

Glasgow and Galloway Mission Action Plan



Name of Charge/s **St John the Evangelist, Greenock**

Name of Facilitator **Maureen Russell**

MAP Completed **October 2013**

Strategic intent is growth

Stage 1: Why are we going for Growth?

<p>Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <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>Greenock is, in many ways, a polarised town divided by tradition and denomination. The families who live here have often grown up here and loyalties run long and deep. Where people live, the denomination their family belongs to and the football team they support are important dynamics. Consequently the Episcopal Church in Greenock presents something of a mystery to many. It is seen as 'kind of Catholic' and definitely 'English' or just as an unknown quantity. St John's has a good reputation for its musical tradition and the clergy have a visible role in the nursing homes, residential homes and, in the past, in the schools. It is generally perceived that if the Episcopal Church in Greenock disappeared it might not be missed except by those who attend.</p> <p>In the past St John's has been more active in the community with the Scouts, Girls Guildry, Mothers Union, Social Club, Drama Club, Youth Club. Many in the congregation feel that, although these activities are sadly no longer running, St John's is, however, more spirit-led now than in the past. Despite the older generation passing away St John's continues to grow, continues to attract new faces and people, continues to re-build a new Sunday School from scratch. Worship is now more Eucharistic in focus than in the past and the presence of Christ above, within and between is apparent.</p> <p>St John's has changed in its ethos, spirituality and direction during the last ten years. The change has been welcomed by many. It has been led by the clergy but at the same time has been underpinned by prayer and negotiation. Some however have resisted the changes and still look to how it was done in the past. As a community we must continue to foster the sense of belonging, the sense of being the hands and feet of Christ in our corner of the world and build on our gradually dawning awareness of living for those outside our walls. We must continue to try to live together in faith, hope and love and utilise the opportunities which come our way to build the Kingdom of God in our midst.</p>
<p>Check: <i>understanding of each strand</i></p>	<p>Due to extensive communication of the Intention for Growth the congregation know about this Strategy. There have been two meetings with the facilitator, magazine articles, displays and sermons on the six strands. The congregation were encouraged to reflect and respond to each strand, seeing where they could apply them to their own lives or to the life of St John's.</p>



Appraise, affirm and celebrate:

with regard to each strand of the strategy, we exhibit the following strengths ...

Prayer and spirituality

The clergy and some of the congregation say the Daily Office twice a day, incorporating the Diocese' intentions and the intercessions for the charge. There is a designated prayer corner in the church with candles which is used for private intentions. The congregation take part in the weekly intercessions and are regularly trained. As a community different services have been tried eg. Stations of the cross, Taize, Healing services, Compline. The church building encourages prayer and spiritual growth; as do the sermons, liturgy and music which are varied and based on a theological theme each week. The Thursday discussion group focuses on a different theological issue each week eg Benedictine spirituality, prayer, Eucharistic theology, atonement, theodicy etc. There is a thriving Sunday School which takes the theme of the main service and explores the stories and issues with the children at their pace and understanding. There is a Contemplative Prayer group which meets once a month at St Johns and draws on people from other churches and the community as well as the congregation. There is a Regional Pilgrimage which is organised by the clergy of St John's.

Learning and Discipleship

During the year cycle Lent groups are regularly held which explore theological ideas often through the course provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Some of the congregation take advantage of the courses provided by the Diocese eg. Journey in Faith. The Thursday Lunchtime group frequently discusses the relationship between faith and daily living... exploring where God is in daily events and relationships. In our bi-monthly magazine there are always some articles which aim to teach or guide readers through Scripture.

Missional Leadership

Many in the congregation are realising that Missional Leadership is the domain of the whole congregation and not just of the clergy. It is a huge change in mind set which is slowly becoming more of a reality in our congregation. There is frequent opportunities to offer oneself for roles within and without the church eg visiting.

Welcome, Integration, Numerical Growth

As a church the congregation feel they are good at welcoming people at the door and chatting to them immediately after the service. It is thought the liturgy booklets are easy to follow, as they are tailor made or chosen for each service. The clergy speak to every person who attends the service. There is a pastoral care team who visit newcomers as well as the housebound. There are interest groups which newcomers can join as well as several social events, particularly at the moment when we are fund raising for the restoration of the Hall. It is encouraging to note that although a 'whole generation' has been buried the numbers are still good and comparable to ten years ago. It is believed that the relationship between clergy and congregation has changed over the years and is now much more relaxed, open and relevant. The church building itself is seen as clean, welcoming and conducive to worship.



Children and Young People

St John's is known for being family oriented and welcoming to families. The original Sunday School has grown up and flown to other places; but there has been the birth of a new Sunday School – with many toddlers and babies. There is a good Sunday School provision during the services and there are regular All Age Worship services. There are special events during the year especially geared towards the children: Christingle Service, Nativity Play, Mothering Day service, Trip to Millport, Adventurers Coffee Mornings, Pantomime Trips, Twice yearly ceilidhs. The children are encouraged to participate during services and events.

Imaginative Outreach into the Community

There are good links with local URC, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches. We support the ecumenical Walk of Witness which happens in the town on Good Friday. We partake in the combined services during the Week of Christian Unity. We support local charities eg Inverclyde Food Bank, Starter Packs. Some of the congregation have helped to set up and run the crèche at Greenock Prison.

Prayer and Spirituality

Sometimes there is tendency in the congregation to prefer to stick with traditional services and patterns of services and ways to worship. Much of the clergy time and energy is therefore channelled into maintaining the status quo rather than trying new things.

Learning and Discipleship

There is quite a poor uptake of learning opportunities. There are a few who make learning a priority, but poor numbers do not encourage more events. Sometimes courses are seen as too 'high-brow' or intellectual for some to feel they can comfortably attend.

Missional Leadership

There is still a lack of confidence in some to embrace and take the responsibility of mission and the consequent building of community and relationship. The difficulties of the secular world also bring a fear of being ridiculed or being 'different' if too open about our faith.

Welcome, Integration and Numerical Growth

Although our initial or 'basic' welcome is secure, it is still regarded as difficult to fit into St John's or to make friends. Many still regard church as something which is kept separately from the rest of life despite the efforts of the clergy to change this perception. There is not a culture of invitation or opening of homes among the congregation. We need to work on inclusion and integration of newcomers. The building itself, though beautiful, is not very flexible.

Children and Young People

There are still people who do not like the noise which by necessity accompanies the presence of children in the service. There is a desperate need for decent accommodation for the Sunday School – which should be solved with the restoration of the Hall. There is desperate need for more volunteers to be willing to work with the children – it still lands on the shoulders of the few.

Assess:

with regard to each strand of the strategy, we suffer from the following weaknesses...



<p>Investigate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities...</i></p>	<p>Imaginative Outreach into the Community The congregation are aging or at work during the day and there is limited personnel to get involved in local community projects. We would love to be more visible and get more involved – but feel resources are limited.</p> <p>Prayer and Spirituality There is an opportunity to explore ecumenism in Greenock and to work more closely with other SEC churches in the Region.</p> <p>Learning and Discipleship There is the opportunity for offering some learning experiences which would appeal to a wider uptake and would answer the needs and abilities of more of the congregation.</p> <p>Missional Leadership There is great opportunity to grow in our faith, to become confident in proclaiming the Gospel and to find ways to show our faith in our community and share it in ways which are non-threatening.</p> <p>Welcome, Integration and Numerical Growth There are many missed opportunities to become an invitational church; we have the events and services – but need to change the mind set so that all the congregation invite others to ‘come and see’.</p> <p>Children and Young People St John’s has a steady stream of baptisms during the year and children who come sporadically. We realise it is essential to keep up with these families but it is very time consuming. AS a church we must see the children’s work as vital missional activity and be prepared to help with its demands.</p> <p>Imaginative Outreach into the Community The new Hall will provide great resource to the local community – we need someone to invest time into making sure it is utilised to everyone’s benefit. We could use the Church for more concerts. We hope the new Hall will provide many new opportunities.</p>
<p>Communicate: <i>How has everything so far been communicated?</i></p>	<p>At the outset the Diocese Intention for Growth was given a high profile in the Church. The prayer was prayed at every service, the Strategy was prayed for in the intercessions. There was a sermon series which was interactive and allowed the congregation to give written feedback on their views of the Strategy. There was a good display at the back of the Church explaining the Strategy. There continues to be an article in every magazine concerning the Intention for Growth and information about what is happening in other churches. Our facilitator has led two meetings and the vestry has discussed issues concerning the Intention. The MAP process will be taken forward by the Vestry and the congregation will have the opportunity to share and discuss their thoughts.</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>Our vision is to be a community who witnesses to the love of Christ for all – for those in the church, for those need and those who are lost. We wish to share our faith both within our walls and outwith them.</p> <p>Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That God values and loves each and every person whatever their background or worldly standing • That our God is hospitable and therefore we should show the same hospitality and welcome • Jesus welcomed unconditionally and we should do the same • Those of us who have so much should share what we have been blessed with those who have so little • By helping those in need we are really helping Christ through them
<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>We wish to focus upon two strands that of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome, Integration and Numerical Growth • Imaginative Outreach into the Community <p>These seem most appropriate for St John's because we believe Welcome and Integration underpins our life as a community and is an effective way to demonstrate our faith when we give hospitality to newcomers and visitors. We are a church to which many still bring their children for baptism and this year we have many weddings planned. With our new Director of Music the church will also be used for many concerts which again will bring the outside community into our premises. We believe it is important to get our Welcome right and have strategies in place for seekers to join us as easily and fruitfully as possible.</p> <p>Outreach into the Community will be important to us this year particularly because we are renovating the Hall. When we have decent premises to offer the community at large it will be an ideal opportunity to use them to help those in need in our community as well as the usual groups.</p>



<p>Goals</p> <p><i>We will address the following by means of...</i></p>	<p><u><i>Communication and Engagement Activity</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate invitational welcoming process to congregation 2. Invitational Services 3. Welcome Team training <p><u><i>Visual Aid Communication Review</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Websites and On Line presentation review 5. Notice Board review 6. Development of Welcome Pack into Welcome Leaflet <p><u><i>Fact Finding and Feedback Opportunities</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Existing Congregation Survey and Review activity 8. Engagement Survey – Timings for Church Meetings / Discussions 9. Mystery Worshipper Feedback <p><u><i>Creative Outreach into Community Audit</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Undertake Community Audit 11. Engage with Creative Outreach Development Team <p><u><i>Publicity</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Develop effective Publicity Strategy – Services, Musical Events, Hall use opportunities and Access <p><u><i>New Hall – Advantages and Opportunities</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Let system – Hall Keeper <p><u><i>Congregational Togetherness to support Outreach activity</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Church Retreat/Quiet Day
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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
	Welcome, Integration and Numerical Growth		
1	Communicate invitational welcoming process to congregation – Have a preaching series on Invitational Welcome to support congregations understanding of aims and activities.	Drew / Liz	Autumn 2013
2	Invitational Services – Hold Monthly Invitational Services on the first Sunday of the month	Drew / Liz	2013-14
3	Welcome Team training – Enhance current Welcoming capability by setting up a dedicated team who will be provided with training to support their activities.	John Dyer / Drew	2013-14
4	Websites and On Line review – Revisit and revamp our online look and feel to support welcome and outreach reflecting the life of the congregation.	Jane Pearce/ Liz	Autumn 2013
5	Notice Board review – Use material gained from 24 hour dash and from online sources to improve Notice Board presentations – Internal and external.	Phil O’Ryan/ Liz	2013
6	Development of Welcome Pack into Welcome leaflet Professionalise the existing welcome packs to include photos and more precise message / information.	Liz	Before Easter 2014
7	Existing Congregation Survey and Review activity - Ask longer members of our church to complete a questionnaire on: What keeps them coming back What they like most What they would change	Drew/Liz	2013-14



8		Engagement Survey – On timings for Church Meetings / Discussions – To support wider attendance of Church Meetings, undertake a survey to establish what times would suit widest numbers to attend “whole church” meetings.	Drew/Liz	
9		Mystery Worshipper Feedback – Invite members of other Episcopalian and Non Episcopalian churches to attend services and then give feedback on whole process of Welcome and Service	Moira McKay/ Francoise Lyon	2013/14
10		Undertake Community Audit – Identify using congregation, Local Council and other NGO support functions within Greenock, what the key support needs are and how we can best use our resources to assist	Phil O’Ryan	2013-14
11		Engage Creative Outreach Development Team – Once the Audit findings have been reviewed and agreed by our Church, engage the development team to work collaboratively to deliver maximum benefit to areas targeted by Audit.	Drew	Before Easter 2014
12		Develop effective Publicity Strategy – Services, Musical Events, Hall use opportunities and Access	Kirsten McKay/Moira McKay/ Jane Pearce/ Jennifer Gallagher	2013/14
13		Hall Keeper - Identify a key person to have responsibility for Hall. Improve booking process, New rules and regulations for Usage, Cleaning and Maintenance and the advertising of premises.	Jennifer Gallagher/ Gwyneth Wilson	
14		Church Retreat – Provide an event that supports the development and spiritual growth of the church as a group entity within the community as well as offering individual spiritual growth opportunity.	Drew/Liz	



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:

- *The lack of desire of involvement of the congregation*
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Date of MAP Review with Bishop/Dean

MAP signed by

Rector/clergypersonDate.....

Secretary of the VestryDate.....

(5 copies are signed, being for the cleric, the Vestry, Bishop Gregor, the Convenor of the Regional Council and the Facilitator.)

I will keep in contact with the charge throughout this coming year as they work for growth

FacilitatorDate.....

Agreed frequency of ongoing Facilitator contact

*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*

