

31 January 2022

Dear Friends

*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”*

What is our purpose to be in these times? That is the question which the Presbytery Plan Creation Group is now dealing with.

I think this is a time to face facts, to pull up and to plant, to build on what has been done and to continue that work urgently.

- Time to face facts: The 2021 General Assembly instructed all presbyteries to review and update their mission plans by the end of 2022.
- Time to pull-up and plant: The Presbytery of Glasgow has been allocated a total of 84 ‘ministry’ posts. We currently have 123 charges, and many church buildings
- Time to complete work already begun: The Presbytery Mission Plan Review Group and last year’s local focus groups have given us 21 principles to abide by.

Now, we all have work to do: The PPCG has to bring a draft Mission Plan before Presbytery for approval by September and the Faith Nurture Forum and General Trustees by December.

It is important to us that we consult with local churches and take their comments and concerns into consideration. We are a diverse Presbytery; we are coming from different starting places and our congregations each have their own characters and histories. There will be change. Change both excites and threatens us and I can relate to both reactions.

We face hard choices. No parish or post is ‘immune’. As in bereavement, when we feel shock, numbness, anxiety or denial, we react with denial, defensively, even angrily. After all, we are experiencing loss shared, personal and cultural.

However, I do wonder where will defensiveness lead? Denial might deliver a short-term pay-off; a committee given a bloody nose; a hard choice left for another day; the illusion of business as usual. We could split into parties ‘for and against’ or argue over the inheritance. All very understandable and very human, but is there another way?

What if we own these feelings? What if we say, “Yes, I *do* feel threatened. We *are* angry and resentful” and go on to say, “Alright, we *won’t* pretend that this is what we’d choose normally, but we have to deal with it. This is the time.” This cannot be wished away. Much has already been done and *now* we have to see it through.

Your PPCG will work conscientiously to bring a draft plan before Presbytery. Then Presbytery will decide.

Over the coming weeks and months we will make every effort to maintain regular contact with you. It is important that you know how we are progressing and it is equally important to us that we know about your comments and concerns. What can you offer in this shared effort?

Yours in Christ

Roy Henderson  
Convener, Presbytery Plan Creation Group