

Introduction

As the Church Council is aware from previous meetings The Methodist Conference has directed that every Church must have a Growth Plan showing how it will grow in every aspect of its Church life in the next few years and in particular show what it intends to do which will hopefully make new followers of Jesus Christ. The Church Council agreed the current version of the Achieving the Vision/Growth Plan in December 2018 and the Circuit have asked for this to be reviewed before the end of March 2020.

This document provides the Church Council with an update on the Growth Plan and the proposed Growth Plan for 2020/21. This is proposed to the Church Council by the Church Growth Team who the Church Council asked to review the Growth Plan when it met in autumn 2019. In doing this the Church Growth Team reflected on the input from the whole Church at the General Church Meeting when the meeting was asked to share and record areas of celebration, opportunity and challenge in the life of the Church.

Review of Achieving the Vision/Growth Plan December 2018- March 2019

When the Church Growth Team reviewed the Growth Plan we noted a number of areas of growth and development which we wanted to give thanks to God for the:

- Development of Trinity's Sunday Worship over the last twelve months, in particular the morning worship being led by the teams of Service Leader, Music Leader and Preacher.
- The development of Closer, Listening to God and Mission Tea as expressions of worship alongside Sunday Services.
- Increased use of Testimony in Worship but noted that it would be good to develop this across the whole life of the Church.
- Blessing of the Alpha Course over the last few years but to explore offering a different introduction to Christianity course next year.
- The breadth of Children's and Youth Work that had impacted the lives of children and young people especially Open the Book, Sunday Club, Youth Group, Ask 7:7.
- The way in which inviting people has become part of the Church culture.
- The number of families from Parents and Babies who have begun connecting with other Church activities especially Christmas services.
- The good pastoral care system which is in place and ensures people are cared for.
- The prayerful approach to Church life which is present in so many different ways including in the Tuesday Prayer Meeting, Alpha Prayer Team, Prayer Ministry Team, Worship Teams.
- 13 individuals who became Church members last year both those new to faith and those transferring from other Churches.
- The number of Baptisms and Thanksgivings for Children from Church Families.

We noted the following areas where we felt we hadn't moved forward as quickly as we could but where God is still calling us to:

- Increase the participation in small groups; in particular developing time limited small group opportunities and training for small group leaders. Ensuring there are appropriate small groups for those who are new to faith, e.g. those who have just done Alpha, those whose faith is deep and those in between.
- Develop an outreach opportunity for men.
- Develop a Saturday morning gathering for all the family which is fun, helps people to discover God and worship. For this to be a bridge between Parents and Babies and other Trinity activities.
- Provide opportunities for the Trinity family to get to know each other better for example Church socials, encouraging hospitality and introducing new people to others.

We acknowledged that we felt the following items hadn't been achieved but no longer needed to be on the Growth Plan.

- Build on Open the Book and consider who we can help those children learn more about Jesus.
- Develop an informal opportunity for people to question, discover and explore the Christian faith. Possibly to include three elements Coffee, Conversation and Compline (Prayers).

Achieving the Vision/Growth Plan 2020/21

In light of the above reflections the Church Growth Team suggest the following is the Church Growth Plan for 2020/21. **New items are in red for ease of reading.**

What is distinct about Trinity as a Church?

- It is accessible, accepting and inclusive for all.
- The fellowship, love and care that we give to and receive from each other.
- A place to encounter God
- A commitment to help others meet Jesus
- The openness to allow people to question, discover and explore the Christian faith
- The good quality Children's and Youth Work
- A reliance on God through the Holy Spirit to enable all that we do.
- A praying Church, where everything is underpinned and supported by prayer.

Achieving the Vision/Growth Plan Priorities

Worship, Prayer and Learning

- **Continue to** develop a range of worship opportunities with a core gathering on a Sunday morning which is accessible to all.
- **Review and develop the Prayer Ministry Team and Prayer Ministry Time.**
- **To commit to pray during Lent for each other, for the community, for the Church and to seek God's will for our lives as a Church.**
- Increase the participation in small groups; in particular developing time limited small group opportunities and training for small group leaders. Ensuring there are appropriate small groups

for those who are new to faith, e.g. those who have just done Alpha, those whose faith is deep and those in between.

- Consider how a 1:1 buddy scheme could be introduced to help people grow in faith.
- To increase the use of Testimony across the life of the Church not just in Sunday Worship.

Outreach and Partnership

- Continue to develop an outreach activity for men.
- To continue to offer an introduction to Christianity Course on an annual basis and to think about the best Pre-Alpha opportunities that can be offered.
- To consider how we can make those who use the Church building more aware of Church activities and the Christian faith.

Youth, Children and Families

- Further develop a Children's and Youth pathway so there are appropriate activities at each stage of life from 0 to 18. In particular to work with families of Children and Young People connected with Trinity to identify and if appropriate develop a:
 - worship opportunity for young people.
 - new expression of Junior Youth Group for young people aged 11 to 14.
 - group for middle school aged children, possibly at lunchtime.
 - a non Sunday opportunity for the growing number of first school aged children.
 - Bible Study or similar for young people in years 12 and 13.
- Develop a Saturday morning gathering for all the family which is fun, helps people to discover God and worship. For this to be a bridge between Parents and Babies and other Trinity activities.

Pastoral Care

- Provide opportunities for the Trinity family to get to know each other better for example Church socials, encouraging hospitality and introducing new people to others.
- Continue providing high quality pastoral care and ensuring everyone knows who their pastoral link person or visitor is.

Resources

- Make a reality the redevelopment of the Church Foyer to enable the Church to be seen from the street, to create a more flexible and welcoming space in which other activities can take place during worship e.g. Prayer or Children's space.
- Address Trinity's current projected financial deficit and seek to work to a balanced budget.

The Church in Slaley

Whilst considering the Trinity Growth Plan the Trinity Church Council noted the growth that is taking place in Slaley through the 'The Church in Slaley' which is a united congregation of Anglicans and Methodists.

In particular the Church Council noted and encouraged:

- The continued growth of the Sunday congregation which has come through people being attracted to a larger congregation or attracted back because of the fresh start since the closure of the Methodist Chapel.
- The growth in the depth of people's faith through the Methodist House Group and the village study group.

- The introduction of Lent Lunches in 2020.
- The plans for a meal and faith conversations evening in the village pub during 2020.
- The growth of Messy Church and the plans of the Messy Church planning team to think about how they can deepen the faith of the parents who come over the coming year.
- The involvement of Anglicans and Methodists in the running of the Church in Slaley.