

SECRETARIAL NOTES

Although the AGM of 2020 was cancelled, as was as the Study Day later that year, much has still taken place. Our journal the *Record* continued to appear:

The 2019 issue contained the papers on Ordination and the Eucharist from that year's Study Day together with the paper given to the Annual General Meeting of 2019 by the Revd Dr Doug Gay. This paper, although general, contained some very pointed messages to the Society in terms of its continuing agenda, and it repays revisiting by members.

The 2020 issue reflected the increasing use of the streaming of worship resulting from the closure of churches during the pandemic, including the issue of 'virtual Communion'. It also included a paper on the use of the arts in worship, reflecting a project in St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, where the author, our member Alan Falconer, was minister. Again, here is a very significant paper about a significant project which would repay a careful second look on the part of members.

We are most grateful to Robert Lawrie who was willing to undertake the editing of the journal in succession to James Stewart, but he, having to shoulder a new task, now stands aside, and we have been very glad that David Scott, most recently of Traprain, now in St Andrews, has been willing, as he says, to 'put himself on probation as editor'.

2020 also saw the publication by St Andrew Press of the book *Scottish Presbyterian Worship* by a former president of the Society, and world-renowned writer on liturgy, Professor Bryan Spinks of Yale; this project had begun with the lecture marking the 150th anniversary of the original Society's founding, given by Bryan in 2015, and the finished work was generously dedicated to the Society.

In the period since the AGM of 2019, four issues of the e-letter *Versicle* have been circulated to members and friends. This is the place where we interchange views and share initiatives. May we urge members and friends, who week by week seek to refresh the worship of the church, to share what they are doing through *Versicle*. Their work locally is more significant than they know.

The Society's website continues to develop and two new features are now in place. One is a bank of simpler versions of hymn tunes, not just for very young players but those who, new to weekly playing, have often to master up to 5 tunes they have not played before and usually at only a few days notice. The other is a beginner's course on improvisation. Both features are related to the recent publication of *Assist our Song*, noticed elsewhere in these pages.

Members of the Society continue to contribute more widely to the councils of the church. The first, second, and now the third convener of the Theological Forum, Dr Liam Fraser, have been members; others are contributing to the worship committees and the group planning the next hymn book supplement. Three other members have contributed to the hymn reflections broadcast daily on the website of the Hymn Society or in a later webinar.

In July of 2020, we heard of the death of one of our most supportive members, Professor Bill Shaw, who was always generous in his messages of encouragement. A fine memorial service took place at Cramond Kirk in August 2021 where one of our members, Professor David Fergusson DD (now Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge), paid tribute, along with Professor Ron Piper, former principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews.

It was not possible to have our annual meeting during the General Assembly in 2021 but one took place in August, with some members present in Greyfriars Kirk and some participating through Zoom. An address by the retiring president, Dr Alison Jack, on 'Poetry, prayer, and praise' provoked a good discussion; it appears in this issue. The meeting confirmed Council's decision to delete the post of vice convener from the Constitution, believed as having originated in this form at the time of the Union of 1929 to express the equality in the merger of two liturgical societies. Elected President was Rev Dr John Bell and Secretary Rev Dr Scott McKenna. The meeting welcomed a new representative from the Liturgical Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Revd Christoph Wutscher of Holy Trinity Church, Stirling, as well as Fr Jamie McMorris from the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, currently in St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh. The meeting expressed gratitude to John Young, now retiring following many years service as a member of Council. Re-elected to Council were Carleen Robertson, Gilleasbuig Macmillan KCVO and Marjorie Williamson. New members elected were Pamela Strachan, David Scott, and

David Todd. The meeting fairwelled the Secretary Martin Ritchie, soon to take up a charge in New Jersey.

Although plans had been progressing towards a Study Day this year on the subject 'The streaming of Sunday worship', circumstances continue to prevent final arrangements being made and it is likely that this will not take place until at least the early part of next year.