

## Local Church Review

# Your Church

***Please complete these forms electronically. If you have any difficulty in doing this, please contact your LCR Team Leader***

### Overview

This part of the review is divided into two sections

#### 1 – The story of your church

This is where we would like you to tell us about the recent history of your church – both the celebrations and the challenges – and how this has led you to where you are now. We also ask about your parish, your values and focus and your buildings.

#### 2 – The life of the congregation

In this section we will look at the life of the congregation in Worship, Community, Mission and Belonging

### Purpose

The purpose of this part of the review is

- To help you reflect as a congregation on the way you worship, grow fellowship, and relate to the world and the wider church.
- To help the LCR team understand
  - what is important to you in terms of expressing your faith
  - the opportunities and challenges you face in your local area.
  - how these influence and are expressed in the way you worship and relate to God, each other, the world and the wider church
- To help Presbytery identify and share good ideas.

### Completing the sections

- Please note that the bullet points are prompters to help you think rather than being a set of prescriptive questions. If it is more helpful to write paragraphs that take the questions into account, please do so.
- Any questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are to be completed by the Minister or Interim Moderator, in conjunction with the Session Clerk
- The spaces below the headers will stretch as you type.
- If you find you have already answered a question at an earlier point, please simply refer back to that section.

## 1 The story of your church

**History** - *Thinking back over the last 5-10 years, please tell us something of your church's recent history – the celebrations, the struggles, the achievements, the failures and the dreams.*

- *Where have you seen God at work in your recent past?*
- *What have been particular highlights in the life and development of the church?*
- *What significant challenges have you faced and how did you work or are you working to overcome them?*
- *What have you learnt most from, whether the situation itself was positive or otherwise?*

The congregation has had to face problems in the past. The previous minister's health broke down after only 3 years in post, leading to a lengthy absence concluding in a vacancy, and the current minister, who was inducted only 4 years ago, had an extended period off work due to stress arising from a personal situation. It should be noted that the Kirk Session and congregation offered enormous support to the minister and her family in this time of crisis. However, the lack of a sustained and stable ministry over a significant length of time has been a challenge and has made it more difficult for the congregation to think about how to move forward. Nevertheless, congregational life during these times has been maintained very successfully by volunteers.

Other challenges facing the congregation are the very small number of children and young people associated with the church family and how to engage more effectively with the community.

### **Where are you now?**

- *Where are you currently seeing God at work?*
- *What is going well or developing and what could be better in church life?*

There is a real understanding of the need for change. The congregation has flourished during the times of ministerial absence and engaged in some development but there is still a recognition that more needs to be done to rise to the challenges presented by the current climate in society.

There has been a small but noticeable increase in attendance. The congregation is open to experimentation and we have been accepted on the Path of Renewal. We are actively seeking a fresh vision for our congregation in the midst of the community of Campsie.

### **Values and focus**

- *What are the values that shape and direct the life of your church?*
- *Where is your energy spent just now and is this where you want your energy spent?*

Our mission statement is:

A Voice for Jesus in the Life of Campsie: together, listening to God's word, responding to his love. Faithfully and prayerfully loving, worshipping and serving our Lord Jesus Christ in obedience and humility. Sharing God's love with others and working through the power of the Holy Spirit for the coming of his kingdom.

Our values are hospitality and friendship.

Much of our energy goes in maintaining the structures of church: providing volunteers to do the various tasks, for example: treasurer, safeguarding coordinator, and property convener. Also, pastoral care of the elderly is an ongoing and increasing task. Some energy goes towards fundraising. The Guild is very strong. We would like to have more energy for engaging with the community and working with young people.

### **Your parish**

- *Please tell us about your parish and the communities within the parish – those you connect more readily with and those you find harder to engage with. Do the people who come to church live predominantly within the parish?*
- *What type of church do you believe the parish needs and how do you work towards meeting those needs?*

Our Congregation is drawn from people who live within the parish in the main. Our parish has a very mixed demographic, but our congregation is not truly representative of our parish. There are various communities within

the parish, and some of our members are involved with some of the communities but as a church we find it difficult to engage with the different communities.

Part of our aim on the Path of Renewal will be to identify the needs of the parish and consider which of those needs we might be able to meet as a congregation.

## 2 The Life of the congregation

### Worship - Engaging with God

#### Inclusive and Participative

- *Please tell us ways in which you aim to make worship accessible for*
  - *visitors and people not used to coming to church*
  - *people with impairments, disabilities or additional support needs*
  - *diverse ages*

We have a helpful welcome team at the door every Sunday. Disabled access to the sanctuary and other parts of the building is very straightforward. We are always prepared to welcome children and have creche and Sunday school facilities on a weekly basis.

- *What happens as people gather for worship and what happens after the service?*

There is a great deal of buzz and chatter and laughter, and a warm and welcoming atmosphere, as people gather for worship and about half the congregation remain behind for coffee after the service.

- *Please tell us about any opportunities for people to participate in worship, whether sharing in leading worship or in congregational participation.*

The Bible is read every Sunday by a member of the congregation. News time, after the all-age talk, is an opportunity for folks to share with the congregational community. On occasion the service will involve responses, or other congregational involvement, although this is not regular.

#### Reading and Preaching the Word\*

- *Please tell us about ways in which you enable the congregation to hear and understand the Bible.*

This happens mainly through preaching and the two house groups, although we also have occasional Bible study groups. We have experimented with café church and more discussion-based teaching during services.

#### Prayer\*

- *What opportunities are available to the congregation and/or wider parish for prayer?*

We have a Prayer Secretary who circulates topics of prayer to our prayer circle on a monthly basis. We also have a short prayer meeting before morning worship. Our evening service will occasionally focus on prayer and this would normally give the congregation the opportunity to pray using more reflective methods than a traditional prayer meeting. Our two-house groups provide another opportunity for prayer.

#### Celebrating the sacraments of baptism and communion\*

- *Please tell us ways in which you engage the congregation in the celebration of the sacraments.*

We celebrate Holy Communion as part of the 11 o'clock service twice a year, in June and October. In the same month we will celebrate communion at the evening service. In addition to this we have a monthly celebration of Communion after the 11 o'clock service. Home communion is offered to any housebound members who wish it. We do not have many baptisms in the congregation, there being only three since the induction of the present minister four years ago.

#### Relevant to the people in the parish

- *Please tell us ways in which you work to make worship relevant to the people in your congregation*

Hymns are chosen for their accessibility to the congregation, either because they are known, or because they are relevant. Our two organists are adept at encouraging the congregation to sing new items of worship. The language of worship is contemporary, and we use PowerPoint slides, with either words or images, to lead the congregation through the service from start to finish. On occasion, recorded music or video clips are used in worship. Preaching aims to take account of the local, national, and global situation and the needs of the congregation at different times and in different ways.

### Teaching and nurturing believers

- *Please tell us ways in which you encourage people on a journey of faith, from awareness to an established relationship with God e.g. through worship, teaching or other means?*

The house groups are places where faith is nurtured. We follow the Christian year in our Sunday worship and aim to lead people through the history of salvation by that means. There are occasionally opportunities for other Bible study. In the evening services we often use installations, reflective worship and worship stations to enable people to engage with their faith in more visual and interactive ways. We also use times such as Lent to concentrate on specific issues of faith through Bible study. We have had one Alpha course in the last 3 years. We have just been accepted onto the Path of Renewal which aims to support and inspire the minister in discipling the congregation.

### Sharing information

Please tell us about anything you have developed in your worship practice that you think could be helpful to other congregations

There is nothing we currently do that is not already being done elsewhere

## Church Community - Engaging with each other

### Showing grace, love and unity, encouraging people, and developing and sharing gifts

- *Please tell us ways in which you actively facilitate opportunities for people to connect, build friendships and become involved in the life of the congregation*

We have a number of opportunities for people to volunteer for either long-term, or short-term, or one-off commitments. We are a welcoming and friendly congregation who do not overwhelm newcomers but allow them to feel part of the family at a level with which they are comfortable. We are not slow to ask people to fulfil tasks if a request for volunteers does not produce a response. People respond well to this.

### Developing ministries of service and leadership

- *Please tell us about ways you*
  - *enable individuals to discover their gifts and develop their capabilities*
  - *support people as they start to exercise those gifts and help people to continue to feel valued in what they do*
  - *help individuals discern if they are still able to fulfil a role and support individuals if they decide to step down*

There is ample opportunity to volunteer for a variety of roles within the congregation. We have recently appointed a new session clerk and depute clerk, a new treasurer, and a new property coordinator and committee.

### Creating structures that are ordered and organised to support mission and good practice

- *Please tell us about ways in which*
  - *the leadership structure within the congregation enables mission and congregational growth*
  - *you review your structure in order to ensure it still meets your needs*
  - *you decide upon and develop the range of activities and meetings both for the congregation and for mission.*

The Kirk Session is currently considering ways to engage more effectively with the community. It is a forward-looking group which has embraced the need for change if we are to do this successfully. We are hopeful that Path of Renewal will support us in this. We are currently reviewing our structure of pastoral care to ensure that members are offered care, support, and contact, in the way that best suits them. We have recently ordained four new elders. There is a great deal of consensus on the Kirk Session as to the way forward.

### Sharing information

Please tell us about anything you have introduced to develop fellowship and nurture within your congregation that you think could be helpful to other congregations?

## Mission - Engaging with the world

### Proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom

- *Please tell us about ways in which you share your faith*

We recently held an Alpha course, although that was disappointing in that no-one came who was not already part of the Church family.

### Responding to human need by loving service

- *Please tell us about ways that you, as a congregation are involved in loving service, either directly or in partnership with other agencies.*

Our Rainbow Café runs four times a year, always in support of a different charity. As a congregation we support the Lodging House Mission on a monthly basis with donations of food and money. We observe Christian Aid Week. We are currently exploring starting a Dementia group and becoming a Dementia Friendly Church, in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland. We hope to launch this in March. We take worship to the two local care homes on a monthly basis for ten months in the year. Members volunteer for other charities, such as the local food bank.

Our church flowers are taken to members on a weekly basis, including those who do not attend, as an indication that they are not forgotten. A team of volunteers deliver the flowers.

### Transforming unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursuing peace and reconciliation

- *Injustice is seen in many forms. Please tell us about how you actively address or raise awareness of injustice*
- *Please tell us about ways you work to promote peace and reconciliation.*

### Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth

- *Please tell us about any ways you encourage and promote sustainability and good stewardship of the earth*

We recycle as much as possible and are exploring the possibility of becoming an Eco-congregation.

### Sharing information

Please tell us about anything you have introduced to that builds bridges between the local community and congregation that might be helpful to share with other congregations

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## Belonging - Engaging with the wider church

### Nurturing local relationships – parish neighbours and ecumenical groups

- *Please tell us about ways in which you engage with*
  - *other Church of Scotland churches locally*
  - *other local churches and Christian agencies in your local area*
- *Please tell us about whether or how these relationships provide mutual support and action*

We have good relationships with the local Catholic Church, Saint Machan's and with the local Free Church and occasionally work together on specific events.

The nearest Church of Scotland is in Milton of Campsie, a village a mile away. Our Guilds are mutually supportive, and we aim to bring our congregations closer together in the future.

### Engaging with and mutually supporting each other as part of Presbytery

- *Please tell us about*
  - *How you support Glasgow Presbytery and how you are supported by the Presbytery?*
  - *any ways in which you support or work with other churches across Presbytery*

We are heavily involved with Glasgow Presbytery through our minister, who convenes a committee, our presbytery elder, who convenes a committee, and our equalising elder who has served on more than one presbytery committee in his time as a member of Presbytery.

In a recent crisis while our minister was absent Presbytery was very supportive in terms of ensuring that legal processes were properly observed.

### Engaging with the Church of Scotland, its councils and committees

- *Please tell us about the extent to which you engage with the national church*

Our minister is involved in training supervisors of candidates training for ministry, through what was the Ministries Council, and also in offering supervision to colleagues in ministry.

### Identifying and connecting with the worldwide church

- *Please tell us ways in which you connect with, give support to and advocate on behalf of the worldwide church*

As a former Speaker for Open Doors, our Session Clerk maintains regular contact with the organisation and continues to lobby his MP when required, writing letters of protest to diplomatic representatives of countries where individual's human rights are being breached. In addition, he promotes specific prayer initiatives which arise through Open Doors or Christian Solidarity Worldwide from time to time.

### Recognising and celebrating our relationship with the church – past, present and future

- *Please tell us about*
  - *ways in which you celebrate belonging to the historic church*
  - *the part you consider you are playing in developing the future church*

We held a Pilgrim Way seminar on St Machan. We are proud of our history and the continuity of worship in the community for over 1000 years. We use the Revised Common Lectionary.

Looking ahead, our openness to change and the recognition of the need to experiment and develop worship and pastoral care as well as outreach to the community will provide examples of good practice.

### Sharing information

Please tell us about anything you have introduced to develop relationships with other churches that might be helpful to share with other congregations

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## How your buildings support worship, mission, community & the work of the wider church

### Accessibility

- *How accessible are your buildings? Please include how easy it is to get into your buildings, how you help people to find their way about and how people can get out in case of emergency?*

Our buildings are disabled friendly and it is easy to get in and out. Signage is clear and people are always willing to help.

### Buildings as a resource

*Please tell us about*

- *the strengths and drawbacks of your building and how you work with these?*
- *ways in which you use the space within your buildings to help people engage in worship*
- *how you use your halls and sanctuary to support the life of the church community, promote the congregation's relationship with the wider community and engage in mission*
- *ways you use your building to collaborate with or support the work of the wider church?*

Our building is modern with a flexible sanctuary and the facility for multimedia presentations. It is a great asset and morning worship is an opportunity to occasionally experiment with different layouts to refresh worship. From time to time the building is used by the community, although with a community hall in the village, as well as the Roman Catholic chapel and the Free Church nearby, the village is well served for hall accommodation. We host Lennoxton Primary School's Easter service, and Leavers' service and the Christmas service bi-annually, attended also by the local priest. Every alternate year the Christmas service is held in St Machan's Primary and the minister attends.

We are currently considering the live streaming of morning worship.

**Development**

- *Please tell us about any church/community/parish plans under consideration or in the course of planning (or that you would like to make) that have implications for your buildings. How would these plans better facilitate mission?*

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There is a plan, developed by the Community Council, to improve the environment in Lennoxton. This has no implications for our building but may have implications for our future engagement with the community. This is something to be explored.

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your congregation and/or parish?**