

## **Stated Annual Meeting 2023 - Session Clerk's Report 2023**

2023 has been another year of growth for our church embracing a return to more normal church life post the COVID pandemic as well as our involvement supporting our Ukrainian friends and participating in the Glasgow Presbytery Mission plan review. With our neighbouring cluster church, Ibrox, commencing their building work, we have benefited from holding joint services with them since mid-July. The main items from 2023 are:

### **1. Kirk Session**

There were five meetings of the Kirk Session and one Congregational meeting held during 2023. Clare Williams remained in post as the Session Clerk during the year and in November intimated that her term of office will end in April 2024. Nominations will be sought to succeed Clare in the early stages of 2024. Our thirty-eight serving elders continue to take on a variety of roles giving many hours of support to our church and wider community. In the autumn, the Kirk Session agreed and implemented a new committee structure which we hope will bring a new efficiency and direction to the church as we endeavour to embrace both our short as well as longer term future. Each of the working parties have been given clear aims and objectives and deliverances which will be reported to the Kirk Session. The new working parties can be grouped into the following areas of responsibility:

- a. Pastoral care, Membership care & development and discipleship, Social Committee, Hall and Sanctuary Lets, Worship, Communication
- b. Finance, fund raising, property,
- c. Outreach, community and mission, eco-committee

In addition, short term action groups, eg energy, grants and clockwork/standing committees, eg property, pastoral, communication, will be created as required. The new committee structure will be bedded in during the year and reviewed in November 2024.

### **2. Worship**

- a. **Minister:** the Reverend Adam Dillon continued to develop his ministry with Sherbrooke Mossspark during the year. In June we said a fond farewell to William McCulloch, on completion of his probationary ministry with us participating in our worship through the all-age address, preaching and leading prayers. Adaeze Goziem-Ibonye joined us for a short period as a probationer in September and then took up a position in India as part of her student ministry development. We have continued to enjoy the return of the Thursday morning services and have had the opportunity to worship with other local congregations during Advent, including our cluster church Ibrox Parish church.
- b. **Church officer:** in June 2023, we had the sad news of the death of Cameron Aitken, our Church officer of 8 years. Cameron was the life blood of our church and gave a lot of time and effort to

ensure the smooth running of both services and our extensive hall letting programme. He will be sorely missed. After an interview process including three members of our congregation, Rebekah Dillon was appointed as our new church officer from the start of September 2023.

- c. Ibrox:** in July, our cluster church, Ibrox Parish church started the complex upgrade to its halls building complex. With the closure of their sanctuary, the congregation joined us for worship from mid-July and we have enjoyed the joint fellowship including the ministry of the Rev Tara Porr Granados during that time. We have endeavoured to integrate our two congregations during the last six months which will stand us all in good stead as we progress to the proposed union as part of the Glasgow Presbytery Mission plan.
- d. Messy Church:** under the leadership of Susan Graham, our Church and Community outreach worker, and our volunteer team, we have continued to enjoy fellowship with local families during both our Messy Church, held at Mossspark Bowling Club, and summer Muddy church sessions in our local parks. A varied programme including the provision of a delicious meal for those families attending continues to be well received. Attendance levels have tended to vary and at the September 2023 session 14 children, including some new families, attended which is encouraging. Susan's connection with Mossspark primary school has assisted in developing relationships and we are grateful to all the volunteers who assist with the various aspects of running this important aspect of our worship outreach.
- e. Music:** under Tom Ferguson's leadership as our Organist and Director of Music, music and singing has remained an important part of our worship at Sherbrooke Mossspark. The Carols by Candlelight service and our participation in the BBC's Christmas eve service were both highlights of the year. There are currently twelve choir members; Tom and the choir would welcome more singers joining them.
- 3. Presbytery and Mission Plan:** Christine Macmillan has remained our Presbytery Elder during 2023 and would like to thank her for her ongoing commitment to this appointment. Sherbrooke Mossspark continued to be part of Glasgow Presbytery's Mission Plan project working alongside our local cluster church of Ibrox Parish Church. Following various stages of review by Glasgow Presbytery, as well as the Church of Scotland, Glasgow's Mission Plan was finally approved in July 2023. As noted elsewhere in this report, we have started working with Ibrox Parish Church and enjoyed hosting their congregation during the period of their building project. We will continue to work with Ibrox Parish Church as the year progresses as we gradually consider a union in due course. The annual Inspection of Records by Glasgow Presbytery was conducted in March 2023 with our church being given a 'clean bill of health'.

#### 4. Membership, Care, Development and Discipleship

- a. Membership:** in 2023 we had seven new communicant members, however there were sadly ten deaths and one removed for other reasons. The result was that our communicant roll reduced from 282 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 278 as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. Many thanks go to the various members who have been involved in this exercise, especially John and Brenda Duthie our Keepers of the Roll.

As part of our annual return to Glasgow Presbytery of congregational statistics, we also reported there we have 28 individuals over the age of 18 who are involved in the life of our congregation and 23 children. Through the work of our MCD committee we have continued to reach out to our wider congregation. One initiative which was started last year, was the distribution of small gift bags with cards for those unable to attend church for Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas; this has continued this year with the gifts being well received by the recipients. We will look to build on our pastoral work as we build fellowship across the various groups within our church community as well as our cluster church, Ibrox Parish Church.

Progress with taking forward previous proposals by the Committee concerning support for members and Elders' duties has been further discussed during the year with the setting up of neighbourhood hubs and a 'talents and skills database' starting to be progressed as we move into 2024. Further Elder's training alongside additional safeguarding training is also being planned for 2024.

- b. Communication:** we must commend the outstanding work of Mags Cargey in relation to the communication portals of the Website and WhatsApp groups and Julian Guse for our on-line worship and all IT related matters. Our on-line worship has been essential and successful over the past year with around 85 viewers over a typical week with higher levels for other events (the Carols by Candlelight service had over 500 views). The website usage continues at high levels with on average 500 monthly visitors over the calendar year. Mags Cargey has decided to step down from her communication role from the start of 2024 and we would like to thank her for her considerable contribution over many years. The MCD working party is currently working on finding a replacement for Mags but recognise it will be a difficult task given her experience, skill and dedication to the role.
- c. Social Committee, Women's Group and Guild:** the Easter Breakfast, Pentecost lunch, Coronation celebrations, Harvest Ceilidh and Christmas lunch all took place this year and were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. Members of our Social Committee and coffee team have also played an important role in our outreach initiatives of the Warm Welcome, Ukrainian Coffee and conversation afternoons, the plant sale and the mince pies and mulled wine at our Carols by Candlelight service. The Social Committee is commended and thanked for its continued support in assisting with a greater feeling of fellowship at Sherbrooke Moss park. The Women's Group continues to be well supported throughout the year and resumed their annual coffee morning

in February supporting one of our local charities, Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, raising just over £1000. The current state of the Guild is encouraging, with c18 people attending weekly sessions, attracted by a varied programme providing an opportunity to pray as well as learn from external speakers.

**5. Finance and Property:** Iain Webster, has continued in his role as our Church Treasurer and should be commended for his ongoing conscientious approach on our behalf; Iain has continued to be ably supported by David McCrossan. Electronic giving plates have now been installed both in the Sanctuary and in the large hall which have been used during our regular Sunday services as well as larger events. In the Autumn, the weekly collection was also reinstated. Although our near-term position is secure, concern remains over our longer-term funding and is one of the key areas of consideration for both the Finance and recently formed Fund Raising teams. We are seeking to actively manage the various options that could ensure our longer position as a thriving Church of Scotland centre in our area. Our Property Convener, Carole Mackie, and her team have worked very hard over the past year. They have made good progress with the essential Church building work highlighted by Kerr Baxter Associates following their survey in 2021 alongside managing the ongoing maintenance required at the Manse including the installation of a new kitchen. Budgets have been prepared for 2024 with a view to ongoing maintenance for our Church buildings and further repair and maintenance activity at the Manse.

**6. Outreach:**

**a. Mission Development Support - Church and community outreach worker:** Susan Graham's work has been directed towards developing our Messy and Muddy Church initiative in the Mossbank area latterly at the Mossbank Bowling Club and the Warm Welcome project. More recently Susan has restarted our mother and toddler Group on a Monday morning with attendance starting to grow. We are also working with Ibrox Parish Church to consider how we might offer support to the new Asylum-seeking centre in the Urban Go Hotel. Some other local charities are also supporting this initiative and plans are taking shape to run various activities during 2024.

**b. Other initiatives:** other areas of activity for the Outreach, Community and Mission team include:

- Working with our local community churches, the Warm welcome continued during 2023 despite the low numbers; a review of this project has now taken place and it will not continue in its current form in 2024 with our support now being directed towards the asylum-seekers.
- Adopting a station project at Corkerhill Station – good results by our hardy team.
- Fond farewell to our Ukrainian friends – with the Ukrainian community being rehoused from the Ambition cruise ship at Braehead in March 2023, our coffee and conversation afternoons having attracted large numbers came to end. The English language classes

were a significant aspect of the afternoons alongside providing 'cultural exchange and education'. An amazing project to have been involved with for our church community.

**c. Hall bookings:** Anne McCaig, our Halls and Sanctuary Manager, has continued to build on our ability to provide a superb community hub and facility for local as well as region-wide organisations. Seventeen concerts have taken place during the year with returning visitors from Glasgow's various orchestras and four new hirers including a Guitar and Mandolin orchestra from Lanarkshire and the Strathclyde University Symphony orchestra. There have been two new Glasgow based choral hires and our sanctuary has been used for four recitals, an all-day recording session for a string quartet and the BBC for their Christmas eve service. Trinity Music continues to hold its examinations in our sanctuary and we host a number of organisations for their regular meetings including the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and the British Doctors and Dentists. The weekly hall hires continue with the usual groups of the Scout Association and Tae Kwando through to the AM Chorus and Embroidery groups as well as new groups starting; we also hosted several parties organised by the wider local community. In September, we also accommodated some of Ibrox Parish Church's organisations due to the commencement of their buildings project. Encouragingly, we already have a number of choral, orchestral and other music events lined up for 2024 alongside three birthday events.

## **7. Miscellaneous, but not unimportant**

Other activities to mention include, but not limited to:

- The Plant sale raised £2,650 with plans already in place for this year on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May.
- Our Remembrance Poppy installation 'we will remember them together' created by the Women's Group, flower Committee and members and friends of both Sherbrooke Mosspark and Ibrox Parish Church. Over 1600 poppies were knitted and then tied onto two poppy banners installed on the Chancel pillars in November 2023.
- We continued to support our local charities with contributions to the Lodging House Mission, Glasgow City Mission, Preshal Trust and Christian Aid.

This report can only be written because so many people make a contribution to our church. It would be difficult to mention all names for fear of inadvertently omitting someone. I would therefore take this opportunity of thanking all of you for giving freely of your time and for the considerable effort that many of you put in 'behind the scenes' to bring warmth and sense of community to Sherbrooke Mosspark church.

I am also grateful for the assistance of Janis Walker, secretary to Sherbrooke Initiative Limited, who has provided practical and administrative support. I would also like to thank Rebekah Dillon who has taken over the role as our Church Officer, supported by Shona Heaney.

SAM 2023

Finally, thank you to our minister, Adam Dillon, who carries out a tremendous amount of work, not only at Sherbrooke Mossspark, but in many other areas across Glasgow Presbytery and the Church of Scotland.

**Clare Williams**  
**Session Clerk**  
**February 2024**