

Glasgow and Galloway Mission Action Plan



Name of Charge/s St. Mary's the Virgin , Hamilton

Name of Facilitator Steve Thompson

MAP Completed

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>We believe that St. Mary's is a friendly and welcoming church. It is strongly linked to the community and believes very much in being a good neighbour. It is a busy church, and punches above its weight in terms of what it does, given the size of its congregation, particularly in terms of what it provides for the needs of the local communities. It is very much a pastoral church, which emphasises its social focus as well as its religious one.</p> <p>The congregation is generally an older one, but nevertheless has a fair number of families and children. It is drawn from a wide area, with some people travelling a considerable distance to attend church. St. Mary's seems to attract people undertaking their first experience of church, or returning to church attendance after a break. The homely feel and style of worship seem to be key factors in this. With a typical attendance of around 70, it is neither large nor small. The congregation is dedicated and committed to the tasks it undertakes.</p> <p>The local communities are not generally affluent, so that there is a demand for a variety of support activities and resources that the church could provide, and it does indeed provide a broad range of well used services. Furthermore, plans to develop the church building facilities (St. Mary's For All) offer a range of opportunities to develop these.</p> <p>The church also offers a variety of opportunities for worship and spirituality that are generally well received and appreciated, but this does not mean that there is not room for further exploration.</p> <p>There has been no indication that any of the activities that the church undertakes should be dropped, and there have been some ideas about what additional things could be taken on. However, there seems to be some feeling that some new developments might be best left until the St. Mary's For All development has been completed.</p>
<p>Check: <i>understanding of each strand</i></p>	<p>The Growth Strategy group have looked at the Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities of or for the church under each of the six strands, so as to highlight which of those strands best lend themselves to focussing on for action planning.</p>

Appraise, affirm and celebrate:

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

Prayer and Spirituality

A regular worshipping community
Tradition and liturgy are very attractive
Involvement of congregation in leading prayer
Ian is very good at identifying and communicating prayer needs
Introduction of prayer booklet, has been very helpful, particularly in structuring individual prayer lives
Prayer chain is very helpful in maintaining prayer
Study groups, on a regular basis as well as for particular times such as Lent and Advent
No pressure – can opt in or out of events
Good organist encourages music making and frequent musical events arranged/organised

Learning and Discipleship

Lent and Advent courses
Bible study groups
Good variety of tasks to promote congregational involvement in services
Efforts taken to identify and develop gifts by the Rector

Numerical Growth

A welcoming church, friendly, open and non-judgemental
A place to explore – you are not a box of identified skills, you can explore what you are or might be, don't need to tow a party line
Plenty of things to get involved in but no pressure to do things

Imaginative Outreach into Communities

Participation in Hamilton Churches Together
Good community activities (Circle, Hyzone, drop-in centre, Family Contact Centre etc)
Christian Aid weeks involvement in Hamilton
Good range of events and projects (Music concerts, Brazil project, Arts and Crafts Fair, etc)
Outward looking vestry and congregation
Inclusive attitude
Being a good neighbour
Concern for meeting people's needs and promoting a broader social / community relevance.
AA use of our facilities

Children and Young People

Sunday School runs during term time
Messy church (still in its infancy)
Large number of families connected with the church
Involvement of children in services for traditional festivals
Family trips – engages with family groups
Good child protection practices

Missional leadership

Involved in Hamilton Churches Together
Community use of church facilities
Church activities are not just rector led
Good participation by congregation (not just passive receivers)
Broad range of "good neighbour" activities
Good witness to outside communities
Collaborative (but see instances of lack of collaboration)

Assess:

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

Prayer and Spirituality

Traditional liturgy could be off-putting, alienating some people (note the age profile of the congregation)
The Liturgy can at times can be hard to follow and not always in a suitable format – i.e. large print books may be required
Traditional services limits range of music during services
Can be repetitive – could be boring, especially for young people
Limited creche facilities, can lead to people not taking part in services
Limited ability to cater for young people's spirituality
Sermons can be too long
Lack of awareness of midweek services
Some members of the congregation feel that the bible studies are not for them

Learning and Discipleship

Communication about events and opportunities
Limited extent to which opportunities are taken up (eg events at other churches, diocesan learning opportunities)
Events and opportunities not always available at the best times and days.
Poor take up of Vestry open day, limited understanding of Vestry matters.

Numerical Growth

People's concerns about "fitting in", especially when they have "noisy" children
We are not a parish church so not a defined area to 'target'
Website could be improved
Communication issues, as per other strands
Could use the local papers to better effect to promote our events and the life of the church
Church buildings, especially the hall, have an air of neglect and disorganisation, therefore being less welcoming
Hall not used to best effect in communicating to the wide range of non-church users
The church building is not open during the week (although the sign says it is!)
How can the congregation connect with the church and its services if they are unable to get to the church on a Sunday morning either due to illness, housebound, holidays, work shifts etc...

Imaginative Outreach into Communities

Communication issues, as identified elsewhere
Church and its resources not always visible to outside users
Much being done, but of a similar kind to elsewhere. Areas of community need can still be identified.
Lots of activities could overstretch a relatively small congregation
Over-dependent on a small number of people.

Children and Young People

No current youth work activities/no members in the 'youth' age range?
Children tend to be separated from the adult worship life
Too few volunteers to run activities
Do not collaborate with others on big events
Could improve family services
Parents not confident about bringing children into church
Hall is not very user-friendly, especially for kids

	<p>Missional leadership Decision making can be focused on those inside the church rather than those outside of it (eg, no alpha course, learning events such as Lent courses aimed at insiders rather than seekers) Possible resistance to activities that have too strong an evangelical character Lack of detailed understanding of what is involved in missional leadership</p>
<p>Investigate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities...</i></p>	<p>Prayer and Spirituality Explore ways in which to develop the ability to cater for younger people: - Children's spirituality - Meaningful activities for children outside of the services - Creche facilities Exploring different ways of worshipping Exploring different forms of spirituality Communicating what is available to a wider community</p> <p>Learning and Discipleship Various ways in which to improve communications / possible brainstorming event. Ensuring that opportunities outside of the church are communicated to the congregation (this would meet diocesan aims as well as St Mary's needs) Re-run pastoral training course, if still available Review timetabling of events and opportunities Rethink vestry open day so as to encourage greater take-up</p> <p>Numerical Growth Various ways in which to improve communications / possible brainstorming event. Utilise various communication methods available Exploring new ways in which people and their gifts can be supported Explore service times to fit working lives Abundance of grandparents with grandchildren attending church Abundance of young families who are infrequent users of the church General indications of a large external community of seekers</p> <p>Imaginative Outreach into Communities Develop succession planning (to avoid problems of critical people leaving) Plenty of communications options to explore Areas where needs are still not being met in the local community Open church operation Working with other churches in the area</p> <p>Children and Young People Communication issues as identified elsewhere Youth work could be developed Making hall more user-friendly (St. Mary's For All will help hopefully) Collaborate on big events Develop more youth orientated activities, eg encounter opportunities and re-dedication services Use events such as baptisms, weddings and summer camps to engage with families and young people Use the back of the church more effectively (comfort and storage) Make children's activities known to new and infrequent visitors Events for families not on Sunday mornings</p>

	<p>Explore options related to grandparents with grandchildren Follow up baptisms</p> <p>Missional leadership Alpha and similar courses Broad range of activities to develop from Consider ways of exploring what it means to be missional</p>
<p>Communicate: <i>How has everything so far been communicated?</i></p>	<p>We have kept the congregation updated on the process through articles in the monthly newsletter and announcements during the services etc. There are also regular reports to the vestry by members of the group. The congregation, and the church building users, were all invited to complete a questionnaire which has helped to guide and influence our discussions and decisions thus far.</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> <i>(i) what is your vision of the way of life God is calling you to?</i> <i>(ii) what values do you need to have for this growth to happen?</i></p>	<p>We are an active and welcoming church but in order to continue to thrive going forward we need to encourage new members to fully integrate with the life of the church (to the extent which they wish and are comfortable with!).</p> <p>We must look at new ways of adapting our work to connect with people in new ways that does not fit perhaps with the traditional church on a Sunday morning model.</p> <p>We are being led to think of the future of our church and its resources as we are largely an aging church.</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>Numerical Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to help us look at ways of building on our already welcoming nature - to improve our communication using new methods including social media, the website and with both the congregation and the wider community as a whole (such as through the local papers) - To work at integrating all aspects of our life as a church and welcoming all into our worshipping community. <p>Children and Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We value the importance of children and young peoples work - We want to encourage families to be a part of St Mary's in order that we can grow as a church - We want to encourage children and young people to be an active part of our worshipping community and to encourage their spiritual growth.

<p>Goals</p> <p><i>We will address the following by means of...</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review how St. Mary's communicates and identify ways of improving them. 2. Explore more ways of worshipping, to include a wider range of people. 3. Making St. Mary's a family friendly church 4. Ensuring children and their carers are made to feel welcome 5. Being able to give children opportunities to grow as part of the church community
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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.*

In the table below:

IMMEDIATE means these tasks can be implemented as soon as the plan is adopted.

Short term means following up immediate action with implementation within two months.

Medium term indicates implementation in 2 to 6 months.

Long term means implementation in the first year / ongoing implementation

Actions: <i>small achievable steps which gradually build into something bigger</i>	Who	When
1. Communications		
a) Set up a communications working group – tasks to include the following:		IMMEDIATE
- More copies of the prayer diary to be available to newer members and at the back of the church		IMMEDIATE
- Online / downloadable copy of the prayer diary		Medium
- Work on our online presence – Website, twitter & facebook		IMMEDIATE start and ongoing
- Consider how to engage with the local paper – a spot once a month or a fortnight on St Mary's and what we are doing?		Short
2. Accessibility and Inclusivity – including:		
a) Drawing up accessibility guidelines		IMMEDIATE

b) Putting the numbers of the prayers to be used during the service into the service sheet for ease of following		IMMEDIATE
c) Have large print service books available		Medium
d) Assess suitability of service books – consider having our own printed.		IMMEDIATE and short term
e) Investigate recording sermons – to be available online or on CD		Medium
f) Consider the suitability of the music that is used at some services or special occasions i.e. when no choir is available or for family services etc		Medium / Long
3. Services – including the following:		
a) Improved or specific family services – short, simple music, etc		Short
b) Youth dedication service, eg for Guide & Scout groups who use the church		Medium
c) Christingle service for families		IMMEDIATE or Long
4. Children and Young People, including:		
a) Children and youth work working group, to review and develop activities (such as below)		IMMEDIATE
b) Investigate children’s liturgies and teaching material		Short to Long
c) Have Messy Church as a regular part of the calendar		IMMEDIATE
d) Investigate possibility of noisy church, eg as a follow up to Messy Church		Short
e) Show and tell to follow Sunday School during the service, along with display space for things that the children produce		Short
5. Social events, such as:		
a) Consider a mixer event for new and old members of the church. Informal?		Medium
b) Non-religious events, that non-religious people can attend / be invited to		Medium
c) Explore the possibility of childcare cover for people attending		Medium
6. General		
a) Opening church during week (investigate success of scheme in Lanark)		Medium
b) Cards for people who used the church for eg weddings or baptisms on an annual basis, to invite them to take up facilities, resources and activities, including new ones listed above.		Medium
c) Investigating examples of good practice taking place in other parishes in the diocese.		IMMEDIATE to Long

d) Encouraging the diocese to collate and disseminate examples of good practice in parishes throughout the diocese, particularly in the region.		IMMEDIATE
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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:

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Date of MAP Review with Bishop/Dean

MAP signed by

Rector/clergyperson Date.....

Secretary of the Vestry Date.....

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

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

Facilitator Date.....

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*