FIFE PRESBYTERY The Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Fife

SCO050563

The Basement, 1 Howard Place, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9HL

01334 461300 fife@churchofscotland.org.uk

Presbytery Clerk: Rev Dr David Coulter

Mission Director: Mr Neil Campbell

Moderator: Rev Jane Barron

Letter to all Ministers and Congregations in Fife Presbytery

Fife Presbytery Mission Plan Update – 31st January 2022

In the King James Version of the Bible, Proverbs 29:18 says: "*Where there is no vision, the people perish….*" In the RSV it is translated: "*Where there is no prophecy…*" while in the NIV it reads: "*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.*" By the 31st December 2022 we as a Presbytery are mandated to deliver an approved Presbytery Mission Plan that will reduce our number of ministries by approx. 25% and determine the future of our buildings. To do so, we all need to seek God's guidance and to pray for revelation, prophecy and vision.

For several months we have been in consultation and now, given the time constraints, we need to begin to forge a vision for the future. There is an ancient proverb that says: "*Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he will never sit.*" It is understandable that some ministers, ministry staff and congregations are apprehensive about the future and what will happen to their church and ministry. Many have continued to work hard to maintain the church for generations to come. Our people are devoted, committed, hardworking and faithful but now we are asking too much from too few. As a new Presbytery we have come together but we don't really know one another and what we can become. We have yet to discover that we can be greater than the sum of our parts. In some places congregations are dwindling; ageing and fearful about where the Kirk is going.

Elsewhere there are new shoots beginning to appear and new ways of being and doing church beginning to emerge and evolve. Many of our ministers are weary and Kirk Sessions are working hard to support them, sustain the faithful, our buildings and our Presbyterian heritage. We all want the Church of Scotland to be living and active in our community and to endure; despite the fact that our resources are being stretched and our infrastructure may no longer be as fit for purpose as it once was. Deep

9.32

down we know we need to change, to make decisions and plan to future proof our church, so that future generations will sit in the shade of the tree that we have had the courage and the conviction to plant.

Our people are valued and we need to retain the faithful. We as a Presbytery have come together to support one another, to help one another as followers of Jesus and to be a force for good and a catalyst for change across our communities. We need to deliver on our promise to unburden ministers, elders and congregations and to free them up for mission, vitality and growth. We need to be prayerful and open to God speaking as we listen to him and seek his will as we continue to evolve, change and deliver the plan. Our aim is to enable ministers and congregations to fulfil their calling and to realise mission that is sustainable.

Lastly, in thanking you for all that you have done and continue to do for our church, we would ask you to pray for us, as together we seek to discern God's will for Fife Presbytery's Mission Plan.

With all good wishes and every blessing,

Jane, Neil and David

Rev Jane Barron – Moderator

Mr Neil Campbell – Mission Director

Rev Dr David Coulter - Clerk