

The Princess Royal opens the General Assembly



General Assembly 2017 L-R New Moderator of the Church of Scotland Rt Rev Derek Browning, HRH Princess Royal and outgoing Moderator Rt Rev Russell Barr.

HRH The Princess Royal has addressed the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where she is serving as Lord High Commissioner representing Her Majesty The Queen.

After praising the General Assembly as a place for “reasoned and civilised debate” she said the numbers worshipping in church may be falling, but “there is still a need for ‘spiritual leadership, and in fact, “that need is greater than ever.” She continued “The importance of the General Assembly has been reasoned debate and that reasoned debate is in quite short supply at the moment.”



From a position just next to the newly installed Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh the Rt Hon Frank Ross, she addressed the gathered clergy.

HRH The Princess Royal also noted that churches in Scotland have “a major role to play in welcoming strangers,” a tradition she believes is “stronger in Scotland than in many other parts of the world”. The speech came after the election of the new Moderator Rt Rev Dr Derek Browning, who was installed in the role by the retiring Moderator Very Rev Dr Russell Barr.

Her Royal Highness is the first member of the Royal family to take on the role for a second time, having first served in the

role in 1996. On Friday she took part in the Ceremony of the Keys at Holyrood Palace and she resumed her duties this morning with the ceremonial procession which opened the General Assembly. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon also took part in the opening ceremony.



Saturday 20th of May 2017: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: New Moderator Rt Rev Derek Browning with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. They are flanked by Moderators Chaplains, Miss Ann Mulligan and Rev John McMahon.



Saturday 20th of May 2017: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: HRH The Princess Royal shakes hands with new Moderator Rt Rev Derek Browning following speeches this morning.



Saturday 20th of May 2017: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland:



Saturday 20th of May 2017: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: HRH the Princess Royal, The First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon and other dignitaries process into the General Assembly



The opening session included an address from retiring Moderator, Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, who has drawn attention to the situation of homeless people across Scotland throughout his year of office. Addressing the Assembly he identified a lack of political will as the one thing missing to resolve a situation that he described as “unacceptable”. He said “Homelessness continues to be a stain upon our nation’s

character and consciousness. There should be no room for homelessness in 21st century Scotland.”