TFTD 230914

GOOD MORNING

One of the things which I like most about Scotland is the feeling of safety and stability which it has. Yet the last few days have felt very unlike that Scotland - full of strong feelings, angry words, personal hurt. People challenge the integrity of those who voted on the other side. We are snatching at possible futures. When perhaps we should pause.

The churches feel a deep responsibility to help this community to find reconciliation. We remained neutral during the Referendum campaign - partly so that we could be there for the whole community afterwards.

John Chalmers, Church of Scotland Moderator, spoke at the Service of Reconciliation in St Giles on Sunday and said:

*"Recovery and healing [are] a soul searching matter and, for me, that is deeply spiritual – so no quick fix. Instead, it will take a force of magnanimity and graciousness to restore equilibrium to nation and individuals.*

Yes it will take time - time for strong feelings to be expressed and for more measured thinking to follow; time to begin to see one another as part of the same journey. I lived and worked in Northern Ireland during difficult times. You might think that it was never too soon to talk about reconciliation and forgiveness. But it can be. Certainly my experience then was that time was needed for strong feelings to be expressed - feelings which honoured the importance of what was at stake. But not just strong words which raged on and on - but which gradually brought people to the point where more measured and considered dialogue might be possible.

So my prayer for our community today is that we can move through these difficult days after the Referendum and gradually begin to find ways in which we can begin to think, speak and act as one people.

As the Book of Ecclesiastes says, there is 'a time for everything - a time to be silent and a time to speak - a time to tear and a time to mend'