

Glasgow and Galloway Mission Action Plan



Name of Charge **CHRIST CHURCH, LANARK**

Name of Facilitator **None**

Completed **5th February 2013**

Strategic intent is **growth**

Stage 1: Why are we going for Growth?

<p>Review <i>- your Church as God would see it</i> <i>- where God has been, and is, at work in the community and in church</i> <i>- what needs to be retained or relinquished</i></p>	<p><i>In 2007 the congregation formally signed up to a local collaborative ministry exploration. With the support of Anne Tomlinson and our facilitator David Balfour we looked at all aspects of our congregational life and mission by exploring where we had come from, where we were then and where we would like to be five years down the line.</i> <i>We decided that for the survival of our church we had to work together using all the gifts available within the congregation. We also decided that we did need a priest to support us in our mission, to encourage us to develop the gifts that we had, to help bring cohesion and healing within the congregation, and to help reveal God's pathway for us and our Church. This culminated in the appointment of Dan as Priest-in-Charge and eventually as Rector.</i></p>
<p>Check: <i>understanding of each strand</i></p>	<p><i>The Diocesan Growth Strategy coincided with our five year review and so the vestry initiated an assessment of the developments that had happened in the last five years under each strand (see Appendix).</i></p>
<p>Appraise, affirm and celebrate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we exhibit the following strengths ...</i></p>	<p><i>See Review (Appendix)</i></p>
<p>Assess: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we suffer from the following weaknesses....</i></p>	<p><i>The vestry and congregation feel that our Church is in good heart following the work over the last five years and that we have seen growth within each strand. We do not like to think in terms of weakness but rather in terms of discerning opportunities to carry out God's mission for us, as and when it is revealed to us.</i></p>



<p>Investigate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities...</i></p>	<p><i>We are not complacent and do realise that we have more to do to encourage growth in our own and others discipleship and to reach out into our community. This will be an on-going process for us and our successors but we are positive that we are on the right track.</i></p>
<p>Communicate: <i>How has everything so far been communicated?</i></p>	<p><i>The congregation have been kept up to date through our church magazine. The review was circulated to the congregation and we have had a well attended congregational meeting to outline and discuss the proposals. The vestry then produced this Mission Action Plan which was discussed with the Bishop on his visit in June. Finally the congregation supported our plan at our annual general meeting.</i></p>



Stage 2: What will our Growth Strategy involve?

<p>God's call to growth.</p> <p><i>Having thought about the challenges for each strand, discern your overall strategic response.</i></p> <p><i>(i) what is your vision of the way of life God is calling you to?</i></p> <p><i>(ii) what values do you need to have for this growth to happen?</i></p>	<p><i>We want to continue our development as a worshipping community where every member is cherished and supported in their call to discipleship. To continue to be a friendly, open and welcoming church that is willing to explore Christ's call to faith and what that means to us.</i></p> <p><i>We need to build on what we have achieved in the past. To be positive about the future but also to be realistic. One of the strengths of the Growth Strategy is that it encourages us to set goals that are achievable within our current resources but we still have to remember that with the support of the Spirit we may be able to move mountains.</i></p>
<p>Our prioritised response</p> <p><i>To work towards responding to that call, and expressing our values, we will focus upon the following strand (or strands) of the strategy because...</i></p>	<p><i>Following prayer, contemplation and discussion, the goals came to us first. These broadly fit in with the prayer and spirituality, learning and discipleship, children and young people, and outreach to local communities strands, although some of the goals fit into more than one strand.</i></p>
<p>Goals</p> <p><i>We will address the following by means of...</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Make our Church more available to all who need it.</i> <i>2. Continue our exploration and understanding of liturgy</i> <i>3. Explore aspects of spirituality</i> <i>4. Increase our interaction with those out with the church</i> <i>5. Expand our children's ministry</i>



Stage 3: How will we encourage Growth?

Plans, processes, people and resources

*Remember: SMART – plans must be **S**pecific and documented, You must be able to **M**easure the difference you are making; so change or re-visit the Goals if necessary.*

*Your proposals must be **A**chievable; do not try to meet impossible goals.*

*Actions must be able to be **R**esourced, by people, buildings, and funding.*

*To enable proper review, your actions must be **T**ime bounded.*

Actions: <i>small achievable steps which gradually build into something bigger</i>		Who	When
	<i>We intend to introduce a regular mid week Eucharist or other appropriate service. This will probably be on a Tuesday to make it possible for attendees to be invited to go to the Lunch Club.</i>	<i>Dan, Bobby, Richard</i>	<i>2013</i>
	<i>We intend to have an open church (not locked) available from 10.00 – 16.00 for visitors and for prayer and contemplation.</i>	<i>Dan, Leslie & Jamie</i>	<i>Trial during Holy week 2013</i>
	<i>Afternoon study group on aspects of liturgy. Possibility of visits to other churches in diocese to experience different expressions of liturgy.</i>		<i>Autumn 2013</i>
	<i>Exploration of the use of meditation techniques in spirituality.</i>	<i>Dan, Richard & John</i>	<i>Started Sept 2012</i>
	<i>Further involvement in our existing charity works</i>		
	<i>Continuing to improve/update church information by the provision of Hotel Cards.</i>		
	<i>Investigate whether further improvement of the hall facilities would enable further outreach.</i>		
	<i>Possibility of prayer group meeting in the church during the week.</i>		
	<i>Improving our children's ministry by restarting a Sunday School</i>	<i>Dan, Gemma, Nonne & Rhiannon</i>	<i>Started Nov 2012</i>



Stage 4 Outputs: keeping the MAP alive

*We will endeavour to **address these plans in action, ongoing consultation and prayer**, and will regularly **affirm and celebrate God's gifts and blessings and our responses**, culminating in our annual MAP review. We will communicate widely what we have attempted, so that others may learn from our experience.*

We have already identified the "resilience" required to keep the MAP alive. The following factors will not discourage us in our task:

Any difficulty in identifying people to lead any of the strands, time and facility issues, any perceived lack of 'success' in any of the strands.

Date of MAP Review with Bishop **June 2012**

MAP signed by

Rector/clergyperson Date 5th Feb. 2013

Secretary of the Vestry Date 5th Feb. 2013

(4 copies are signed, being for the cleric, the Vestry, Bishop Gregor, and the Convenor of the Regional Council. One is posted on the Growth Strategy web site for public viewing.)

Method of oversight of our MAP in the absence of a facilitator

We will have our Mission Action Plan as a regular item on our Vestry agenda so that we can assess progress reports, monitor what is happening, and ensure that adequate resources and encouragement are given when and where required.

We will organise a review of the MAP progress once per year with the Bishop/Dean

*Spirit of our Loving God,
in your mercy and compassion
inspire, encourage and empower us
to live and work together
as a Diocese,
to allow your mission for us
to take flesh
through Jesus Christ
our Living and Eternal Lord. Amen*



APPENDIX

A REVIEW OF WHERE WE ARE AS A CHURCH AND CONGREGATION FIVE YEARS POST THE LOCAL COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY INITIATIVE.

In 2007, we as a congregation signed up for local collaborative ministry (LCM) at Christ Church Lanark. The Diocesan Growth strategy which we have also indicated that we would support gives us a timely point to review our progress as a congregation which we have chosen to do in terms of the six strands of the growth strategy. This can be used in future reviews as a point of reference.

Initiatives like LCM and the growth strategy are not new in the church and Christ Church and its congregation have always been involved in them. During Bruce's ministry we took part in Saint's Alive and Alpha courses both of which covered aspects of growth in spirituality, discipleship and with Alpha some outreach. We also participated in Mission 21 which focused on aspects of outreach, welcoming and numerical growth. Dan has always been very supportive in our growth as a church and in the development of our individual ministries based on the gifts that God has given us.

It is important to note that while some of the things mentioned in this review are new others have been in place for longer. However, many of the latter have either been improved or refreshed by the introduction of new people. So where are we now in terms of the six strands of the growth strategy?

Prayer and spirituality

Corporate prayer is focused on the weekly services and meetings. The intercessory prayers during the Sunday Eucharist are led by a rota of congregational members which leads to different approaches and subjects for prayer. Many of the congregation have mentioned that they find this helpful. The reintroduction of a monthly Evensong has been used to explore different styles of worship including a regular Celtic style evensong offering, within its structure, time for meditation and contemplative prayer, this is supported by a variety of musical input ranging from the church organ to a clarsach group. Our 'adapted' (and now approved) Eucharistic liturgy has been well received by old and new members. The ever widening range of hymns, most of which are really sung prayers, are very thoughtfully chosen to compliment the theme of the service. The weekly information sheet has an updated prayer list for those members who are in need of prayer. We have a stand for votive candles where anyone who wishes can light a candle as a focus for prayer, at any time. Prayer also has an important role in other church activities e.g. periodic services at the local hospital and care homes, at the lunch club meetings, and during visits by the pastoral team.



Sermons from Dan, Bobby and Richard encourage us each Sunday in our own personal spiritual journey. Dan's 'conversation evenings', for people to meet and discuss various aspects of our Christian belief, sometimes set alongside other faiths and beliefs, also give opportunity for development of our spirituality. Further examples of positive movement in this area include the recent introduction of a confirmation group and the pilgrimage to Iona which will take place in August.

Learning and discipleship

The sermon retains its traditional teaching role with Bobby and Richard helping Dan in this. The congregation are certainly supportive and hopefully get something of lasting value from this. Certainly Dan's vogue of teaching concentrates on helping people feel valuable and valued (i.e. loved). The regular study / conversation evenings in the Rectory gives an opportunity to learn more about our faith. Dan encourages plenty of audience participation and the evenings are full of humour which helps the message go down. Congregation members are encouraged to go on appropriate courses offered in the diocese which can involve training for specific ministries or be very helpful for new members to learn more about the diocese and for older members who know they still have lots to learn and appreciate the opportunities offered. It should be noted that during this period Richard was encouraged to take up TISEC training and was licensed as a Lay Reader last September.

We have become more 'Rector' orientated during Dan's ministry but he has continued to encourage discipleship in the form of all the personal ministries that make Christ Church what it is. These range from cleaning the church, beautifying the grounds, sides person's duties, reading lessons, pastoral visiting and home communions, intercessions, organising social occasions, playing the organ, the harpists, organising the Christingle service, coffee and teas after church, preparing the magazine & notice sheet, etc. We are very fortunate to have so many willing people playing their part in doing these things and encouraging others to help too.

Missional leadership

We believe Christ Church does see itself as a 'community within a community'. Members are involved in various other community activities and few are reticent about letting people know that they worship at Christ Church.

Through the town clergy meetings, we have seen our ecumenical life grow. We have even had a



pulpit swap involving the Church of Scotland churches, the Roman Catholic church and our church. Shared church leaflet drops at Christmas and Easter, the work of the ecumenical Christian Aid committee, the Holy Week services, and the Remembrance Day service all being examples of being part of a wider community.

Our monthly charity collection gives us an opportunity to share materially with others less fortunate than ourselves. Again there are examples of discipleship in the lay led support for Christian Aid and Tear Fund and of a local charity 'New Beginning's' which is also an example of outreach into the local community .

The building improvements to the church hall now provide facilities for more community use, and the Tuesday Lunch Club remains an opportunity to outreach into the local populace.

Overall we do look outward rather than inward.

Numerical growth, welcome and integration

In the last five years we have witnessed the numerical growth that is slowly but surely happening, with both old friends returning and new people coming in. We are a welcoming church with a friendly atmosphere and open style of worship. The congregation is very good at interacting with new people to make them feel welcome by talking to visitors, inviting them for coffee/ tea after the service, and ensuring that they are made to feel at home. The simplified service booklets help new people follow the service and the congregation members are more positive in helping any that have difficulty. Although we do not have a formal integration pathway once new people have made a commitment to be part of our church they are gradually assimilated into the church life without being made to feel that they must take part in something until they feel ready.

Dan visits anybody that he hears about who may have an Anglican background so that they know about Christ Church.

Children and young people

The monthly family service is doing well and growing in strength, the children love Dan's teaching with the help of Peter and Mary (the bears!). Jamie's invitations, Joan's pictures, the toys and crayons are all much appreciated. In a new initiative three of the older children are being trained by Dan to be servers at the Eucharist. We have more children than ever being involved with the



Christingle service. This is heartening as it means that we are not a church without children. However, we still share with most churches the dilemma of the relevance of Christianity to the younger generations. Perhaps during the Growth Strategy new ideas will come forth within our Diocese to address this issue.

Outreach to local communities

Some points here would be a repetition of what is written above; i.e. those already working in the community, Lunch Club, Christian Aid, Celtic Evensong, Charity work.

An important part of this is letting people know we are here. The various clubs etc that meet in the church hall get to know where we are and what goes on from posters. Details of the Sunday service and extra services like the Celtic evensong with harps and the Christingle service are advertised in the local press. We have a church web site to be proud of so that in this world of electronic information we can readily be found. The website includes the up to date church magazine which gives a flavour of what our church community is like.

Dan and others have prepared a very attractive leaflet which has been distributed in areas of Lanark and the neighbouring communities of Carluke and Lanark. This gives details of services and things the church offers and extends a welcome to all.

Conclusion

The congregation would agree that we now in a better place than we were five years ago. This has certainly been helped by the improvement in the church finances but there has been a lot that has happened under Dan's leadership that has been positive including the healing of old wounds.

We are a happy church, something that we can all contribute to and feel proud of and this encourages us to continue to build on this as we take up the Diocesan growth strategy challenges.

