

**St. Margaret's Community
Church of Scotland Dunfermline**

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How do I feel about leaving St. Margaret's for the next 15 months? Part of me feels sad with that horrible feeling in your gut when you are losing something/someone important that you love.

Part of me feels excited at the prospect of doing something that is completely out with my comfort zone and is a challenge – even for a 68-year-old. Especially for a 68-year-old!!

Part of me feels confident because this is something I know God wants for me and St. Margaret's. I am confident because I know the church is in good hands because of the capable people that there are in this church. I am confident too because I know David Redmayne well and I could not ask for a better person to take over my position.

I feel reflective – looking back now over nearly forty years and seeing that in all God does in our lives He is no fool and that whatever happens we are always in His safe hands.

I feel hopeful. I am hopeful because I know that David will not allow the church to stand still and that he will bring his unique gifts of outreach to bear in our situation.

The road ahead of us will become clearer in the next few weeks as Presbytery brings forward its Mission Plan for the whole of Fife. Is there anything to be afraid of?

Nothing. Nothing at all! We have to approach these new proposals, first of all with a clear and open mind. Is it just possible that God is proposing to bring us closer together to work in partnership with other congregations because this is the only effective way forward for His Church here in Dunfermline?

We need to be careful not to be defensive, believing that the old way we have done things is the only right way. Surely good sense ought to be telling us by now that all of the churches are declining and the need to pool resources and engage in mission together makes perfect/divine sense?

We need to try and not be afraid of the *other* just because they see things differently from us and do things differently from us. We have much to offer as do the other congregations we will be asked to work in partnership with – there is that word *together*. It is the very definition of the Body of Christ.

We recognise that God is in the chaos of change. The first book of the Bible shows the Spirit of God brooding over the chaos of creation, bringing it all together. The coming of Christ into the world is chaotic in the impact it had on everyone's life – Mary, Joseph, Wise Men, Shepherds – but especially, Jesus, leaving the glory of heaven.

God was also in the chaos of the early church in particular at Pentecost as the wind of change blew through the lives of people and took them off in a completely different direction.

God is no fool – He will reform something out of this new thing.

What will it call for in all of us?

Love – primarily this. Love is something that brings people together and is the cement that builds the Church.

Grace – it is grace that defines who we are as Christians and needs to be exercised in abundance as we try and find imaginative and new ways of working together.

Perspective – this is the Lord's Church above all else and exists for the sake of those who are out with His Kingdom so that we become a powerful tool for winning people for Christ.

Taking risks/leaps of faith together. This is something that we are not too good at because we feel threatened by our increasingly secular culture. Maybe, like Peter when He saw Jesus walking in the storm we have been of the same mind as him when Peter asked Jesus to command him to take the risk and get out the boat – he got out and walked and then lost faith but two things happened:

- He achieved something none other did because he actually walked on water – in a storm!!
- Although he started to sink, he experienced the power of Jesus saving him.

We ought never to worry about potential failure because that will only result in us standing still and we will stagnate.

Trust our Presbytery Mission Committee and our Mission Director. A great deal of hard work, thought and prayer has been going into trying to imagine the best future under God for the

Presbytery of Fife, of which we are a part.

But above all, pray. Pray with an open mind and heart as we do when we say the Lord's Prayer – "Your Will be done."

So, it is farewell for a wee while until, God willing, I return to serve in this area/church. I know I have your support and I sincerely do value your prayers for the time ahead.

God Bless.

Iain

Intimations

Morning Worship will be at 10.30am. the Minister will be taking the service on Sunday. From next Sunday [27th] Rev. David Redmayne will be in charge both as Locum and Interim Moderator.

If you were a regular attender at Church prior to Covid, please consider it now safe to return to regular worship.

If you have not been to church for a wee [or even long] while, why not make the effort and start to come back – or at least try it and see.

Church Café is open from 11am till 1pm – all are welcome. All proceeds from the Café go into Church funds.