

## 7. GAELIC IN THE CHURCH

7.1 The Council of Assembly has responsibility for coordinating the Church's contribution to the development and promotion of Gaelic within the Church and is supported in this work by the Gaelic Group whose remit was formally approved by the General Assembly of 2018. The Council's Report last year advised that *"in order to produce new resources and materials, as well as activities, the Gaelic Group is exploring a number of different opportunities to receive funding for this work, both internal and external to the Church."* The Council is delighted to report that the Group has made some significant progress in this regard, securing funding to enable key aspects of work to be progressed during the 2019-20 session.

7.2 A grant of £30k has been awarded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and, from within the Church, £15k has been provided from a restricted fund. These grants combined will allow a Gaelic Officer to be appointed on a consultancy basis for one year to progress specific work, but also to bring forward a fully costed and prioritised Gaelic Language Plan, in consultation with the Council, building on the work which has been done on the Plan to this point in time.

7.3 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) has awarded a grant of £9k towards two specific projects: firstly, the production of a Gaelic audio version of the four Gospels and, secondly, for Gaelic resources for the *Thy Kingdom Come* global prayer initiative.

7.4 The Gaelic Group is very keen to work with other denominations and has benefited from the involvement and advice of the Ecumenical Officer in its meetings over this session. This work provides many opportunities for ecumenical engagement and joint working, and a number of initial approaches have been made. The Gaelic Officer will be required to work in collaboration with other churches wherever possible so that the Gaelic community as a whole is supported and that Gaelic speakers within all of the churches are better resourced and equipped for ministry and mission.

7.5 In this regard, a key priority for the next session will be a national conference, following on from the 2015 *Next Steps* event which looked at the place of Gaelic in Scotland's churches and how best to strengthen this. This event will further consider the needs and ways of promoting Gaelic ministry and mission and will offer support and encouragement to Gaelic speaking ministers and anyone who would like to improve their Gaelic for use within a church context. One specific aim is to see an increase in the number of Gaelic church services being held.

7.6 The Group's primary aim is to encourage the use and enlivening of Gaelic in the Church. This was very much the focus of the Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison who convened the Group until June 2018. The Council is most grateful to Dr Morrison for his involvement and enthusiasm for this work. The Vice-Convener, Boyd Robertson, former Principal of Sabhal Mor Ostaig (the Gaelic College in Skye) has been serving as Acting Convener since that time. Boyd's expertise has been of great help in ensuring that this important work is taken forward to the next stage of development on behalf of the Church.