

# Kintore Parish Church of Scotland

SC001406 Registered Scottish Charity

5 March 2018

Dear friends,

On Tuesday, 27 February, we held the first of our Strategic Planning Conference Sessions. The weather was atrocious, yet we still had a turnout of 27 people at the meeting. Thank you to all who braved the weather. The theme of the conference was **Leadership for Mission**, and we worked through a presentation from Richard Lloyd who has been our Path of Renewal mentor but was unable to be with us due to the weather. A copy of his slide presentation is available on the Church website: [www.kintorekirk.org](http://www.kintorekirk.org). I will briefly summarise the contents of the presentation here.

We started by recapping the challenge facing the church in the West today that has necessitated our journey on a path to renewal. There is little from the past that helps us on the journey as we are entering completely new territory. Churches in Scotland and across the world are, however, beginning to discern some clear principles that will shape the church of the future: The church of the future will need to offer **hospitable** fellowship and worship; engage meaningfully in **mission** to the wider community; and, nurture spiritual growth and **discipleship** among its members. These three traits - Hospitality, Mission and Discipleship – need to be core underlying principles for the future of the church and its leadership. Our success in each area will be measured by growth in numbers of newcomers joining and staying part of our church community, growth in our impact on our wider community and growth in faith and commitment by our members.

The journey towards being this new type of “Missional” church will take time, contains no quick fixes and will take place over difficult uncharted territory. To illustrate how our current situation differs from the past we might contrast the stories of Israel’s Exile to Babylon and Exodus from Egypt. At the Exile God’s people knew the land from which they had come and to which they wished to return – their desired destination and the route to get there were clear. In the 1980’s and 1990’s the Church Growth Movement saw the Church as a people in Exile longing to return to the heyday of Church dominance in the pre-1960’s era. The challenge before us today is much more like the Exodus from Egypt: We find ourselves in a desert place with only the promise of an unseen land ahead. What that Promised Land will look like and where the route lies that will get us there is as yet unclear.

Moreover, leadership in each of these situations looks completely different. Getting back home from Exile requires careful management to keep us on a determined path. Heading into the unknown of the Exodus requires brave leadership that will not simply tweak what we are currently doing but will risk experimenting with doing new things – many of which will be blind alleys. Leadership experts distinguish between technical and adaptive challenges. A technical challenge requires us to improve the way we are currently doing things. An adaptive challenge demands that we find completely new ways to do things. Leaders facing adaptive challenges need to stop asserting that everything is fine and will work out OK in the end; stop letting others think we know how to fix things; and, start working together to look for the way through. In adaptive change, rather than fulfilling the expectation that they will provide answers, leaders have to be the ones prepared to ask tough questions.

Finally, we considered the future role of the Kirk Session and other leaders in the congregation. While there are always various technical challenges that require management, the future will require the Kirk Session to lead the congregation through adaptive changes. This will require a far larger emphasis on discernment (eg. Discerning what needs to change and what needs to stay the same; and, discerning what God is doing in our community and how we can participate with God). As leaders the Kirk Session will also need to identify, recognise and co-operate with other leaders in the congregation. A discussion about possible changes to the personnel, structure and function of future leadership in the congregation (eg. Committees of Session, task-groups, etc.) will be left over to the final Conference Session in May.

The programme of conferences will take place as follows: (All meetings will be in the **Church Hall at 7:00pm**)

**Tuesday, 27 February**    **Leadership for Mission:** The roles of Elders, Session and other leaders in the light of the Path of Renewal. (COMPLETED)

**Tuesday, 20 March**      **Clarifying Vision:** Describing the future church to which we aspire and are called.

**Tuesday, 17 April**      **Goal-setting/Year-plan:** Reviewing our Year-plan and setting goals in the light of the vision agreed.

**Tuesday, 22 May**        **Committee Structures:** Restructuring Session Committees/Task-groups to assign and achieve goals agreed.

I look forward to your ongoing participation and prayer.

With much love,

Rev Neil Meyer