

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014

The outline Order of Business in Appendix 1 details the arrangements for the 2014 General Assembly. The General Assembly will meet in the Salutation Hotel, Perth from Wednesday 4th to Friday 6th June. The annual meetings of the Women's Home and Overseas Committee and all Business Sessions and the Opening and Closing Services of the General Assembly will take place in the Salutation Hotel. The culmination of the General Assembly will be the Closing Service during which the Moderator will give his address. The Leaders' Forum, organised by the Christian Education and Evangelism Committee will this year take place on the Thursday evening.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2015

In accordance with the decision of the 2008 General Assembly that future meetings of the General Assembly be held in a central location, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly 2015 be held in the Salutation Hotel, Perth from Wednesday June 10th until Friday June 12th. This is the usual week for the General Assembly, beginning on the Wednesday after the first Sunday in June.

STEDFAST

Mr Alastair Wright continues as Stedfast Secretary. He continues to work well with the Stedfast Editorial Team. The Stone Agency continues to design the magazine and the General Secretary provides valuable support and advice. During the last year, Hay Nisbet Press, who have printed Stedfast for a number of years, stopped trading. Quotes were obtained from a number of printers, and it was agreed to accept that from Buchanan McPherson in Hamilton, which is for 1300 copies. The Team continues to commission and request material from within and beyond the church in its effort to provide a magazine that encourages, supports and advances the life and witness of the denomination.

Congregations are encouraged to give Stedfast their support. The Committee is concerned that the magazine incurs a substantial deficit and encourages congregations to make efforts to promote the magazine. Free copies can be made available from the office for distribution to those who do not normally subscribe to the magazine. Congregations are also encouraged to submit material to inform others about what is happening locally.

PRAYER UNION

The Committee appreciates the valuable contribution which the Prayer Union continues to make to the life of the church in providing an opportunity for focused prayer throughout the denomination. Mrs Wemyss Billows and her Committee are to be commended for the quality and content of the Prayer and Study Guide which is widely used throughout the Church.

QUINQUENNIAL VISITATIONS

There has been discussion on the importance of regarding Quinquennial Visitations as an opportunity to carry out a Mission Review of congregations. Changes are planned to the Quinquennial Visitation Schedule. The plan is to have two sections, a questionnaire which Kirk Sessions would be asked to complete before the visit takes place, and a schedule giving suggested questions to be covered during the meetings with the Kirk Session and the

temporal court. Notes will be included to give guidance on how the material should be used and on reporting to presbytery with a reminder that a draft report be sent to the Presbytery Clerk before it is sent to the congregation and then reported to Presbytery. This material is included in appendix 2.

RISK REGISTER

Time has been spent on the reconsideration of a Risk Register. The following were identified as some of the main risks at the present time:

- 1) Lack of human resources and an insufficient number of people to give leadership.
- 2) Failure to make contact with our society.
- 3) Loss of confidence through a lack of positive results.
- 4) The Failure of Denominational Structures.
- 5) Lack of a clear agreed purpose.
- 6) The risk of a Child Protection incident.
- 7) Impact of changes in Government legislation.
- 8) Upkeep of ageing church buildings.

HANDBOOK 2014

A new handbook has recently been produced. Thanks are expressed to the office staff for their help in its production.

COORDINATING FORUM

The Coordinating Forum met in October 2013 when further consideration was given to the matters discussed at the residential meeting held early in 2013. As a result, it was agreed to set up a small group representing several General Assembly Committees to consider how best to take matters forward. This group has had several meetings and has focussed both on the possibility of planting a new church in a suitable area and of helping to 'revitalise' an existing congregation to enable work to be developed in that community.

NOMINATIONS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

The Committee continues to experience difficulties in finding suitable people to serve on General Assembly Committees. There is a particular need that those who are nominated to serve on such Committees are willing to give attendance at all committee meetings their absolute priority. Small committees cannot function properly if even a few members are absent from meetings.

APPEAL COMMISSION

The Committee recommends that the following members be elected to serve on the Appeal Commission for the coming year. Rev A M Ford (Chairman), Rev G J A Barclay (Vice Chairman), Rev M C Keane, Rev G G Brown, Rev A Ritchie, Mr W Cairns, Dr I Smith, Miss J Doran, Rev A D Scrimgeour, Rev C C Brown, Rev D Lyon, Mr A Scott, Miss L Mathieson, Rev G B Bruce, Rev I F R Lloyd, Miss J Ramsay, Mr G H McRobb, Mr I Shering.

PANEL ON DOCTRINE

The Committee recommends that the following members be elected to serve on the Panel on Doctrine for the coming year: Revs: I.F.R Lloyd (Convener), D. Cartledge, J. O. Fulton, A.D. Scrimgeour, Mr. A. Scott, and the Principal Clerks.

FUNDING OF MINISTRY

Decisions have been made regarding honoraria to the Principal Clerks and recommendations regarding honoraria to Presbytery Clerks have been forwarded to the three Presbyteries. Consideration has been given to the financial arrangements where ministers spend a considerable amount of time on work within the denomination. The principle of making payments to congregations served by such ministers has been agreed, and discussions on this issue are ongoing.

CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS

Matters have been finalised with Registers of Scotland and Congregational and Presbytery Records which were held in the Church Office have now been transferred to Edinburgh. In order to ensure confidentiality, it has been agreed that records which are less than 75 years old may only be accessed with our approval.

MODERATORIAL VISITATION

Thanks are expressed to the Moderator, Rev Graham G Brown, for his visits to congregations during the past year and for the encouragement he has brought. The Moderator has willingly represented the church at a number of meetings and events.

East: Bo'ness: Craigmalen, Gorebridge, Leith: Ebenezer, Portobello: Wilson Memorial, Sauchie and Fishcross.

West: Dumbarton: Dalreoch, Glasgow: Candlish Wynd, Cathcart, Drumchapel, Knightswood, Millerston, Partick, Greenock: St Andrew Square, Kilmaurs, Largs, Lochwinnoch, Whifflet.

North: Aberdeen: Northfield, Torry, Auchterarder, Balintore, Boddam, Cunningsburgh, Dounby, Ferryden, Lossiemouth, Montrose: Knox's, Sandwick.

QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION

During the year the following quinquennial visitations have been carried out:

East: Bo'ness: Craigmalen; Edinburgh: Corstorphine

West: Duntocher: West, Glasgow: Darnley, Knightswood, Shieldhall & Drumoyne;
Greenock: St Andrew Square, Largs

North: Balintore, Boddam, Dundee: Caird Avenue, Newport: Trinity

FINANCE

The Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2013 are at the back of Assembly Reports. Commissioners may obtain detailed Fund Accounts from the General Secretary.

This Report highlights the principal factors affecting movement in Funds in 2013, explains agreed 'Target' requirements for 2013 and 2014 and the level of Target recommended for 2015, and presents Assembly Committees' budget requirements for 2014.

The General Trustees of the Denomination hold funds deposited for investment on behalf of third parties. These Third Party funds have been excluded from the Balance Sheet amounts for Investments and Creditors (see Note 12 to the Accounts). They should be accounted for in the financial statements of the third parties.

TARGET

2013 'Minimum' Target set for 2013 was £55 per member. With a membership of 2,995 the income expected was £165k. Income received was £173k.

2014 'Minimum' set for 2014 is £57 per member. Membership at the start of the year was 2,870 and therefore the anticipated income is £163k but is budgeted at £173k in the expectation that some congregations will contribute at the higher level of £65 suggested to cover core denomination costs.

2015 'Minimum' for 2015, recommended for Assembly's approval, is £60 per member. The higher level figure will increase to £70 as a more accurate reflection of core costs by 2015.

Yearly increases reflect a falling membership and increases in costs, and aim to ensure the maintaining of essential denominational services.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES' FUNDS 2013 & 2014

The Schedule on page 67 details the movements in Committee's resources in 2013. The right hand columns project budget income, costs and target allocations for 2014 for each Committee and their resources anticipated at the end of the year.

The policy adopted is to ensure those Committees with limited resources and fairly well defined income and costs have sufficient funds from Target to fulfil their agreed responsibilities and commitments. Ministry and General Purposes funds are more difficult to predict and outgoings are significant and thus they must maintain adequate reserves. Their allocation from Target however is usually less than their needs and the General Trustees transferred funds to Ministry and to General Purposes in 2013.

The Overseas Fund has traditionally not received a share of Target and had significant resources, though this fund is diminishing as the Committee continue to actively support overseas mission.

The General Trustees Funds have increased significantly due, regrettably, to the dissolution and closure of some congregations and the inflow of their remaining funds and proceeds of property disposals. The Trustees are concerned to support Congregations who find their finances insufficient to meet annual outgoings and/or significant costs to adequately maintain their property and mission. These needs **must** be addressed through Presbyteries and Assembly Committees' who can and do seek the assistance of the Trustees. A number of such requests have been met and others are being considered.

DENOMINATIONAL AND CONGREGATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The resources of the Denomination and the Congregations in funds and property are significant although often unevenly spread. The challenges faced spiritually and practically can seem overwhelming and are reflected in a fall in membership, congregations and human resources. We continue to strive to be wise and good stewards of the resources God has given to advance His mission, ministry and Kingdom through the Gospel about Jesus Christ His Son and our Lord.

CHARITY LEGISLATION AND 'OSCR' (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

The Charity Regulator (OSCR) continues to ensure Charities adhere to charity accounting standards and a new draft Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) was issued during the year with a target implementation in 2015. When changes are introduced, Church Office will inform Congregations.

The advice given is that Presbytery Finance Committee's and Church Office be informed of any case of 'non-compliant' Reports which are returned by OSCR so that corrections are made and help can be offered to avoid a similar situation arising in future.

GIFT AID AND INCOME TAX RECOVERY

This year the UK Government, through HM Revenue and Customs, introduced the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS). Church Office has issued guidance on this and changes in the procedure to submit claims including GASDS. The benefits are small but significant, particularly to smaller Churches. This scheme allows recovery of Gift Aid on cash donations outside the normal Gift Aid provisions. The existence of an active Gift Aid Scheme is essential. Please contact Church Office, if required, for assistance

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURERS

We acknowledge the additional work and commitment which has been required from all treasurers in recent years to fulfil and the requirements of Charity Law and of OSCR and thank treasurers and responsible committees for their patience and perseverance. If problems occur in meeting these requirements Treasurers are advised to contact Church Office.

AUDIT OF DENOMINATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants, who are the Auditors appointed by General Assembly have carried out their audit. It is recommended that this firm be reappointed for the 2014 audit.

STATISTICS

Presbyteries: The number of Presbyteries remains at 3.

Congregations: The number of Congregations at the end of 2013 was 59, the same as in 2012. The Perth congregation had its final service during 2013 but had not yet been dissolved.

Name of Presbytery	Number of Congregations
1. East	13
2. West	29
3. North	17

Roll of Ministers, etc.

Ministers:

	2012	2013
a) Retired	26	26
b) In Pastorate.....	17	16
c) Others	5	6
Total	48	48
Part-time Ministers & Pastors.....	12	11
Students.....	4	4
Probationer.....	1	1
Widows of Ministers.....	11	12
Widows of Pastors.....	2	2

Persons and Agencies: In the table appended to this Report the analysed details of schedules received from Congregations will be found with the corresponding figures for previous years.

Communicants: The number of Communicants on the Roll at 31 December 2013 was 2,876 compared with 2,995 at the end of 2012.

Admissions were as follows: -

	2012	2013
By Profession	32	25
By Certificate	16	15
By Resolution	7	3

Removals were as follows: -

By Death	125	117
By Certificate	73	17
Without Certificate	38	28

Office-Bearers: There were 459 Elders and 286 Deacons, Managers or Board Members who are not Elders.

Baptisms: There were 14 Baptisms of children and 2 of adults.

Sunday Schools:

	2012	2013
Schools	36	36
Classes	55	49
Teachers	117	103
Children	311	275

Bible Classes/ Youth Fellowships:

Groups	22	25
Membership	126	103

Midweek Organisations for Children & Young People:

Number	51	53
Membership	731	777

Adult Organisations:

Number	153	154
Membership	2,095	1,958

Roll of persons not yet Communicants: The Committee recommend to the Kirk Session the practice of keeping a careful record of all persons not yet communicants who are in any way connected with the Church either by attendance or by affiliation with any organisation of the Church.

In the name of the Committee,
GRAHAM G BROWN
ANGUS PENDER
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice-Convener
Secretary

APPENDIX 1

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014
OUTLINE PROGRAMME
SALUTATION HOTEL, PERTH**

WEDNESDAY 4th June

11.00 & 2.15 Annual Meeting of Women's Home and Overseas Committee.

7.00 Opening of General Assembly

THURSDAY 5th June

09.45 Opening Devotions
Memorial Tributes
Reception of Delegates from other Churches
Report of Assembly Business Committee
Report by Committee on Women's Home and Overseas
Presentation by Youth Committee
Presentation by Ministry Committee
Presentation by Christian Education & Evangelism Committee

Breaks will be: Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, Tea 4.30 – 6.00 (Meal at 5 p.m.) with tea/ coffee from 11 – 11.15 and 3.00 – 3.15 p.m.

The Annual meeting of the Friends of the Students Association will take place at the close of the afternoon session.

FRIDAY 6th June^t

09.45 Opening Devotions
Representative of Scottish Bible Society
Presentation by Church & Society Committee
Presentation by Ecumenical Relations Committee
Presentation by Administration & Finance Committee
Presentation by Overseas Committee

Report by General Trustees
Committee on Records and Minute Books
Any business left over from previous diets/ closing items

Breaks will be: Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, Tea 4.30 – 7.00 (Meal at 5 p.m.) and tea/ coffee from 11 – 11.15 and 3.00 – 3.15

7.00 **Closing Service**
Including Moderator's Address

APPENDIX 2

United Free Church of Scotland

QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION

Part 1: Preliminary Questionnaire

&

Part 2: Visitation Schedule

Part 1: PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

*Kirk Sessions and Temporal Courts are asked to reflect on and respond to the following questions **before** meeting with the deputation from Presbytery. It would be helpful for the deputation to have time to look over the responses prior to the meeting.*

Meeting with Kirk Session

1. Context

Give a brief history of the congregation.

Describe the nature of the community being served:

- a. Numerically - with other relevant detail (e.g. growing/ static/ declining)
- b. By social composition (e.g. age, ethnicity etc.)

Describe the ecumenical scene:

- a. What other churches are in the area? Estimate the average combined attendance.
- b. What relationships exist between the various churches?
- c. Is there scope for further cooperation with other local congregations?

2. Congregation

- a. Describe what is distinctive about the congregation and the community(ies) it serves.
- b. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation?
- c. Have any significant needs and opportunities arisen in the last 5 years?
- d. What are the needs and opportunities you would like to tackle in the next 5 years?

3. Kirk Session

- a. How many elders have been inducted in the last 5 years?
- b. What training have elders undertaken in the last 5 years?

4. Local Church Life

a. Mission

Mission is about the church developing links with the people in the local community so that through our actions and words we can share with them the love of Jesus; it comes from our desire to see others come to faith and join in worship.

What form has outreach to the community taken in the past 5 years?

b. Ministry

What form has ministry taken in the last 5 years and what form do you see as appropriate for the next 5 years?

- i. Full-time minister
- ii. Minister shared with another congregation in a linkage
- iii. Part time minister/ ministry assistant
- iv. Pulpit supply
- v. Other (please specify)

c. Worship

Please describe the nature of worship services held each Sunday.

What is the average attendance?

What involvement is there from members of the congregation in the preparation for and conduct of worship?

How many baptisms have there been in the last five years?

How many weddings were conducted in the church in the past 5 years?

What proportion of these are for neither church members nor adherents?

How many funerals were conducted in the past year?

What proportion of these are for neither church members nor adherents?

d. Pastoral Care

Please describe how pastoral care is carried out within the congregation and indicate any ways in which you would like to see this develop.

Please outline the roles being undertaken by minister/ ministry assistant/ pastor/ interim moderator, elders and members of the congregation.

e. Christian Education

Please outline the existing programmes, meetings, study groups and other ventures that build people up in their faith, life and witness?

What courses and events have been organised or attended by leaders or members to equip them for service?

What would the congregation be keen to see developed in the area of Christian Education?

f. Work with Children and Young People

Describe the work with children and young people in relation to the following questions:

What are the age ranges, and numbers attending on a Sunday?

How many leaders are there on a Sunday?

What other activities/organisations are there for

a. children

b. young people?

What is the attendance numbers at the other activities/organisations?

What are the numbers of leaders for these groups?

What is the roll of the local Primary School(s) and how has this changed in the last 5 years?

g. Congregational Life

What adult organisations are there in the congregation and what is their regular attendance?

What opportunities are there for people to meet for prayer within the congregation?

What is done to encourage the congregation's awareness of and support for the wider mission work of the church in this country and around the world?

Meeting with Congregational Board/ Deacons Court/ Committee of Management

5. Property

Church and Manse (*where appropriate*)

Please prepare a report on the property including information on any major repairs or renovations carried out over the last 5 years and any major work on property which will be required over the next 5 years.

6. Finance

Please prepare a summary of the financial position of the congregation over the past 5 years and have available a copy of the most recent annual accounts.

7. Statistical Summary

Membership_____

Adherents_____

Membership Age profile:

0-11 ____ 12 -19 ____ 20-39____ 40-64____ 65+_____

Changes in the roll over the last **five** years:

a. Additions: Profession of Faith _____
Transfer _____
Resolution of Kirk Session _____

b. Losses: By death _____
By transfer certificate _____
By removal without certificate _____

Proportion of Members residing a. within one mile of church building _____%
b. over three miles of church building _____%

Number of adherents
Total number of households (members + adherents)

Number of Elders_____

Congregational Board/ Deacons Court/Committee of Management

Number of members _____

Midweek Services or meetings _____
& average numbers attending _____

Church organisations for Adults:

_____	Membership_____

Church organisations for young people:

_____	Membership_____

Other groups and organisations using the Church Buildings:

Part 2: QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION SCHEDULE

The topics and questions set out below are only intended as a guide for the meeting with representatives of Presbytery. The intention is that the questions asked and the discussion which takes place in the various meetings should be based on the responses to the questionnaire which has been completed prior to the visit. The visit is intended to help the deputies get a clearer picture of the life of the congregation and is also an opportunity to offer encouragement and advice to the congregation.

Meeting with Kirk Session

1. Context

Raise appropriate questions and discussion points from the responses in the questionnaire. Further to the information given, is there anything further the deputies should be aware of in terms of the community and changes to church life in the community?

2. Congregation

Raise appropriate questions and discussion points from the responses in the questionnaire.

3. Kirk Session

How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of the kirk session?

What development has taken place in the life of the Kirk Session and what development would the elders like to see in the next few years?

4. Local Church Life

a. Mission

Mission is about the church developing links with the people in the local community so that through our actions and words we can share with them the love of Jesus; it comes from our desire to see others come to faith and join in worship.

How effective has mission to the community been in recent years and what does the kirk session hope to see happening in mission in the next 5 years?

b. Ministry

What changes in Ministry would the Kirk Session like to see in the next 5 years?

c. Worship

How would the Session like to see worship developing in the next 5 years?

d. Pastoral Care

What changes could take place in pastoral care to make it more effective than it is at present?

e. Christian Education

What developments in the area of Christian Education would the Kirk Session like to see in the next 5 years?

f. Work with Children and Young People

What work with children and young people would the kirk session seek to initiate/ develop over the next few years?

What assistance would the congregation like to have in work with children and young people?

g. Congregational Life

How are the needs of the congregation being met by adult organisations?

What developments would you like to see in this work and is there any help you would like in this area?

Meeting with Kirk Session without the Minister

Has the Kirk Session any matters which they wish to raise?

Meeting with the Minister alone

*This is an opportunity to offer help and encouragement. This section is **confidential and should not** be reported to Presbytery but any issues arising that require further action should be reported to the Presbytery Clerk.*

Health

Are there any issues related to personal wellbeing which the minister wishes to raise?

Manse

Is the minister reasonably satisfied with the manse and is everything necessary being done for the welfare of the family?

Personal Needs

Needs of the minister on a personal level: What does he or she see these to be? What are the main encouragements and discouragements of the congregational life?

Study Leave

Has the minister taken up his/her entitlement to study leave?

Future

How does the minister see his/her, work developing in the next five years?

Are there any particular burdens the minister has?

The above is strictly confidential. Pastoral care where required can be given by the Moderator of Presbytery or by the Presbytery Clerk, or by someone acceptable to the minister.

Meeting with Congregational Board/ Deacons Court/ Committee of Management

5. Property

Church and Manse (*where appropriate*)

Please give information on any major repairs or renovations carried out over the last 5 years. How much has been spent on property maintenance over the period?

Please give information on any major work on property which will be required over the next 5 years.

If the congregation own property, who are the Property Trustees?

Those conducting the Quinquennial visit should look round the property to confirm it is in a reasonable state.

6. Finance

Please give a summary of the financial position of the congregation over the past 5 years and a copy of the most recent annual accounts.

What is the amount for which the buildings are insured? How and when are these figures reviewed?

7. General

Have the Court or Board anything they wish to raise with the Presbytery?
