



**T R I N I T Y**  
**C H U R C H**  
*A B E R D E E N*

*A Guide to Membership*



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## Introduction

This booklet provides answers to the following questions:

- What is church membership?
- Why does church membership matter?
- How do you become a member of Trinity?
- What is Trinity's relationship to the International Presbyterian Church?
- How is Trinity church organized?

### ***First....***

Please read through this booklet, note any questions you may have and make arrangements to meet with David or one of the elders to talk things through.

If you would like to become a member, the Session will consider your request to join and you will be advised of the decision.

### ***Then....***

If proceeding with membership, you will be asked to complete the membership declaration form on pages 9-10 for your own keeping, and to sign and return to the church the loose-leaf copy. Receipt of this form will be acknowledged.

We hope that the information in this booklet (while possibly more than you can cope with in one sitting!) will give as full and open a picture as possible about the Trinity Church family.

With sincere Christian love,

Simon Barker, Lawrie Fairns,  
David Gibson & David MacLeod

*Spring 2017*

# 1. Trinity Church Membership

## What is it and why does it matter?

Church membership is based, quite simply, on the clear call of Jesus Christ to repent and believe the gospel. And so, whatever your church or denominational background, all that we require for membership is Christian baptism and a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If baptism and public profession of faith are things which you have not considered before please speak to one of the elders.

We provide much more detail in this booklet than the need to repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Please, however, do not lose sight of this simple core of Christian faith.

Part of the beauty of God's grace is that there are no extra hoops to jump through, we have nothing to prove to God, there is nothing we can earn from him. The gospel is not about receiving what we deserve, it is about what God has done for the undeserving. The local church is the group of people who belong to this gracious God. Together, we are learning all the time to respond to his grace and to make it known to each other and to as many others as possible.

We sincerely hope that in attending Trinity Church, Aberdeen you will have found a fellowship which is committed to serving one another in Christ. We hope that attending will grow into a desire to make a further commitment through membership. In becoming church members at Trinity, we are not pretending to be perfect in our obedience, or to be advanced in our spiritual status. Quite the opposite. When you read the vows carefully you will see that what we are declaring is our own personal weakness and Christ's wonderful victory over sin on which we all depend.

In many of the New Testament letters we see the tendency in the church to promote some kind of advanced form of Christianity based on religious observance. Our aim is to do the opposite. Our aim is to reaffirm the profound simplicity of the gospel which always welcomes

all who are repentant and never leaves us where we are.

For many who attend, we anticipate that the decision to become a member of Trinity will be a natural choice. We do recognise that for some, however, there may be differences to the denomination that you are used to. Please bear in mind that denominations are human inventions. They are useful for organising ourselves, under God, in a fallen world but they should never separate fellowship amongst the family of God.

### So how do you become a member at Trinity?

Church members:

- Will have received Christian baptism as a child or adult (if you have never been baptised, please speak to one of the elders)
- Are not usually members of another Church
- Profess Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord
- Carefully consider and sign the profession of faith statement on pages 9-10, understanding the commitment involved.
- Will be entered on the membership roll of the church and remain there until they advise otherwise or are removed by decision of the Session.

Members over 18 years of age are entitled to speak and to vote in congregational business meetings.

The dependent children of members (i.e. up to the age of 18) are considered 'non-voting members' by covenant promise until they reach maturity and public profession of faith. Parents of these children do not need to fill in membership forms for them and are simply asked to list their names on one of the parents' forms.

Church members need to carefully consider and regularly review their stewardship of all the resources God gives them. Time, money and skills are all gifts from God that we should joyfully and sacrificially share with the Church.

In order to function, Trinity Church relies wholly on its members' financial support (all monies are given through The Cruden Trust). Income is needed to pay for staff salaries, room hire and all other ministry and administrative costs.

We do want to highlight the eight vows on the membership form. It is a real joy for each of us, as part of our church family, to affirm our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by making these vows our own and signing our name against them.

### ***Finally....***

The way that your membership is recognised publicly may differ but the substance and validity of membership remains the same:

#### **By public profession of faith**

For those who have previously been baptised as an infant but have never made a public declaration of their faith before, this is a great way to encourage the rest of the church family.

Usually this will take place in a Sunday morning service and would involve being asked some straightforward questions (similar to those on the membership declaration form).

#### **By baptism**

If you have never been baptised, this is the way to recognise what God has done in your life. David or the elders will be pleased to discuss this in more detail with you.

#### **By resolution of the Session**

Where an individual has previously been baptised and a member of another church, the Session may resolve to admit you to membership. This will be publicly acknowledged in the church notices.

## We are a congregation of the IPC

The International Presbyterian Church is our family of churches and, as such, reflects the close fit between the pattern and constitution of our own structures and beliefs at Trinity. We gain strength of fellowship, accountability and structure that is a real blessing through our membership in the IPC family of Churches and so we commend the IPC to you warmly.

The International Presbyterian Church, affirms that:

*God calls every local Christian fellowship to a pattern of preaching and shared life which will lead other people to hear the gospel and follow Christ.*

*God creates and shapes the church through his perfect and living word as it is taught and applied in a way which people can both access and understand.*

*God's word teaches us to adopt a pattern of church leadership (as found in Presbyterian churches) where authority is shared between local churches and given to appointed elders.*

*God has many true believers in many different branches of the Christian church with whom we are in real fellowship through a shared belief in the gospel.*

*We are part of the historic family of churches which, since the reformation, seeks to uphold God's truth in scripture and to teach Christ's authority over every aspect of life.*

*The church family should encourage Christians to live pure and holy lives and, when required, discipline members in order to protect the fellowship from false teaching or unrepentant sin.*

The overriding objective of the IPC is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, who is head of his church and Lord of all the world. This means that IPC congregations seek to be humbly submissive to Christ's word and to seek his honour and glory in all aspects of their organisation and ministry.

## Membership of Trinity Church, Aberdeen

*(Please sign and retain this copy in this booklet for your reference)*

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert full name]

of \_\_\_\_\_ [insert address]

hereby confirms they have been baptised within the Christian Church,  
and also publicly affirms their faith in the following profession:

*I know that God exists as a personal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and acknowledge that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.*

*I acknowledge that I am a sinner, not only in thought, word and deed, but in my very nature; thus if God were to judge me as I deserve he would have to condemn me.*

*I know that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, he paid the penalty for my sin and did everything necessary to make me right with God.*

*I know God's promise that 'he who believes on the Son has eternal life' and have personally repented of my sin and trusted Christ as my Saviour, so that I can say without presumption that I am now a child of God.*

*I intend to serve Christ and to make him Lord over every area of my life, realizing that this may be costly and that I will need to depend daily on God's strength.*

*I recognise the authority of the elders and I am willing to accept their discipline if that should ever be necessary.*

*I promise to support this congregation by prayer, giving, and caring practically for individuals.*

*I commit myself to fostering healthy relationships in this congregation, recognising that this includes the stifling of gossip and expression of any criticism in a positive and humble way to the person concerned.*

and hereby assents to the governance and oversight of the International Presbyterian Church over the life of the congregation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please also list below the name(s) and date(s) of birth of any dependent children in your family:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

## **2. Trinity Church Organisation**

The following is an outline of church family life at Trinity, Aberdeen. (For a more detailed presentation, see 'Trinity Church Constitution' in this booklet).

### **Services and other activities**

Trinity Church meets at the Northern Hotel, Great Northern Rd.

Services are held every Sunday at 11am and 5pm.

Church family prayer meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month all year round. We share communion on the first Sunday of each month, alternating between mornings and evenings.

House group Bible studies are formed on an annual basis and usually meet for two terms – please ask for details.

A crèche is provided for younger children.

Sunday School classes are held every Sunday morning from age 3 to the end of primary school. We are delighted to welcome new children.

The Trinity Youth Group 'TR:UTH' is the group for children at secondary school. Regular Bible study and activities are planned.

Special events and family activities are arranged throughout the year – please ask about our next one.

We have quarterly Church Council meetings that are open to all. We also have an Annual General Meeting.

There are many opportunities to help and serve. Please speak to any member of the leadership to discover how you might get involved.

## Leadership

Trinity Church exists under the authority of the Presbytery of the IPC and is led by our Session, made up of ordained elders:

Moderator & Teaching Elder	David Gibson (Minister)
Ruling Elder & Clerk to Session	Simon Barker
Ruling Elder	Lawrie Fairns
Ruling Elder	David MacLeod

The Session is responsible for the leadership of our church. The Elders are not democratic representatives but are ordained and accountable to Presbytery. Decisions of the Session should always be in accord with the primary aim of honouring the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Church Council

The Church Council is made up of men and women members of the church, and is responsible for the day to day running of the church under the direction of the Session. Members of the church are appointed to the Council for three year periods. The Council is chaired by one of the Elders. Two trustees of the Cruden Trust are *ex-officio* members of the Church Council.

## Co-ordinators

Some areas of our church life are co-ordinated by individuals – please do speak to them if you have a specific query:

Welcome Team and Venue	Alan Smith
Transport	Pearl Williamson
Sunday School	Gillian Falconer
Crèche	Nicola Fitch
TR:UTH	Ben Traynor

## Staff

David Gibson, our Minister, is responsible for organising our services, leading the church staff team, and for the day to day running of the church. Alongside him are other members of staff:

Nicola Fitch	Church Administrator
Drew Tulloch	Music Co-ordinator
Ben Traynor	Ministry Trainee

## Church Office

The Church office is open most weekdays:

Trinity Church, c/o 63 Wingate Road, Aberdeen, AB24 2SZ  
01224 481144  
info@trinityaberdeen.org.uk

Please advise Nicola Fitch of any changes of contact details.

## The Cruden Trust

Trinity Church is financed by The Cruden Trust, a registered Scottish Charity (SC041966). The Trust was founded in 2010 with the primary purpose of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of Aberdeen and beyond.

You can contact the Trust at:

The Cruden Trust, 63 Wingate Road, Aberdeen, AB24 2SZ  
01224 481144

The Trustees are:

Simon Barker (Chair)	Alan Smith (Secretary)	David Gibson
Jamie Cooper	Lawrie Fairns	Mairi Prescott
Norma Gibb	Alistair Smith (Treasurer)	Drew Tulloch
David Macleod		

To support the work of Trinity Church, please give to The Cruden Trust.

Cheques should be made payable to 'The Cruden Trust' or standing orders should be set up online or by writing to your bank:

Sort code: 87 39 53; Account number: 70320560; Bank: Lloyds TSB

Please use Gift Aid – fill in a form and we can claim back tax.

### 3. Distinctives of the International Presbyterian Church

The 'IPC' was founded in 1954 by Francis Schaeffer. As a Reformed church, it holds to the understanding of the gospel as set out in the Ecumenical Creeds and The Westminster Confession of Faith, all of which are subordinate to the Bible as God's Word. It is a small denomination with churches in the UK and mainland Europe.

#### The Gospel

The IPC recognises the following truths as key expressions of the gospel:

a) *The gospel is about knowing the Sovereign, Transcendent, Trinitarian God.*

The gospel is about how the almighty, great and glorious God, who made everything and is infinitely exalted above all his creation, has called his people to know him. The Triune God calls us to know the Father through the incarnate Son by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is God's summons to know himself through himself. All the blessings of the gospel, now and for eternity, are to be understood as coming from the Father, won for us by Jesus Christ, and enjoyed in Spirit-given fellowship with him.

b) *The gospel is inseparable from the Word of God*

The gospel is good news (Mark 1:1): that is, it is a message to be verbally proclaimed. Furthermore, this message is the word of God (Acts 6:7), defined by the Scriptures. The Scriptures are God's covenant constitution for his church, through all of which the Holy Spirit brings the Church into existence and onwards to maturity. We therefore treat the Scriptures as having the full authority of God himself, and aim to understand it in continuity with the Church throughout history. For this reason we are a confessional church: not only must we say that we believe the Bible's teaching, but we must state clearly what it is we believe the Bible teaches. Therefore we hold

to the ecumenical creeds and the Westminster Confession, as encapsulating the content of the gospel.

*c) The gospel is about forgiveness of sins*

As the angel announced to Joseph before his birth (Matthew 1:21), and Jesus himself said after his resurrection (Luke 24:47), the principle blessing he came to give to those who receive him is the forgiveness of sins. Specifically, forgiveness of us by God for the sins we have committed against him, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus at the cross, saving us from future judgment and justifying us for eternity. Important as other blessings of the gospel are, this is never to be neglected, eclipsed or displaced as the centre point of what salvation in Christ means.

*d) The gospel is about the whole of life*

Once the central place of forgiveness has been affirmed, it is necessary to say that the gospel is not merely that. The gospel is that God in Christ is restoring and completing his creation: restoring what has been damaged by sin, and completing his original purposes when he created the world and placed man over it to rule it and fill it. This has been accomplished by Christ in his death and resurrection and will be brought to completion in his body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church is therefore humanity recreated in the image of God (Ephesians 4:24). Forgiveness and justification are therefore the essential beginning of the work of redemption and transformation that encompasses the whole of human life. This means not only the whole of the life of the individual Christian (there is no area of a Christian's life which is not to be transformed in the power of the Spirit into the likeness of Christ), but the whole of human society throughout the world. The Church is an international body united in Christ (Colossians 3:11). Jesus gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).

*e) The gospel is about the return of Christ*

While we have a foretaste of these things now, we do not expect their full realisation now but only at Christ's return when Christians will be united with him in a resurrection like his (Romans 6:5). What Christians receive now from the risen and ascended Christ is a foretaste of these things, in their new birth in their 'inner man' (2 Cor 4:16) and in the life of the church, which is the nucleus of the new creation.

*f) The gospel is about the church and the church is about the gospel*

God's plan of salvation has always centred on his covenant people, the Church. The members of the Kingdom of God are the members of Jesus' Church; the Church is the sphere of redemption. It is not merely the meeting-place for converted people; it is the nation God has chosen for himself, the race who are being restored into God's true image, because it is the body and bride of Christ the true image of the invisible God. As such the Church is the nucleus of the new creation and salvation is all about being part of the Church. To be saved is to enter the Kingdom, to join the covenant people of God.

In his covenant God chooses a nation as his own, calls them to himself, binds himself to them and them to him by his words and comes to dwell with them, to be their God and to have them as his people. Far from being something which was scrapped with the coming of Christ in favour of a whole new mode of salvation (applied individually to people through faith outside of any context of covenant), the glory of the new covenant is that the gentiles have come to share in the blessings of Israel (e.g. Rom 15:27). Individual faith is vital because the promises of the covenant must be received in faith; and for just the same reason, faith must be in the covenant promises, made to God's people as a whole. The goal of salvation is the building of the Church, rather than the other way round.

This means the Church is the sphere where the whole-life gospel is put into practice. Calling people to salvation is calling them to Christ,

which is calling people into his Church. Of course church membership must never be divorced from faith in Christ; but nor should faith in Christ be divorced from church membership. The Church is to be a counterculture where God's design for humanity, for all human relationships is restored and displayed for the world to see. Because there is one Church, the one covenant people of the Triune God, connection and mutual accountability between congregations is important. Gospel unity needs to be maintained by appropriate accountability of elders to the wider church, and spurred on by mutual encouragement in the gospel. The Biblical pattern appears to be that these twin functions should be fulfilled by a council of elders from many churches – a presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). Presbyterian church government is, therefore, both a court for the good government of the church and a catalyst for the growth of the church.

## **The Church**

The IPC seeks to practically apply these truths and understands the functions of the Church to include:

a) *The Holy Spirit applies the blessings of the gospel through the means of grace.*

While the visible church, as seen by us in the present, is not to be identified with the true Church of those of genuine faith (which is invisible to us), nevertheless the ordinary means by which God gives Christians the blessings of salvation come through the visible church.

Therefore the normal Spirit-filled Christian life is lived in the church and it is through the means of grace found in the church that the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Christ and grows them to Christian maturity.

Therefore our churches, and future church plants, should have the following distinctives:

### *i) Preaching*

God has always built his Church through his word; Jesus rules his Church through the written word, written and illuminated by his Spirit. Therefore the preaching of the word of God to the assembly of the church is the central act of the church's worship and the central means through which she submits to her Lord. Both expository and doctrinal preaching are important; expository preaching is of particular value in keeping the church under the authority of God's word. Both must constantly proclaim Christ crucified, risen and ascended (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

### *ii) Sacraments*

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not dispensable additions to the Christian's life; they are given and commanded by Christ as sure signs of his grace and, when received with faith, means of communicating that grace to us. Thus while they are of no value if received with no faith (in fact they increase condemnation), and salvation does not depend on them, they are in ordinary circumstances essential parts of the life of the Christian and the life of the Church. They are (as the Westminster Confession says) signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace: Baptism of entry into that covenant, the Lord's Supper of continuing life within it. As such, the Lord's Supper is to be a regular feature of our services and Baptism should be administered as soon as possible after a credible profession of faith.

In line with their nature as covenant signs, infants born within the family of the church are rightly baptised to show their membership of the covenant people in which they will grow; and children giving a credible profession of faith, as judged by their parents and the church's elders, are rightly given the Lord's Supper. When understood in this way the sacraments are a powerful visual proclamation of the gospel both to believers and unbelievers.

### *iii) Elders*

Elders, also called in the New Testament overseers, shepherds and teachers, are Christ's ordained means of equipping the saints for the work of ministry so as to build up the body of Christ, and so bring his church to maturity. They do this through their example, their teaching, and their government of the church (Ephesians 4:11-16). Elders are to meet the standards set for them in 1 Timothy and Titus and obey Paul's exhortations in Acts 20.

A healthy church should have a plurality of elders according to the New Testament pattern. It is the responsibility of elders to teach the Bible to their church and to dispense the sacraments appropriately. This includes the discipline of believers when necessary. Eldership is to be seen as an immense blessing to the whole church; a gift from the ascended Christ to his people (along with the Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists), as the principle route through which he applies the blessings of his word to his church, through preaching, teaching, governing and pastoral care.

Being instituted and ordained by Christ, the office of elder is not to be tampered with. Elders hold a delegated authority from Christ, and as such it is only an office for men, the distinct roles of male and female in human society being clearly laid out in Scripture. The office of Ruling Elder, as one who exercises the authority of an elder without having the regular duty of teaching, is less prominent in the New Testament than in the Old, but still appears to be present (1 Timothy 5:17) and is to be preserved.

There are many godly believers in Christ who do not hold to a covenantal view of the church as set out above, and therefore are unable to subscribe to the Westminster confession (for example, they might refuse to baptise the children of believers). Such individuals and their families are most welcome as members of our churches. However, since it is essential for the good governance of the church that elders hold to a common vision of the church, and the Reformed view of the church set out above is of great

significance to the character of our gospel preaching, it is not acceptable for such men to be elders in our churches. At the same time, those with such convictions who are elders of other orthodox churches are to be treated as brothers and fellow-elders and dissension is to be avoided.

*iv) Deacons (the Church Council at Trinity)*

Deacons are entrusted with the care of the needy, starting with those in the church. Each church should aim to appoint deacons, to enable the elders to concentrate on the ministry of the word and prayer.

*b) The Holy Spirit drives the church to mission*

*i) Mission is essential*

The covenantal view of the church held by Reformed churches commends active involvement in mission. The covenant with Abraham was always intended to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth; ever since Pentecost Christ has been gathering his people, through the witness of the Spirit to the word as it is proclaimed by the Church, from all across the world. It is therefore inconsistent and unbiblical for churches with Reformed convictions to be satisfied with self-preservation and not see winning disciples from the unbelieving nation in which they are located, and partnering with churches doing the same worldwide, as a high priority.

*ii) Mission means drawing people into the covenant by the gospel*

The covenant of grace is a counter-culture; it is not our ambition to assimilate to the culture in which we find ourselves but to transform those who join the church into the radically different culture of the Kingdom of God. British Christians have more in common culturally with fellow-Christians in Kazakhstan, and with fellow-Christians who lived in the Roman Empire of the first century, than with their non-Christian British neighbours.

*iii) Mission requires laying aside stumbling blocks for those coming from within contemporary culture*

At the same time, our desire to guard the apostolic gospel and live in a distinctive Christian way is not to be confused with a desire to preserve subculture, which may be no more than the relic of non-Christian culture of an earlier age.

There is of course great wisdom in learning from where Christians in earlier ages have learned things from Scripture that we have missed; but there is no virtue in preserving (for example) forms of dress, or language, from an earlier age merely because it is from an earlier age.

While finding our identity in Christ, and always wanting to reform all of life according to Scripture, we should be willing to do so in ways which lay no unnecessary stumbling blocks in the way of non-Christians coming to church, hearing and understanding the gospel, repenting and believing in Christ and joining his Church.

Our passion is that sinners in a world ruined by sin may hear and believe the gospel of Christ and find salvation, join his church, and wait for his return.

Whilst matters of biblical accountability are reserved to the denomination, resources are not. The assets of Trinity Church are all held locally by The Cruden Trust.

## **4. Trinity Church Deed of Constitution**

We hereby constitute ourselves to be a part of Christ's universal and apostolic church, recognising the Holy Bible to be the inspired word of God and the supreme authority in matters of faith and life.

### **Subordination to IPC**

The control of the affairs of the Congregation, both spiritual and temporal, shall (subject to any Acts, Regulations or Directions which may subsequently be enacted by the International Presbyterian Church, hereinafter referred to as the 'IPC') be vested in the Session of the Congregation (hereinafter referred to as "the Session"). Such functions shall include all those devolving in terms of the Book of Common Order of the IPC (this may be inspected in the Church office on request). Nothing herein shall affect the status of the Session as a Court of the Church.

### **Church Membership**

The procedure for church membership shall be subject to the Session and shall be in accord with the Laws of the IPC.

### **Session**

The Session shall consist of the Minister(s) of the Charge (Teaching Elders) together with the Ruling Elder(s) ordained and admitted to the Session in accordance with the laws of the IPC as expressed in the Book of Common Order. Other Ministers and trainees may be associated with the work of the Session as permitted by the law of the Church.

The Session shall lead and nurture the spiritual welfare of the congregation and encourage participation in Christian worship and promote mission and evangelism.

A Minister(s) of the Charge shall *ex officio* be Moderator of the Session. In a vacancy or where the Minister has, for any reason, been granted leave of absence, the Presbytery shall appoint one of its number to act as Interim Moderator (and may do so where a vacancy is anticipated) with all the powers and to fulfill all the usual functions of the Moderator.

The Moderator or Interim Moderator shall also be entitled to authorise another minister of the Church to act as Moderator. It shall be the function of the Moderator to call meetings of the Session and he shall be bound to do so within ten days if requested in writing by a majority of the elders. Meetings shall normally be held in public with pastoral or disciplinary matters being taken in private by resolution of the Session. The quorum at meetings shall be a majority of Elders including the Moderator or Interim Moderator. Procedure at meetings shall be in accordance with the law of the Church, subject to which it shall be competent for the Session to frame Standing Orders to regulate its own business. Failing it doing so, its business shall be regulated in terms of the Book of Common Order of the IPC.

The Session shall appoint a Clerk. The person so appointed shall hold office during the pleasure of the Session. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep regular minutes of the proceedings of the Session and also of the proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and to maintain these in a permanent record in which each minute, when approved, shall be signed by the Moderator and the Clerk. He shall issue extract minutes when so instructed, and ensure the safe custody of all official records.

The Session Clerk (or another Elder) shall organise Communion services (the dates and times of the services being agreed by the Session). It should be noted that any document signed by the Clerk in that capacity carries the presumptive approval and authority of the Session.

The Session may arrange for any of its functions to be discharged on its behalf by a committee (retaining nevertheless full responsibility for the diligent discharge thereof). When delegating to a committee with powers, the Session shall cause to be minuted the powers so delegated and any conditions or restrictions applicable to the delegation.

It shall be the duty of the Session to oversee the temporal affairs of the church, through the Church Council to which it may devolve decision making authority for such temporal functions. The Session shall, however, maintain a responsibility to create and maintain in the Congregation a commitment to provide, by regular giving, sufficient income to meet the cost of the whole financial and other temporal affairs and obligations of the Congregation and to take all necessary and appropriate measures to secure that end.

## **Church Council**

The Church Council shall be the equivalent of a diaconate as defined by the IPC. It is a devolved decision making body of the Session and as such shall organise the temporal affairs of the Church, together with other responsibilities delegated to it by the Session. Church Council members shall be expected to participate in meetings, in sub-committees of the Council and to set an example of Christian leadership in the Church family.

The Elders of the church shall be members of the Church Council. An Elder shall chair meetings of the Church Council. In addition to the Elders, two trustees of the Cruden Trust shall be members of the Church Council. Up to 6 church members shall be appointed by the Session to the Church Council to serve for 3 year renewable terms. The Church Council shall make recommendation to the Session for the co-opting of additional members to fill any vacancies that emerge.

Stated meetings of the Church Council shall be intimated in advance at the ordinary services on two consecutive Sundays. The Council

shall meet for ordinary business quarterly, meetings shall be open to all who wish to attend. The Session Clerk shall prepare and distribute an agenda in advance of meetings.

The agenda shall be agreed and adopted at the commencement of meetings. The Session Clerk shall distribute the minute in advance of the next meeting. The minute shall be agreed (or amended if necessary) and signed at the subsequent meeting of the Council. Decisions shall normally be reached by consensus. In the unlikely event of a vote being required decisions shall be carried by a simple majority of Council members who are present. A quorum shall be one Elder plus three Council members. The Council shall have capacity to meet additionally as required, intimated as above.

The Council has the facility to convene additional sub-committees to support and facilitate its functions as required.

The Session and Church Council gratefully recognises that there are a large number of church functions that are readily handled by an individual or small group. These areas of delegated task may report to the Session or Council where support is required.

### **Reserved matters**

Whilst maintaining oversight, the Session wishes to empower its sub-committees to make appropriate decisions (as outlined in this document). For clarity, several areas are specifically reserved:

The frequency and times of services, outreach and mission. The content and conduct of services is the sole responsibility of the Minister(s).

Staff contracts [Cruden Trust].

Annual accounts and budget approval [Cruden Trust].

Decisions on matters of discipline, admission to membership and appointment of Elders [Session].

## **Church Finances**

The Cruden Trust, a registered Scottish Charity, is the financially competent body which finances Trinity Church, Aberdeen. All financial expenditure of the Church is subject to the approval of the Trustees of The Cruden Trust whose aims are coincident with those of Trinity Church, Aberdeen.

## **Appeal**

If any question shall arise with reference to the interpretation of any Article of this Constitution or the legality of any particular exercise of the powers herein contained, it shall be competent to any person or body interested to apply by Petition to the Presbytery of the IPC to adjudicate upon the matter and the judgment of the Presbytery upon such matter shall be final, subject only to appeal to the IPC Synod.

Delegation: It shall be in the power of the IPC or any body to which they may delegate powers at any time, or from time to time, to alter, revoke, amend or modify this Deed of Constitution, in whole or in part, or to substitute a new Deed of Constitution for this Deed of Constitution, subject always to such conditions and provisions relative thereto as the IPC or its delegated body shall determine.

## **Congregational Meetings**

The congregation shall meet at least bi-annually. Items of competent business shall be submitted to the Session Clerk no later than 2 weeks prior to the stated date of a given meeting. Review of the year, consideration of church expenditure and a report from the Cruden Trust shall be included as standing items.

The competent body for amending the church constitution is a majority of voting church members present at a quorate (one third of communing members over 18) congregational meeting called by intimation for two weeks in advance.

## 5. Trinity Church Contact Details

Simon Barker (Session Clerk)

01224 487246            [simon@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:simon@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Drew Tulloch (Music Co-ordinator)

01224 483644            [drew@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:drew@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Nicola Fitch (Rotas)

01224 481144            [rotas@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:rotas@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Alan and Andrea Smith (Welcome Team)

01224 486511            [welcometeam@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:welcometeam@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Pearl Williamson (Transport)

01224 686258            [transport@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:transport@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Nicola Fitch (Crèche)

01224 481144            [creche@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:creche@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

James McAlister (Sound system)

07525 362745            [james@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:james@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Gillian Falconer (Sunday School)

01224 705776            [gillian@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:gillian@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

Ben Traynor (TR:UTH)

01224 481144            [ben@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:ben@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

For sermons on CD, or for issues to do with downloading sermons from  
Trinity website:            [media@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:media@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

David & Angela Gibson

[david@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:david@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)

10 Beechgrove Avenue

07811 962244

Aberdeen

AB15 5EJ

01224 647034



**CHURCH OFFICE**

The Cruden Trust  
63 Wingate Road  
Aberdeen  
AB24 2SZ

01224 481144

[www.trinityaberdeen.org.uk](http://www.trinityaberdeen.org.uk)  
[info@trinityaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:info@trinityaberdeen.org.uk)



We are a congregation of  
The International Presbyterian Church  
[www.ipchurch.org.uk](http://www.ipchurch.org.uk)

## Trinity Church, Aberdeen

Meeting at:

Aberdeen Northern Hotel  
1 Great Northern Road  
Aberdeen  
AB24 3PS



