

## **Good beginnings**

As DNS goes to press, two of the six services launching our Diocesan Growth Strategy have taken place, one in St Ninian's Castle Douglas for the Galloway Region and the other in Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Paisley for the Glasgow South and Renfrewshire Regions. Between them, they attracted nearly 300 people, a most encouraging response.

The services followed a specially written liturgy, common in the main but interspersed by Regional intercessions and a presentation depicting local signs of growth and hope. Huge creative imagination was evidenced on the part of those presenting, testimony to much co-operative work within and between congregations.

Many people have commented on the choice of hymns, all of them written post-1950. They focussed upon the mission imperative, that divine call to the Church to join in with what God is already doing in the world; that vocation to look outwards and upwards, not simply inwards. The Launch Services have been deliberately set in the octave of Pentecost

- to signal that this work can only be done by God's grace and in the power of the Spirit;
- to open us to the possibilities of the new;
- to remind us of the imperative for mission and evangelism

Bishop Gregor offered a ringing endorsement of the Strategy in his sermon, drawing from the three readings examples of God's encouragement, energizing and challenge; a reminder of the divine guidance and companionship that will be with us as we embark on this adventure as a Diocese. He also commissioned the Mission Action Plan Facilitators from the different Regions with the laying on of hands and prayer.

"I have been much moved, encouraged and heartened by the response so far - it is a good beginning", he commented, a response that was echoed by the Dean; "a great beginning to the Growth Strategy Launch; full of anticipation but no expectation - wonderful!"

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