

# Glasgow and Galloway Mission Action Plan



**Name of Charge: St Mary's, Bridge of Weir**

**Name of Facilitator: Helen Ball**

**MAP Completed: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012**

**Strategic intent is growth**

## Stage 1: Why are we going for Growth?

<p><b>Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>your Church as God would see it</i></li> <li>- <i>where God has been, and is, at work in the community and in church</i></li> <li>- <i>what needs to be retained or relinquished</i></li> </ul>	<p>God sees the loving spirit that exists between members of the congregation and the warm welcome that we offer to newcomers. That we maintain our building carefully so that it speaks of his presence to all the people who pass it on the main road. That we are generous givers, faithful, hard working, volunteers in our local community and that we participate fully as loved and valued members of the Diocese and of our Region. That we have eagerly engaged with the Diocesan Growth Strategy and that we are keen to move forward and to grow.</p> <p>God also sees our grief that our congregation is now so small that our future has sometimes been doubted. That we sometimes feel very tired, just keeping things going. That our church is situated on such a busy road at the edge of the village and that we haven't got a church hall. That we wanted to do some strategic planning several years ago and that the past few years have been frustrating.</p> <p>We see God at work with us in the strong community spirit that is in the village, in the Bridge initiative, for example, the Fair Trade Walk and the Gala. In the warm ecumenical relations that exist between the churches, that enable us to work together for the good of local people. We see him at work in the way our neighbours support St Mary's fund-raising events, the Carol Service and the Lecture. In the assistance we receive from the police when we need their help crossing the road in front of the church. We also see God at work with us in the Diocesan Growth Strategy, in the new Development Teams, and in the clergy who are supporting us during the vacancy.</p> <p>We very much want to maintain a strong Christian presence in our local community and we shall keep on with projects such as the Gala, the Lecture and the Plant Stall. However, to use our strength and resources wisely, we shall not necessarily do all of these things every year.</p>
<p><b>Check:</b> <i>understanding of each strand</i></p>	<p>We spent the first of our meetings discussing the strands and what they mean. St Mary's congregation has a clear understanding of each strand.</p>



**Appraise, affirm and celebrate:**

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

**Worship, prayer and spirituality:**

Our friendly welcome. People coming to church on Sundays hear very thoughtful and intelligent sermons. We are reasonably traditional and still often have Matins.

We are good at encouraging and helping people to use their gifts in worship. Our beautiful and well-maintained church building is a resource that we can use to create space for different kinds of spiritual devotion.

**Learning and discipleship:**

The 'flagship event' of this kind at our church is the annual St Mary's Lecture, which is very well supported and where topics of contemporary and spiritual relevance are discussed.

We take part in ecumenical Lent groups and some of us attend diocesan events. We feel that our Regional Council is a source of encouragement and support in Learning and discipleship.

**Missional Leadership:**

Many of us are praying about the future of St Mary's.

The Vestry makes plans and decisions about future priorities. We are used to taking up leadership roles and we don't make a fuss. Plans for the future of our church are shared via the church magazine and by discussions amongst ourselves.

We are open to people taking ownership of things and we encourage this. We encourage volunteers and we do offer some training to our volunteers – to new Vestry members, for example. Our volunteers also attend diocesan courses.

We are prepared for change during the vacancy.

**Numerical growth, welcome and integration:**

We invite new people to church to the St Mary's Lecture, to the Carol Service and by word of mouth. We advertise our service times in the local paper and we have a web site.

Being part of the Anglican Communion sometimes attracts people to us.

Our signage is good and accurate. The building looks cared for and the lighting is attractive. When they see St Mary's, people say, 'What a lovely little church!'

Norma's cakes are very welcoming!

We are welcoming and encouraging. There is a good balance, we feel, allowing new members to find their feet and not putting them under pressure to join the Vestry too soon.

**Children and young people:**

We do have room for them in church and we welcome them, even though we don't have a church hall in which to hold a Sunday school.

We have provided a toy box for children and we find that they enjoy using it.



	<p><b>Imaginative outreach into local communities</b>  This is a new priority for us and we are learning to respond  We are a part of the Bridge initiative – Freeland and St Machar’s Churches welcomed and encouraged us. We are involved in the Fair Trade Walk, an ecumenical/interfaith venture.  We give our harvest produce to the local Jericho Mission and we donate half of our Christmas collections to local charities.  Some of us offer to take people to their hospital appointments. Our members are collectors for charities and volunteers for charities such as Christian Aid.  We have the Ladies’ Group.  Wendy is involved with the Olive Tree project that helps Palestinian people in need.  We help with the social group at St Fillan’s, Kilmacolm.  Giving and sharing with others feels like a joy, not a burden to us.</p>
<p><b>Assess:</b>  <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we suffer from the following weaknesses....</i></p>	<p><b>Worship, prayer and spirituality:</b>  Our worship does not meet the needs of different age groups. In particular, it does not meet the needs of young people and families. Also some older people find our service time too early.  Not everyone in our congregation likes Matins: we recognise that we do not all find the same things helpful in worship.  Singing can be hard going in our small congregation. We hand out a large pile of books at the beginning of our worship and knowing how to use them is complicated for newcomers. Our blue-book liturgy booklets are quite old and battered.</p> <p><b>Learning and discipleship</b>  We acknowledged to ourselves that at the moment not much happens in our congregation with regard to this strand.</p> <p><b>Missional leadership</b>  For a long time we have been feeling like we just survive – we have not been planning strategically.  We recognise that it is difficult for people to step down from volunteering when they would like to give up a role.  Although people are praying privately for the future of St Mary’s, we have not been praying about this together.</p> <p><b>Numerical growth, welcome and integration:</b>  Our church building is cold and damp inside.  New people who come to the Lecture and the Carol Service don’t often come back.  Our web site is not very exciting and this year we forgot to advertise our Christmas services on it.</p>



	<p><b>Children and young people:</b>  Parents have told us that the toy box can be an unwelcome distraction for their children.  Our worship does not meet the needs of young families and a toy box is not the answer.  No groups working with children or young people are currently using our building and we do not think there is a possibility of this at the moment.  The busy road outside the church is not safe for children.  We do not feel that it is practical at the moment to consider putting on a service for children at a different time from the Sunday Eucharist.  Bridge of Weir already has two other churches that are highly attuned to children and their needs.</p> <p><b>Imaginative outreach into local communities</b>  We have always taken part in wider community events like the annual Gala Service but our numbers are such that we haven't been able to lead.  Our offer to take people to hospital is not often taken up.</p>
<p><b>Investigate:</b>  <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities...</i></p>	<p><b>Worship, prayer and spirituality:</b>  We feel that this is a good time to think about exploring new ways of worshipping that would be suitable for smaller congregations.  We are aware that the Scottish Episcopal Church has some exciting new initiatives in this area and we would like to find out about them.  We feel that there are opportunities for us to use the church building differently for worship and prayer and we would also like to have bespoke liturgy booklets for St Mary's. We miss our mid-week service and would like to have one again.</p> <p><b>Learning and discipleship:</b>  We feel that although not much happens at the moment, yet it could!  Diocesan events are good – and more of us could be encouraged to go along. We feel that Learning and discipleship is the 'powerhouse' of the strands – all sorts of new ideas and encouragement could come from this.  We could develop this strand in a way that does not ask people to come out for too many meetings or events.</p> <p><b>Missional leadership</b>  We could pray corporately as well as privately for the future of St Mary's.</p> <p><b>Numerical growth, welcome and integration:</b>  We could try to encourage people who just come to church at Christmas or for the Lecture to come back again – perhaps to one more festival or special service each year.  We wonder about inviting people who were married or baptised in St Mary's to come back on their anniversaries: we see opportunities to make connections with people in the events that are important to them in their lives.</p>



	<p>We feel that we could develop a welcome pack for newcomers, or some welcome material of some kind.</p> <p>We recognise that an engaging, informative, up-to-date web site is essential and that the Diocese can help us to improve ours.</p> <p><b>Children and young people:</b> We can see the possibility of developing children’s ministry in partnership with another church in our Region – perhaps St Fillan’s. One of our members is a teacher. Children from her primary school visit St Mary’s on an educational trip every year.</p> <p><b>Imaginative outreach into local communities</b> We could advertise our hospital lifts more widely – perhaps in the doctors’ surgery. We would like to explore how best we can show Christian values more clearly at events such as the plant stall, the gala and coffee morning.</p>
<p><b>Communicate:</b> <i>How has everything so far been communicated?</i></p>	<p>A significant number of the congregation attended the meetings with the diocesan facilitator. The flip chart discussions were written up and circulated. The church magazine reported on MAP. Members have discussed MAP with one another. We have held informal meetings about it after Sunday worship.</p>

## Stage 2: What will our Growth Strategy involve?

<p><b>God’s call to growth.</b></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>These are the shared hopes and dreams we have for St Mary’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beauty and celebration in worship</li> <li>• Serving our community and sharing God’s love</li> <li>• Growing – spiritually and also numerically</li> <li>• Finding a stable future for our church</li> </ul> <p>We feel that if we can grow spiritually and numerically then the future of St Mary’s will be stable and secure. We want the name of Christ to be at the heart of our vision.</p> <p>This is our vision for the way of life to which God is calling us:</p> <p><b>Delighting to praise God, showing Christ’s love, growing in faith.</b></p> <p>We shall need to be intentional and determined about this vision. It will be a new way of life for us. We shall need to be brave. In particular, we shall need courage, as we try to share our faith.</p>
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<p><b>Our prioritised response</b></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 shall focus upon the following strands of the strategy:</p> <p><b>Worship, prayer and spirituality</b> <b>Learning and discipleship</b></p> <p>We shall focus upon <b>Worship, prayer and spirituality</b> because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is at the heart of what we are as Christians.</li> <li>• We do think hard about our services and we are receptive to new ideas. We are enjoying having different priests during the vacancy.</li> <li>• We have had a prayer group in the past and this was helpful.</li> <li>• We already have some new material to work with, about the Intercessions.</li> <li>• We want to give our Sunday services a thorough ‘airing out.’</li> <li>• We feel this is achievable.</li> </ul> <p>We shall focus on <b>Learning and discipleship</b> because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It complements the Worship, prayer and spirituality strand.</li> <li>• Nothing much happens at the moment</li> <li>• We feel that all sorts of good ideas and fresh thinking will come out of this strand.</li> <li>• We can engage with this strand on Sunday mornings or at a mid-week service – it won’t over-stretch our resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals</b></p> <p><i>We will address the following by means of...</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Re-ordering the church building to create a more intimate atmosphere.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Identifying a new non-Eucharistic liturgy for use during a regular midweek service.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Refreshing and reducing in number the books we use in Sunday worship.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Enriching the music at our Sunday morning worship by inviting and welcoming different musicians from time to time throughout the year.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Encouraging as many members of the congregation as possible to attend the new course planned for the autumn by the diocesan Learning and Discipleship Development Team</b></li> <li>6. <b>Inquiring of the Learning and Discipleship Team about study material specifically suitable for St Mary’s to use when the autumn course has finished.</b></li> </ol>



## 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.*

<b>Actions:</b> <i>small achievable steps which gradually build into something bigger</i>			<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
1	Re-arrange the church furniture with the help and advice of the Revd Canon James Milne, convenor of the diocesan Liturgy team.	Gill and the Vestry	July/ August 2012	
2	Contact the Revd Canon James Milne for a discussion about different non-Eucharistic liturgies.	Gill and the Vestry	Autumn 2012	
3	Collect samples of liturgy booklets and leaflets used by other churches.	All members of the congregation	July/ August 2012	
3	Write to the Regional Council asking to borrow liturgy booklets from Council members for consultation.	Martin	July/ August 2012	
3	Ask the University of Paisley and Prontaprint of Gourock to estimate the costs of producing different designs of liturgy booklets.	Wendy	Autumn 2012	
4	Explain and discuss this goal with Bridget and ask her for details of musicians whom we could invite to play during Sunday worship.	Martin	July 2012	



4	Write to the head teachers of Bridge of Weir Primary School and Gryffe High School, inviting students to play their musical instruments for St Mary's during Sunday worship – at the Harvest Festival (7 <sup>th</sup> October 2012) or on a Sunday near that time.	Gill	August 2012 at the start of the new term
5	Advertise the new diocesan study course to our members with plenty of encouragement, as soon as details become available, with offer of lifts and car-sharing to the venue in Paisley.	Gill and the Vestry	Autumn 2012
6	Contact the Revd Gordon Fyfe, convenor of the Learning and Discipleship Development Team, for advice about further suitable study material.	Gill	January 2013

## 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:*

We are very much looking forward to the re-development of our Region and we are determined not to be distracted from our MAP goals during this time of structural change.

We recognise that it can be hard to persuade everyone to come along to evening study groups, so we plan to find a way to share what we have learned with those who can't attend.

Being a small congregation will not discourage us either. We have chosen manageable goals and recognise the difference that can be made with small, achievable steps.





Date of MAP Review with Bishop/Dean .....

MAP signed by

Rector/clergyperson                      *Ivan Draper*                      Date *19 Aug 2012*

Secretary of the Vestry                      *Gill Reynolds*                      Date *19 Aug 2012*  
(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                      *pp Anne Tomlinson*                      Date *19 Aug 2012*

Agreed frequency of ongoing Facilitator contact                      *Quarterly*

*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*

