

8 Southside Road
Inverness
IV2 3AU

22 September 2020

To: Mr. Wym Simpson
Session Clerk
Ness Bank Parish Church
Inverness
IV2 4SA

Dear Fiona, Wym, and all the Ness Bank Family,

This letter is but a small way for me to express my gratitude to you all for welcoming me and accepting me as a familiarisation candidate for the period of April 2019 – September 2020 (six months longer than we all bargained for).

I am so grateful for the wonderfully embracing way in which you all at Ness Bank opened up your hearts to accept me as I am and to allow me to journey with you all through these past eighteen months. For all that I could observe, every meeting, every service, every opportunity to serve and to share in ministry at Ness Bank and in Inverness, I can just say thank you. I have learned so much from you all with regards to procedures, and how to handle the business of the church, but more than that I learnt what it means to be a proper Scottish Church Family – which no amount of courses or training could ever teach me and for that I truly grateful beyond what words can express.

From experiencing and sharing in services on Sundays, joining the Bible Study and Prayer Group, attending meetings of all the different teams and learning how to handle the business at Kirk Session Meetings and Presbytery, to joining the Wednesday Lunch Club, meetings of The Guild, and The Ladies Discussion Group for lunch at the Redcliffe Hotel, observing the service of volunteers at Ach-An-Eas, to be able to share in L'Arche activities and meetings, observing how the wonderful Inverness Foodstuff works, to leading Messy Church and for all the wonderful gatherings with the Youth Team, Sunday School, Girls' and Boys' Brigade Companies that I could join. I will fondly remember the Christmas Fayre, and for joining the one-off singing group for the Nativity Sunday Service, and so many wonderful conversations with you all, shaking your hands at the door after the service and sharing a coffee and a blether downstairs in the hall, and so many other opportunities that I could share throughout my time with you.

To all of the Ness Bank family I can just say that you have given me a soft landing in Scotland and I am so grateful that I could learn the wonderful ways and whims of the Church of Scotland from you all. Thank you for opening your hearts to me, for allowing me into your lives and for taking an interest in me. Thank you also for the very generous donations, totalling at £ 2,031 for me to be able to buy the necessary laptop and printer for my future ministry. Thank you also for the beautiful preaching stole, the lovely goblet and side-plate from St. Andrew's Pottery which will serve as my home communion set, the beautiful olive wood handheld cross and the framed sketch of Ness Bank Church. I will cherish these precious gifts and remember you all fondly whenever I use them.

Lastly, I wish to express my utmost gratitude to Fiona. You opened-up yourself and your ministry to me to learn from you. What a privilege! Fiona, you are a gem and a real example of a servant leader whose heart beats so wildly and passionately for your flock, for the Church of Scotland and for Jesus Christ.

May you all at Ness Bank cherish and continue to support Fiona and uplift her in your prayers as she continues to serve you and with you all in Ness Bank and the greater Inverness.

I will miss you all and remember the wonderful generosity of spirit of the Highlands!

'May the Lord bless you and take care of you; may the Lord be kind and gracious to you; may the Lord look on you with favour and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 GNB)

With all my love and gratitude,

Hanneke Janse van Vuren