

KIRKHILL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – held Thursday 25 March 2010

Interim Moderator's Report. Rev. Reg Campbell paid tribute to the tremendous work carried out by Rev. Willis Jones as Locum Minister. Good positive signs were evident in the building up of the leadership of the church, the numerous events held, increased membership and giving. Whilst not remotely wishing to accelerate Willis's departure, this period should be regarded as a time of preparation and growth. A further advertisement for a new minister is being placed in the next issue of Life and Work. In the meantime, Reg offered his thanks to the office bearers, and expressed his appreciation of the improved communication given by the Parishioner newsletter and the website. Reg also took the opportunity to give advance warning of an open Joint Kirk Session to be held at Kirkhill Church on Thursday, 22 April at 7:30 p.m., to consider the matters raised by the Church of Scotland's Special Commission on Same Sex Relationships and the Ministry. Anyone wishing to peruse the consultation documents in advance can access these by visiting www.churchofscotland.org.uk and selecting the extranet section of the website.

Session Report. Maris Elkin reported on "numbers" – Kirkhill now has 86 communicant members (increased by some existing attendees and some folk new to the area becoming members), also 5 new elders who will be carrying out parish visits. During the year, there were 7 baptisms, 5 weddings and 4 funerals. Maris expressed thanks to Margaret Birkbeck and Flora Morrison for their work with the young people, to Mary Robb for her splendid playing of the organ, and creation / coaching of the Celestial Choir, to Malcolm MacRae for his compilation of the accounts, to the folk involved in the Nominating Committee, the Steering Committee, the churches' website and newsletter. The help of Reg was much appreciated, and a very special thank you was given to Willis and Pat for their faithful service to the congregation.

Treasurer's Report. In the absence of John Finlayson, Malcolm MacRae presented the account, highlighting various factors – please see the separate report in this issue of the Parishioner. Reg commented on the comparatively larger proportion of giving received via Open Plate offerings, and suggested a further effort to ask members of the congregation to convert to Free Will Offering envelopes with a Gift Aid declaration if appropriate. Thanks were also directed to John Finlayson for his work during the year.

Fabric Report. Iain Mortimer gave an update on the progress made by the Church Development Steering Committee appointed in October 2009, after the congregational meeting in Kirkhill Community Centre at which several versions of architect's plans were available for inspection – see article in this edition for fuller report. Iain also raised the issue of the condition of the Manse, on which a serious amount of remedial work is needed – replacement windows, boards, guttering and internal work – in order to make the Manse properly habitable for both the existing and any future residents. Maris Elkin has been verbally informed that the Church refurbishment programme would not be approved by Inverness Presbytery until the manse was put in good order. Reg confirmed that the churches would not be allowed to call a minister if the Manse is not in proper order.

Sunday Schools and Guild. Margaret Birkbeck reported that Sunday School attendances were up and down. Progress has been made by splitting the Sunday School groupings into two, and Margaret paid tribute to the work of Flora Morrison with the teenagers, who meet in blocks of 4 to 6 weeks, with a break between for group social activities. An April outing to Gairloch is planned. Flora's new initiative "Open the Book" has taken various members of the congregation

into Kirkhill School to present dramatic interpretations of Bible stories, and has been extremely well received. The Guild membership has increased to 15 signed up members, who have been joined by interested non-members for an interesting programme during the year.

Any Other Business. Iain Marr, on behalf of concerned members of the congregation, raised the issue of the disparity between the salary paid to the Locum Minister, and the actual hours, work, and involvement given by Willis - the results of which are seen in the growth in membership and spirit within the two churches. A Locum Minister is paid for 2 days work per week, whilst Willis works and is available 24 / 7. Reg explained that the salary level for any appointment was set by the Church of Scotland, but that the Kirk Sessions were at liberty to offer to pay for more days. It was agreed that this issue should be discussed at the next Deacons' Court and Kirk Session.

Refurbishment of Wardlaw Church

A synopsis, as part of the Fabric Report, on where we are with this project was delivered at the Kirkhill A.G.M on Thursday, 25 March 2010 by Iain Mortimer. The first meetings of the committee prioritised work on the church floor, and interior improvements (balcony, Guild Room, vestry, east and west entrances, kitchen and new disabled toilet). The recommendations were reported to the Deacons' Court. The issue of replacing the floor brought with it the attendant issue of whether to replace the pews with seats - the Deacons' Court voted narrowly in favour of seats, in order to enable more flexible use of the church, and the economies that would be brought about by zoned heating. To clarify this debate on seating, the opinion of the congregation was sought via an opinion survey, the result of which demonstrated that whilst this was an emotive subject, the congregation were split in their preference. Accordingly, the original decision of the Deacons' Court was upheld. The Steering Committee is currently facing a delay in the receipt of customised plans from the architect, and is chasing for progress on this matter. The church's biggest asset in this issue is the potential sale of a plot of land behind the church; the potential value of this plot is unknown at present, and it is recognised that serious fundraising efforts are needed this year - end of AGM synopsis.

Fund raising - The 2009 accounts show a balance of £7,631 held in the Refurbishment Fund as at 31 December 2009. Fund raising in 2009 raised £1,259 mainly from the copper bucket, afternoon tea at Eilanreach, sale of notelets, etc. As reported in last month's edition we require nearly £130k to achieve phase 1 of the project. The sale of a plot of land at the rear of the Church could raise between £40k and £80k.

Outside funding / grants can be sought from a variety of sources, e.g. The Landfill Communities Fund, Baird Trust, Renfield Street Trust, Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust, Big Lottery Fund (or its replacement), etc. The Church of Scotland Central Fabric Fund operated by the General Trustees will be approached, although John and Simon quite rightly point out that this fund has already contributed over £55k in grants to refurbishment projects since 2008. Any third party approached for funding assistance, or a grant, will want to know how much the congregation have raised towards the total project before committing. The steering committee believe that a minimum of £20k to £30k needs to be deposited in our Refurbishment Fund, so we have some serious fund raising to do this year to achieve that goal.

Moira McDonald, a member of the steering committee, is the person who is the facilitator / co-ordinator for all fund raising ideas, not I hasten to add, not the organiser for all the events.

Thanks go to Aldra Chisholm for her church quiz - you can get your quiz entry form at the Church door, cost £1. A simple idea that will raise over £50 towards our goal. A quiz night in the Kirkhill Community Centre is planned for May - more details in next month's edition. Willis has received good vibrations about holding a hog roast for the Kirkhill community at Achnagairn House on a Saturday in August - again more details in next month's edition.

Fundraising events are a great source of fun and fellowship involving the wider community. We should not lose heart over the task ahead, and to illustrate what other congregations have recently done in turning their visions into reality, please read the following examples.

- i. Yester Kirk in the village of Gifford, East Lothian. Total refurbishment project was £700,000. The Fabric Committee raised £80,000, from events including a sponsored walk, craft fair, sale of historical booklets, an Antiques Road Show, concerts, bridge evening, garden parties, ceilidh, Strictly Dance Fever.
- ii. St. Andrew's at Arbroath. Total refurbishment cost has been £600,000 which was virtually all funded from events organised from within the congregation. The Minister, Rev. Martin Fair, puts this success down to range of factors, including having a vision of where the church is going, a congregation that is willing to be involved and accept responsibility, being willing to try new things and risk failure, and a genuinely inclusive community.
- iii. Bellie Parish Church, Fochabers. The refurbishment project cost was over £300,000. The fundraising efforts included weekly coffee and chat in the Church hall, annual summer balls, family ceilidh, Scots Nights, sponsored walks and marathons, concerts, talent shows, selling recipe booklets and ladies' lunches.

The Church of Scotland - Kirkhill Parish Church

1 January 2009 to 31 December 2010

John Finlayson - Treasurer

Account highlights				
Receipts	2009	2008	Difference	% inc / (Dec)
Offerings - open plate	£7,698	£8,631	(£933)	(12%)
Other offerings	£2,068	£415	£1,653	80%
WFO Scheme / Gift Aid / Tax recovered on Gift Aid	£9,626	£8,279	£1,347	14%
Flowers / Guild / Sunday School	£1,005	£665	£340	34%
Refurbishment fund	£1,259	£2,940	(£1,681)	(134%)
Bank interest / Investment income	£56	£358	(£302)	(539%)
Grant - General Trustees	£4,313		£4,313	100%
Total receipts	£26,025	£21,288	£4,737	18%

Payments	2009	2008	Difference	% inc / (Dec)
Ministries & Mission allocations	£6,329	£6,080	(£249)	4%
Minister's expenses	£479	£274	(£205)	43%
Locum Minister's costs	£4,160	£3,558	(£602)	100%
Other staffing costs	£1,495	£1,020	(£475)	100%
Insurance	£1,432	£1,407	(£25)	2%
Flowers / Guild / Sunday School	£1,081	£867	(£214)	20%
Professional fees for refurbishment	£4,313	£654	(£3,659)	85%
Other costs	£2,455	£165	(£2,290)	93%
Total payments	£21,744	£14,025	(£7,719)	35%

Excess of receipts over payments	£4,281	£7,263	(£2,982)	(70%)
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A copy of the complete Receipts and Payments Account is available if you contact
Maris Elkin or Iain Mortimer in the absence of John Finlayson