

Saint Andrew Declaration service, held at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh on 30 November 2021

*Reflection from the **Most Rev Mark Strange**, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church*

“I have to confess that I have become increasingly excited about the possibilities that this moment can bring us. I know there'll be those who are anxious, those who think we need to go further and faster, and those who wonder what all the fuss is about. For me this is a moment on a journey I seem to have been on all my life. A journey that has turned from defending my position to one of sharing expectations.

“I find it difficult to imagine a world where I might exclude myself from school worship, because I was a Pisky. Yet, that one used to work. Neither can I imagine a moment when I would turn someone away from the altar, because I somehow believe they didn't belong. These changes, when you look back over my life, have been dramatic. Distant cousins have become close relatives, and interesting strangers have become firm friends, all because we have the courage to live out the call that all should be one.

“I know that I'll probably always find my liturgical refreshment as a wonderful sung high Eucharist. But I know I will also find my spiritual challenge and a remarkably warm welcome in the parish churches that so often invite me to speak.

“I worship alongside people of all denominations. I'm asked what we think about changes in other denominations. They ask us the questions about what they are doing. And when we fill a place with worship, I'm also filled with hope and joy.

“So today, we celebrate what has been achieved: open and welcoming to each other, sharing in worship and mission, praying

together. We're also looking to the future as we commit ourselves to continue this work, and this journey.

“Where we will get to... well let's wait and see.

“What do I reflect on today? That tonight, I stand here surrounded by friends, real friends united in the life of faith. And that has to be better than in my past, simply nodding a greeting at distant cousins in the church across the street.”