

St John's Dumfries

Mission Action Plan

[part of the Diocesan Growth Strategy]



Launched at the

**Annual General Meeting
18 September 2012**

Glasgow and Galloway Mission Action Plan



Name of Charge St John the Evangelist Dumfries

Name of Facilitator Revd Anne Tomlinson

MAP Completed 18 September 2012

Strategic intent is 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>St John's is a growing congregation – or rather is a charge growing multiple congregations within it; the context, staffing and demography is such as to lead us to believe that we will continue to grow in two ways in particular, both of which we term 'ecumenism'. St John's firmly espouses a life of <i>external</i> ecumenism and wishes to see how the existing linkage with the Methodist community could be extended into other communities, URC and C of S. St John's has a significant calling to continue to model and pilot ecumenical ways of being church in the manner of SCIFU's 'maxi-parish' model.</p> <p>We also espouse <i>internal</i> ecumenism, the desire to help every member be affirmed in their ministry and to model how that encouragement of vocations can be nurtured throughout the whole of Galloway. Two discernment groups have been running of late, enabling our members to discover their God-given gifts and vocation in the whole of life, and become aware that, in the Body, <u>all</u> types of service are equally valued and valuable. The Vestry is keen identify further people to join and to run further iterations of this course.</p> <p>There is a historic tradition of mission in the community cascading out from collegiate churches in the area. St John's is keen to explore the 'minster model' of church, minsters being centres of excellence, liturgical worship, training, education and resourcing for a wide geographical area. Such churches have the critical mass to cascade skills and training to other ecclesial missionary communities in the area. This sort of coverage in the twenty-first century will doubtless be effected using <u>both</u> face-to-face methods and electronic means. The ministry of James Clark-Maxwell is significant in this respect; cascading the skills of spiritual listening & accompaniment out from his work-place of general medical practice, enabling others in the Region to minister in the integration of spiritual care and healthcare.</p> <p>St John's is also wrestling with how it expresses these diverse callings in worship: how to balance the need for both-and, traditional-and-alternative, in any re-ordering of the church building.</p>
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opportunities..

Appraise, affirm and celebrate:

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

Assess:

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

Investigate:

with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities..

should be invited and encouraged to join these groups. St John's believes in every-member-ministry, so needs to equip people for that.

Imaginative outreach into the community

It was considered that this strand involved offering worship on another day and 'being flexible' in the offering of worship, i.e. 'midweek and multiple'. It involved looking at how accessible the current services are to people – in the language used, the paperwork offered (service sheets, pew notes etc), regarding who is included and who (unintentionally) excluded; the Gender Audit comes into play here, as does Glennis Tavener's Disability Audit. It was agreed that St John's needs to think further about the issue of communication and ponder the use of electronic media in worship. There is a need to make better use of modern electronic means of communication/social networking, and to offer people a regular diet of news and information by a wide variety of methods. Imaginative outreach means meeting people where they are, so another avenue for thought is to discern which local gathering venues could be used for outreach? Could a group meet in a local coffee shop? Is the railway station a good venue? How do we take the message *out*?

Children and young people

It was felt that it would be good if children could be included on rotas for serving, reading, leading the intercessions. It was felt that

- (i) doing children's work differently automatically leads to outreach
- (ii) work with children and young people would be enhanced and stimulated by the re-ordering of the church and the offering of a wider variety of worship. St John's youth contingent is keen to re-invigorate diocesan youth work from the bottom up, and host a Glenalmond reunion to which others could be invited from this diocese and from 'near-neighbour dioceses'.

Numerical growth

Discussion of this issue caused the most problems, with people not being sure they understood what *kind* of growth was being sought by the strategy. If it is about internal church growth, then that is quantifiable, but if it about growth of the Kingdom, then how is that measured? It was agreed that St John's touches a lot of people through its pastoral outreach and social events, and by other seasonal and ecumenical events such as the Lent Lunches; also through wide Hall usage. How do we quantify *that* kind of outreach?

It was thought crucial to take on board the fact that the Vinegrower prunes in order to enable growth - so the question needs to be asked:

'are there things that ought to be laid down in order that the Vinegrower might bring on the new shoots identified earlier? Is everything that is currently being done/attempted still truly necessary and desired by God?'



<p>Appraise, affirm and celebrate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we exhibit the following strengths ...</i></p> <p>Assess: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we suffer from the following weaknesses....</i></p> <p>Investigate: <i>with regard to each strand of the strategy, we detect the following opportunities..</i></p>	<p>The following questions were then considered by the Vestry at a succession of meetings between the facilitator being with them in November 2011 and returning in July 2012.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are you <u>fully agreed</u> that internal ecumenism is the model you wish to continue following? Are some of you wishing to bring everyone to the same understanding of what 'being the Church' is about, or are you happy to continue to enable and allow varieties of understanding? 2. Is your model of mission going to be largely about 'coming'; that is, making your worship, your building, the spaces within it, the language you use and so on as inviting as possible to as many people as possible who are attracted to you, thus leading to growth in church numbers? Or is it about 'going'; meeting people where they are, and equipping members so that they can go out and be articulate agents of Christ in their daily lives, thus growing the Kingdom but not necessarily leading to growth in the church (or at least maybe not your particular congregation)? 3. Do you feel confident that you have (a) the capacity (b) the responsibility (c) the desire to use your resources in such a way that others in the Region may benefit from your God-given gifts, or is this a stretch too far, or too soon? 4. What does external ecumenism mean to you? How far are you prepared to go? <p>Missional leadership means being imaginative and using all the God-given resources that are available, both within the church community and within the wider community – art, music, theatre. St John's could be a wonderful venue if the space was freed by re-ordering (changing lighting, removing pews, 'being in the round' and so on.)</p> <p>The emphasis in our discussions has focussed mostly on 'mission as coming' - drawing people in to St John's space/Family – but what about 'going'? How do we equip people for that task? In this regard there also needs to be discussion about caritative outreach in the coming year and discernment of which projects to support, and how.</p>
<p>Communicate: <i>How has everything so far been communicated?</i></p>	<p>The wider congregation have been kept informed about the Vestry's MAP deliberations through sermons, articles in the magazine and service sheet notices; Vestry Minutes including Diocesan MAP material are available in the church library.</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>Our prioritised response is thus threefold – welcome, nurture, send out - but under two 'strand' headings:</p> <p>Strand 1 Welcome, integration and numerical growth We want to get better at spreading the news of who we are so that people may find us, feel inclined to visit and find a home in our midst. This work of 'communication' will have a variety of elements to put our church community more on the map and relate to differing constituencies. We also want to work on the welcome we offer when people do find us; and that doesn't just mean what happens at the front door but right through our life together: helping them to find the worship style that suits them, making sure that all ages/stages of life are adequately catered for; mirroring the generous hospitality we find at God's table in the way we share our God-given resources - as a church community, as cells within the whole and as individuals in our own homes</p> <p>Strand 2 Education and discipleship We want to develop and increase our group life (cell groups, small groups) so as to 'incorporate and inform', with the intention that, disciplined by this means, people are enabled to go out and get involved in service in the world. This requires intentionality and co-ordination.</p>
<p>Goals</p> <p><i>We will address the following by means of...</i></p>	<p>1. A focus upon Communication – we wish to communicate to the local community who we are and what we are about: by means of a complete re-branding of all publicity; the re-launch of the magazine and the web site; the production of attractive publicity leaflets that (with the magazine) will be spread very widely through the town</p> <p>2. A focus upon Hospitality – since we expect that, by God's grace and the hard work detailed above, newcomers will continue to come to us, we need to work hard to welcome them and help them find a home and a place within our midst easily, by means of the offering of food and other congregational events that help people to make friends and get to know others.</p> <p>3. A focus upon Nurture – we believe that people grow in faith through small groups; so we need develop and increase our group life (cell groups, small groups) so as to 'incorporate and inform' , with the intention that, disciplined by this means, people are enabled to go out and get involved in service in the world. This requires intentionality and co-ordination.</p>



Stage 3: How will we encourage Growth?

Actions: <i>small achievable steps which gradually build into something bigger</i>			Who	When
1	1a	Prior to the magazine's relaunch: decide who is it for, and hence content; name of magazine; design	Editorial team and Vestry	Summer 2012
	1b	Launch of new website and first edition of new magazine which outlines 'The Church for Everyone' banner.	Webmaster/ Associate Minister & Editorial Team	September
2	2a	Covenant Sunday and AGM: take these opportunities to speak about the vision and the MAP and share these with the congregations		September 16 – 18
	2b	Launch MAP	Rector & Vestry	AGM
3	3a	Organise a meal to welcome newcomers.	Associate Minister & Team	October 6
	3b	Think how this might flow into other meals in homes at regular intervals in the year for the same purpose		
4	4a	Organise an event to be held during Advent to consolidate this first term's work	Vestry	Away weekend
5	Vestry Away-Weekend:			
	5a	Do more detailed planning on the next phase of development of the two strands	Vestry & Facilitator	November 16 – 18
	5b	Think about the kind of project in the town you wish to support and encourage members to get involved in: First Base Agency's Food Parcel scheme via weekly fund-raising lunches	Vestry Harvest launch	21 August 23 Sept
	5c	Think about how to achieve a more detailed programme of consultation with the congregation	Vestry	November
		Spring foci: Think about how to nurture people through small groups, cell groups, SHAPE groups Continue to address the issue how you, as a church for everyone, welcome everyone physically to worship. What does this mean for those with age-related infirmities, disabilities or special needs?	Education Group Vestry/ General Meeting (consultation about church layout)	January to March 2013
	Production of and launch of community leaflet	Associate Minister & Team	Advent	



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:

- 1 Attacks on the church by the secular world—we see these as opportunities to stimulate debate.
- 2 Age profile/ insufficient workers for the harvest.

Date of MAP Review with Bishop/Dean

MAP signed by

Rector/clergyperson *Robin Paisley* Date 18th September 2012

Secretary of the Vestry *Peter Boreham* Date 18th September 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

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***

