

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2015

INTRODUCTION

This past year has been interesting, encouraging, yet also sad. It has been interesting as the Committee has been involved with early enquiries about possible Church Planting and Revitalisation. There have been encouragements as enquiries and applications have been received for the positions of Reader, Ministry Assistant and Minister of Word and Sacrament. It has been good to see settlements and vacancies filled. Yet it has also been sad to hear of established congregations being dissolved. This is a time in the life of the Church when we are acutely aware of the need for faith and to walk very close to God.

PATHWAYS

The Committee continues to explore suitable courses of study for those in training for the various ministries within the Church. As will be seen in this report, discussions have taken place with the Edinburgh Theological Seminary and a recommendation is being brought by the Committee.

The Committee continues to arrange courses for Readers, Students, Probationers, Pastors, Ministry Assistants and Ministers. In this the Committee endeavours to provide opportunities for learning, training and on-going development. The Committee is grateful to all who faithfully attend and those who contribute to these events.

STUDENTS

Mr Gordon Mackenzie (Lochwinnoch Calder) is in his fourth year of theological study at Highland Theological College. Mr Mackenzie is employed in a two day per week placement at Glasgow: Darnley. Mr Mackenzie is expected to complete his course of studies during 2015 and has met all the other requirements of the Church. It is anticipated that Mr Mackenzie will be licensed in the near future. Mr Mackenzie has been invited to preach as a final year student in a number of vacant congregations.

Dr Jane McArthur (Glasgow: Darnley) was accepted as a student in training for the ministry. Dr McArthur is expected to meet the requirements of the Church by the end of the year. Dr McArthur was employed as a Ministry Assistant by the Committee from September until January and served at Lochwinnoch: Calder congregation. Dr McArthur is now employed as a Ministry Assistant at Wishaw. It is anticipated that she will also be employed to undertake pastoral work one day per week from July to December at Glasgow: Darnley. It is anticipated that Dr McArthur will be licensed in 2016 and will be available to receive a call.

Dr David Miller (Glasgow: Millerston) was accepted as a student in training for the ministry. Dr Miller is expected to meet the requirements of the Church by the end of the year. Dr Miller is at present serving as a Ministry Assistant at Glasgow: Millerston. It is anticipated that Dr Miller will be licensed in 2016 and will be available to receive a call.

PROBATIONERS

Rev Elizabeth Mackay (Glasgow: Candlish Wynd) completed the denominational requirements as part of her preparation for ministry. Mrs. Mackay was licensed in June and was ordained and appointed to Glasgow: Candlish Wynd in August.

Rev Martin Paterson (Uddingston: Park) completed the denominational requirements as part of his preparation for ministry and was licensed as a Probationer in June. He and his wife Jennifer served a short-term placement with Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Malaysia and Thailand from July until December before returning to Scotland. Mr Paterson

is at present looking for a charge.

REV WILMA PEARSON

Rev Wilma Pearson was accepted by the Committee as a Ministry Assistant. Mrs Pearson is a Church of Scotland minister at present working in a part-time appointment with Cathcart Trinity, Church of Scotland. In consultation with the Presbytery of the West it was agreed to appoint Mrs Pearson to the Glasgow: Cathcart congregation. The appointment commenced on the 15th March 2015.

READERSHIP

The Committee is grateful to the Ministry Development Worker for his work in developing a suitable programme for those training to be Readers. Readers are expected to successfully complete the study of four suitable modules with a recognised place of learning. Candidates are also assessed on their conduct of worship on two occasions. In addition they are expected to attend three one-day seminars which cover such subjects as worship and its conduct, preaching and voice training.

READER

Mrs Moira Frew (Lochwinnoch: Calder) was accepted by the Committee as a candidate for the Readership of the Church. Mrs Frew is at present undertaking studies at the Highland Theological College and is also engaged in meeting the requirements of the Church.

CONFERENCES

Two Student Conferences were organised in the past year. A residential conference was held at Carronvale in August 2014 and a two-day event in the Church Office in April 2015. The Committee is indebted to the Ministry Development Worker for his organisation of the programme of the conferences. There is a three year programme set which covers a wide range of subjects from preaching and pastoral care to voice training. This year a special one-day conference is being held to cover the Manual of Practice and Procedure. This course will be attended by students and also ministers coming into the Church from other denominations. Thanks are due to the various speakers who lead these sessions. The response from the students and probationers has been very positive.

EDINBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Committee met with Rev I. Martin, Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Mr Martin presented a prospectus of the ethos, work and courses available at the Seminary. There is a three year B.Th. (Ordinary) Course leading to an ordinary degree. There is also a one year M.Th. Course which can be accessed by students who have successfully completed the B.Th. Ordinary degree. These courses are validated by the University of Glasgow. The Committee is of the opinion that the Seminary would be a suitable place for those studying for the Ministry of the Church.

There are a number of other courses which could be suitable for those preparing to be Readers and the Committee recommend these courses to the Church.

PART-TIME MINISTERS, MINISTRY ASSISTANTS AND PASTORS

The United Free Church continues to be very well served by its part-time Pastors, Ministry Assistants and Part-time Ministers. Reports received by the Committee describe men and women who are faithful, hard-working and selfless in their service of the Lord. The Committee is encouraged by the work being done in worship, service and mission and commends our part-time workers to the prayers and support of the Church.

Mr Kevin Hammond (Aberdeen: Northfield) indicated that he would be unable to continue his work as a Ministry Assistant at Northfield. The Committee would like to thank Mr Hammond for his faithful service and to wish him well in his continued work with the Cogwheel Trust.

IN-SERVICE CONFERENCE

The In-Service Conference for Pastors, Ministry Assistants and Ministers took place at Gartmore House in October 2014. Rev Ian Lloyd led the main sessions on “Engaging with the Community” and provided much to consider in content and understanding. There were also three interesting and helpful sessions led by John Mason MSP, Alex Bedford (former evangelist at the Tron Church Glasgow) and Mike Gargrave. (minister at Clincarthill Parish Church)

The 2015 In-Service Conference will also take place at Gartmore House from 22 – 24 September. Dr Ian Hepburn a former lecturer in Old Testament at International Christian College will explore worship in the Tabernacle, Temple and synagogue.

CHURCH PLANTING AND REVITALISATION

The Committee has been pleased to be involved in the work of this group. This is a step of faith for the Church and the Committee is committed to identifying suitable courses for those engaged and leading congregations in outreach and evangelism. The report on Church Planting and Revitalisation is included within the Report of the Christian Education and Evangelism Committee. The Ministry Committee is pleased to support its aims and content.

MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

The Committee continues to be indebted to the Rev Alexander Ritchie for the work he has undertaken as Ministry Development Worker and would seek to extend this post for a further year.

THANKS

Thanks are expressed to the many people who have contributed to the extensive work carried out by the Committee. Thanks especially to Rev. John Fulton and Mrs Helena Jarvis for their considerable and valued work.

ARCHIBALD M. FORD
ANDREW SCOTT
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Vice-convener
Secretary