

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.

Over the last few months the 5 co-ordinating groups have looked at the areas of the Church life it is responsible for and considered what the next steps in these areas are. The co-ordinating groups also looked at a number of questions about Trinity's life as a whole. Each of Trinity's house groups were invited to look at the more general questions and some responded with feedback. On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November the Church Stewards and Minister spent the day together considering the feedback, their own thoughts and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit have brought together what is shared now in this document.

The Church Growth plan is split into three areas. One of the questions in the feedback was 'What makes Trinity distinct from other Churches in Hexham? The first part of the growth plan offers some suggestions as to what makes Trinity different and distinct. The second part identifies a number of areas or projects, by Co-ordinating Group which will be undertaken in the next two to three years which we believe will help Trinity grow. We hope this growth will continue to reflect our focus on John 1:14, deepening the faith of those already part of Trinity and growing the number of people who follow Jesus by stepping out into the neighbourhood. The third part is a proposal from the Church Stewards as to how worship at Trinity is reshaped to better meet the needs of our existing fellowship and those who decide to come and see.

### **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

- Develop a range of worship opportunities with a core gathering on a Sunday morning which is accessible to all.
- 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.
- To increase the use of Testimony across the life of the Church.

## Outreach and Partnership

- Offer training with the life of the Church about how to talk about our faith.
- Develop an outreach activity for men.
- Develop an informal opportunity for people to question, discover and explore the Christian faith. Possibly to include three elements Coffee, Conversation and Compline (Prayers).
- To review the 2018 Season of Invitation and to consider how this outreach opportunity is taken forward in the future.
- To continue to offer Alpha 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.

## 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.
- Develop a Christian story time element within Parents and Babies to help those who come to begin to discover God.
- 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.
- Build on Open the Book and consider who we can help those children learn more about Jesus.
- Help connect our children and young people with other larger gatherings of Christians e.g Ask 7:7.

## 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.
- Develop Trinity's communications to enable the Church family to be better in touch with what happens when they are away and the opportunities for them to develop their faith.

**To enable these things to happen we recognise that we need to also doing the follow:**

- Understand and develop the range of skills of people in the congregation so they feel more able to be involved in mission and ministry of the Church.
- Stop church lunches except for special occasions.

**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 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. A family service is being developed and starting to see children attending. This will continue and hopefully be a place of continued growth.
- The growth in the depth of people's faith through the Methodist House Group and the village study group.
- 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.

## Worship at Trinity

From the feedback and other conversations the Church Stewards and Minister are very aware that many of the Trinity family have been uncomfortable with worship at Trinity over the last few months. The stewards are aware that these concerns have often been reduced to the question of should we be traditional or contemporary or this is what I like however we wish to acknowledge the challenges are not this simplistic and underneath everyone's concern is a real desire to worship God and help others to worship and encounter God.

Having listened, discussed and prayed the Church Stewards would like to propose the following to the Church Council as the way forward. The stewards believe this way forward offers a future that will hopefully unify the Church family, enable all Trinity's worship to be a place of encounter with God and be a strong foundation for our outreach, mission and evangelism.

### So what might we do?

1. Understand Sunday mornings as our core gathering as a Church family. Adapt the services so they are more easily, a place for everyone. This will include AAW in the hall 6 times a year.
2. Acknowledge that within Trinity there are those who need to worship in more specific styles to fully encounter God within worship.
3. Create opportunities for those needs to be met:
  - a. Introduce a once a month 4pm Sunday Closer as a Contemporary and Charismatic expression of worship alongside the 4pm Listening to God, Just as You Are and Mission Tea services which happen once a month.
  - b. Continue to offer a traditional 6pm evening service.
  - c. At periods in the year be different with the 6pm service. e.g In February and March 2019 when the Bible Course will run at 6pm
  - d. Introduce a healing service at 6pm when there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday
  - e. Develop a midweek act of worship that doesn't include music e.g Coffee, Conversation, Compline (prayers).



### **So what values/style would Sunday mornings have:**

- First & foremost a unifying place for everyone to worship and encounter God.
- An informal atmosphere which is accessible to all ages and uses accessible language.
- Has a consistent framework that is accessible for new people but incorporates different styles and *elements* of worship. Be expected whilst expecting God to do the unexpected.
- Founded and rooted in scripture, including teaching from Scripture about faith.
- Include music led by a worship group which is primarily modern worship music but will also include music from the breadth of the Christian tradition. The music is accessible for the congregation to sing in language and tune.
- Includes from time to time the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
- Is open to the Spirit of God moving and responding to that.
- Is participatory and will encourage participation through prayer, conversation, sharing testimony and other ways.
- Place of prayer for each other, Church, world.
- Place where people are invited to follow Jesus.

### **So what would that mean in practice?**

- Encourage congregation to come with an openness to encounter God even if everything isn't to their taste!
- Consistent leadership - services to be led collaboratively by a Service Leader, a Music Leader and a Preacher.
- To talk with Trinity's teenagers about what we can do to help them encounter God in worship.
- Read from the Bible, encourage people to use the pew bibles, read an alternative translation as well if that will help.
- Include teaching from the Bible which is relevant and deepens faith.
- Music will:
  - Be led by a worship group not the organ.
  - Allow all members of the worship group to be in congregation as well as the band from time to time. We'll use the gifts we have and pray for more!
  - Create an atmosphere of worship with pre-service singing from 10:15 and reflective CD music after the service.
  - Include a block of singing (most of the time)
  - Have an agreed list of songs which have been selected for words, theology and sing ability. Include Worship songs, hymns, other songs in this list. This will be reviewed annually.
  - Lead to enable the participation of the whole congregation.
- Include an all age element.
- Prayers for each other, world, Church, mission, those in need. Lord's Prayer.
- Give space for response through testimony, prayer, silence, allow God to speak.
- Explain what we are doing and give the option to not or to sit down and be still.
- Flag up in each service that after the service prayer ministry is available or that you may want to remain in the sanctuary and pray, reflect together. If you want to chat we encourage you to go through for coffee!