

Parish of St John the Baptist & St Kentigern

Parish Assembly

The parish assembly was held at St Kentigern's on Saturday 5th October and was attended by approximately 50 people. Prior to the assembly all parishioners were invited to submit their vision for the parish going forward, their ideas, aspirations and suggestions. These were all compiled and sorted into four categories by the Transitional Council: Children/Youth; Community/Social; Spirituality/Liturgy; Outreach/Evangelisation.

At the assembly, attendees were invited to join a focus group for one of these four categories facilitated by a member of the Transitional Council, to discuss and propose a maximum of three activities that they thought were priorities. The facilitators reported the proposals from each focus group to the whole assembly. All attendees were then invited to vote for the three proposals overall they thought were priorities for the parish. The scores were collated and the top three identified.

Below are the ten proposals put forward by the focus groups. Of these the three receiving the most votes as priorities were: 1. Youth Group; 3. Social Diary; 10. Community involvement.

At the subsequent meeting of the Transitional Council on Wednesday 6th November it was decided to push these three priorities forward. After some discussion, it was agreed that the 'social diary' proposal includes the formation of a social group and planning of events and activities to build up parish community life. The 'community involvement' proposal was taken to include events and activities that develop parish engagement with the wider community be that local, national or global. Thus the three priorities are identified broadly as:

- (1) Youth Group;
- (2) Social Group;
- (3) Outreach Group.

Follow up

In order to continue the momentum of the Parish Assembly, all parishioners are invited to attend a gathering **after 11.30am Mass at St John's on Sunday 1st December.** At this gathering, we'll split into the three priority groups according to interest to discuss next steps. There will be some food and tea/coffee provided so that people can relax and talk together over a sandwich.

I hope that many of you will engage with this process and come together to breath life into these three groups in order to build up our parish and put our faith into action.

With every blessing,

Fr Jeremy

Children/Youth

1. Youth Group

The conversation was started by asking why the previous youth group had fallen by the way side. What was apparent from the conversation was that a few close friends were a driving force but it ended up that only two of them were available and this led to the move from individual youth clubs for each church to one at St Johns and then nothing. From this conversation and contributions around the group it was clear that helpers were the issue and not necessarily demand from the youth. We had a debate about how to get helpers and it was clear that there was misunderstanding and frustration about how to resolve this. The misunderstanding was about the requirements for PVG, ratios of helpers to youth and the like. When it was made clear that PVG would be required for all and that we should think of say 1/8 ratios and cover that would allow for relief each week then it was acknowledged that this would not be easily resolved. There were calls for a degree of direction from the diocese and Fr Docherty (based in West Lothian or Kilsyth) was promoted as someone who may help with the framework and formation of a new youth club. It was also noted that realistically, there may be time pressures that would limit interest\participation from youth and parents of youth. In terms of the youth aspect it was agreed that the approach should be to gauge interest but there was also a desire to build it and they will come. In terms of the helpers, there was an acknowledgment that there could be challenges to help and there was an understanding that whilst it might not have been the way things were done that it might be that some paid for organisation or facilitation could be required. In summary all options were considered to be on the table if this could bring about the establishment of the youth club.

In terms of other discussions around this there was a desire for specific events that would bring together youth and serve to bring a sense of community and parish identity. The events or activities mentioned were:

- a post-Christmas children to young youth event such as a show or magician. This should be post mass and tied into a more family friendly mass where kids or families would be key contributors to the mass
- the establishment of an eco-garden or similar which would bring understanding with nature, connection to the church and would be something that other generations could participate in (particularly older generations). It would also be something that would need small but regular all year round attention and where there could be delegation and ownership of tasks which may lead to better buy in in time
- forming a group, within the youth group or separate to this, where there was greater understanding of and participation in the debates of the day. Environment, wider culture and social justice issues should be understood by the group with particular reference to the church's view point on this. Where possible it would be great to hear more about this from such a group throughout the year or at events that the parish may choose to participate in be that charitable, liturgical, awareness or pastoral.

Next steps?

- Engage with Fr Docherty or the relevant person regarding Youth group formation, structure, ideas and resources

- Work out the scope of youth group by getting sign up. Suggest that the sign up should involve mobile phones of parents or kids as the Youth Group should probably have a WhatsApp group or similar to make management and communication easier (and more relevant to the constituency).
- Knowing what the constituency looks like we decided to split the group in two (by age) or keep one and try and host events and activities that are relevant to both. This will also provide us with clarity as to how many helpers are required, put that out to the parishioners noting the PVG requirements and thereafter we can get a rota together.
- Look to plan what the Youth Group should do, looking to incorporate some of the activities that were mentioned above and looking to make sure that if required older youths can help out at our club and get this credit for their Duke of Edinburgh award or similar that they may be pursuing.

Community/Social

2. Recruitment weekends

There was general consensus that each of the groups in the church be represented in the church halls after each weekend Mass. ie Saturday Vigil at St. John's, Sunday am Mass at both St Kents and St. John's. Just having one at St Kents was not a good idea as you wouldn't catch everyone. This would mean that everyone would have a chance to see what was going on and also to hopefully participate. It was felt that people didn't know who attended their church and this might bring them together.

3. Social diary

We had a discussion on the social diary and how important it was to have one. Also a participant had brought the Archdiocesan Diary and made the point that the dates in that were set in stone and we should ensure that any event in either church does not conflict with this. We had a gentleman (from St. John's) who was very keen to be involved. This was seen as a positive thing as everyone would know what was happening, on a regular basis, in both churches. Obviously any ad hoc event would be broadcast via the bulletin.

4. University of the 3rd age.

As we were discussing what we could do re social and community interaction, the University of the 3rd Age came up. Apparently only costs £12 per year to join. As per the internet the University of the Third Age "is a UK movement of retired and semi-retired people who come together to continue their educational, social and creative interests in a friendly and informal environment." Someone would come in and help set up various groups. (I may be wrong but that was the impression I got). A lot of people thought it seemed well worthwhile and would be worth looking into.

Spirituality/Liturgy

5. Parish Music Evening

Everyone was happy with the style in which the liturgies are celebrated in the parish, but there were some strong opinions on some of the current hymns used and also at which part of the Mass they are used. Only one person wanted to dispense with the current hymnbook

altogether, but it was suggested that a supplement containing other popular hymns not included in the book, could be purchased. The idea of parish music evenings arose because of the problems of broadening people's repertoire of hymns and introducing new Mass settings. It was agreed that five minutes practice before Mass was not satisfactory. If hymns or settings are unfamiliar people do not feel so engaged. A music evening could also be a social occasion with tea and cake.

6. Enquiry Group for all ages

Many people have not had much in the way of catechesis since leaving school and have gaps in their knowledge of the Faith – they might welcome the opportunity to just ask about something that has been puzzling them. Younger people may have questions particularly relevant to their age group. We were undecided as to whether one group could cover all ages or if it would be better to have different groups. The enquiries could be about anything at all to do with the Church, faith, liturgy etc. but the aim was partly to give people, especially younger ones, more confidence and encourage them to play a fuller part in the life of the parish e.g. undertaking lay ministries.

7. Prayer/Study Group

We thought there would be some interest in a prayer group. The idea needs further exploration as a small prayer group was thought to be more conducive to sharing, but a larger group would have to have more directed prayer. The group could pray for all the other things going on in the parish. A prayer group could also be a study group or that could be organised separately. We agreed that, while catechesis was being discussed by the Outreach/Evangelisation group, it was also necessary for individual parishioners' growth in faith and understanding.

Outreach/Evangelisation

8. Reconnect with the housebound

Rota to visit them. Assist the St V group. Advertise for who needs a visit, people can nominate friends and neighbours etc we could ask/advertise in local nursing homes - the goal would be to help people engage with their faith towards the end of their life

9. Bereavement group

Publish the process, perhaps on the website, noticeboard, contact on the newsletter. Establish or expand the group to cover both churches to work with father and the families at this time. Helping perhaps to evangelise to the families having to reconnect with the church at this time.

10. Community involvement

Advertise corstorphine churches together events more. Look for more lay Catholic's to support. Have family masses where a family do the ministries eg grandparents and grand child share the reading, family members are passkeepers for the mass, do bidding prayers etc and family ask members of their family who have stopped coming to church to attend. Link to a family event eg wedding anniversary, milestone birthday