling their own property.
- It is hoped that we will be able to conclude the sale in the coming weeks.

Stewardship:

• **Stewardship Service**

We are grateful to Ashley Johnston, Church of Scotland Stewardship Coordinator, for joining us at our Stewardship Service last month and introducing us to **“A Narrative of Generosity”** – the resource we are planning to use for our Stewardship Programme going forward.

• **Easyfundraising**

Shopping online? Want to raise funds for the Church?

Just log on to the Easyfundraising website **“easyfundraising.org.uk”** and select St Mary’s Parish Church Kirkintilloch as your preferred cause. You can then shop online via with the normal retailers such as M & S, John Lewis, Amazon, Argos and many more...and you will be raising funds for St Mary’s at no extra cost to you!

• **Stewardship Events – First Week in March 2020.**

We are finalising plans for our stewardship events taking place in March. The theme of the events will be how we map out a future for St Mary’s in Kirkintilloch going forward in this new era. **This will be a time for fellowship, a time to share ideas and a time to share stories about our past and our future.**

An invitation will be heading your way next month. This is our future and we all have a part to play.

As always, please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you would like more information or if there is anything you would like to discuss.

With my thanks and kind regards,
Gordon.

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