



The Church of Scotland

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4 August 2020

The text below has been sent to:

Presbytery Clerks, Ministers, OLMs and Auxiliaries, MDS, Interim Moderators and Locums, Readers, the Diaconate, Ministry Candidates & Probationers and Session Clerks

Dear Friends,

While some churches have already re-opened for public worship, most are still considering how best, and when, to do so. The need to navigate our way through the challenges involved and to properly implement the published guidelines is causing a degree of anxiety not seen since the beginning of lockdown. Rightly so, there are all kinds of questions to be answered and systems to be put in place to ensure as much as possible that those who visit our buildings are kept safe. I am enormously grateful to all those who at national, regional and local levels have worked so hard to get us to this point.

But while we order supplies of sanitising agents and face coverings, measure our sanctuaries to calculate allowable numbers, and work out how best to handle 'in church' worship alongside digital content, we mustn't miss the opportunity that is now before us to ask the crucial questions of what it is we're going back to do and how best are we going to do it? Will it be business as usual or might this be an opportunity for us to invite a fresh blowing of the wind of the Spirit to refresh and reinvigorate us and to 'revive us for this hour?'

This may well be a critical moment in the life of our Church - a paradigm-shifting moment. And if that's true for the Church then it may be equally true for the country, not least as COVID-related economic realities begin to bite.

It's with that in mind that I have decided to offer A Week of Prayer for Church and Country, believing that as we head into such a critical period we should be 'on our knees' before the One who has promised to lead us. The week will run from Monday 17 to Saturday 22 August and I'm presently working with a group of wonderfully creative colleagues to put it all together. Fuller details of how to get involved and how to involve congregations will follow, but in brief there will be a short, recorded reflection and prayer each morning and an opportunity to gather nationally online each evening. These gatherings will be entirely interactive and there will be ways for individuals and congregations to participate - as little or as much as possible.

I very much hope you'll want to participate in this week, as you are able, and that you'll encourage members to do likewise.

'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.' Colossians 4:2

Yours in Christ,

Rt Revd Dr W Martin Fair
Moderator