

450 years since John Knox

Joint plans to mark the 450th anniversary of the Reformation were unveiled by the Church of Scotland and Scottish Government today.

The main national focus will be on Wednesday November 3, beginning with a conference, organised by the Joint Commission on Doctrine, followed by an ecumenical service at St Giles' Cathedral and then an evening reception hosted by First Minister Alex Salmond in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle.

The day-long conference, 'The Scottish Reformation 1560: Marking the Legacy, Imagining the Future', opened by the First Minister and addressed by Professor Tom Devine, Rev Dr Alan Falconer, Rev Dr Alison Peden, Professor Paul Murray and the Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting.

The Kirk is also planning a touring exhibition, alongside the release of hundreds of years of Kirk Session minutes which will provide a valuable insight into the Church's development and a mine of information for historians and genealogists.

It was 450 years ago tomorrow (August 17, 1560) that the Scottish Parliament approved the Scots Confession written by "the Six Johns", including John Knox.

Fergus Ewing, the Scottish Government's Minister with responsibility for faith communities, said:

"The Reformation was one of the most important periods in Scotland's history, and one that helped shape the character of our nation and its people to this day.

"We have been working with the Kirk to ensure the 450th Anniversary is appropriately remembered. The Scottish Government fully appreciates the work of the Kirk across Scotland, and internationally, as well as all our varied faith

communities for their roles in helping our nation to become One Scotland.

“The First Minister is delighted to be hosting a reception at Edinburgh Castle. This will recognise and celebrate the contribution the Kirk has made to Scottish life, the legacy of the Reformation of universal education leading to the Enlightenment and to celebrate the modern, diverse, multi-faith, multicultural Scotland to which we all aspire.”

Right Reverend John Christie, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said:

“The Reformation was a key event in Scotland’s history and the opportunity afforded by the 450th anniversary to reflect on its far-reaching legacy is to be welcomed.

“Earlier this year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland commemorated the Reformation during a special open session which placed it in its historical setting as well as reminding us of the place which the Reformation had in the religious and cultural life of Scotland.

“The planned commemoration with the Scottish Government not only allows us to remember the past, it also challenges us all as we strive together to create a society where justice and peace, with hope and love, are the foundations on which to keep building for the future.”