

LORD HIGH REPLY

Your Grace,

Your Grace, please convey to His Majesty the King our best wishes together with our prayers for his continued recovery and, please, urge him to take the time he needs to get up to full speed - his health is important. We will be praying for him, and for all who have health concerns.

Thank you for your kind words to me and to the Church of Scotland, and please be assured that the General Assembly is absolutely delighted (and dare I speak personally for a moment, I am delighted) that you are here as Lord High Commissioner. As soon as the announcement about me was made public I was flooded with messages of congratulations, and in the same sentence the messages were, 'that's great but do you know who the Lord High will be?' And then there's a lot of speculation and there was a real desire that it might be you accompanied by the Duchess of Edinburgh. I didn't know for some time. Then I did know, but couldn't tell; but when the news became public it was met with great joy.

The Church so enjoyed your last visit as Lord High. Commissioners who were here appreciated the way you reached out, put people at ease and shared a genuine interest to the work of the church and communities across Scotland – for the Assembly should know that when you are not sitting in the Royal Gallery you are travelling hundreds of miles to meet people and projects all across the country.

This is a difficult time for our church, our nation and the world in which we live. Its tempting to think that much of what is going on whether it be cost of living, conflict, climate is beyond us because we have tended to become very isolated. My theme is building together, as you have alluded to, for together we can be such an incredible resource for good in our communities, across our nation and throughout the world.

Welcome – you are our special guest. Thank you for being together with us.