

Caldwell Parish Church

Future Focus Session 1 (14/11/2017) Facilitator's Report

Introduction

A total of 17 people as well as Rev. Alison McBrier attended the session, which was held in the Church hall, with three groups seated around tables.

The facilitator, Robbie Morrison, opened the evening with a time of prayer before explaining the evenings' exercises.

Timeline Exercise

The evening consisted of two main parts with a short tea break in between. The first part provided an opportunity to look back into the church's recent past (50 years) and discover more of how the current congregation came to be.

Each group was invited to draw a timeline on lining paper dating from 2017 back to 1967. Key events were to be recorded for both the church and the parish/community over this period. Events considered to be positive ("celebrations") were noted above the line, whilst the opposite ("struggles") were to be noted below the line. The right hand end of the lining paper was sectioned off and left blank. This is because it will deal with the future and will be completed in the final daytime session.

Although this document does not record the actual drawings, the main events have been collected from all the small groups and recorded below. As one would expect, there were a number of duplications, but the "happenings" need only to be mentioned once.

Celebrations

1967 – 1977

- Burns' Supper
- Women's Guild
- Sunday School 25+
- Strong youth fellowship
- Membership 351
- Scouts started
- Rev. Eddie Low

1978 – 1987

- Church Socials
- Ongoing link with school
- Rev. Eddie Low
- Struggle for money
- Centenary
- B. Robertson book published
- Church hall established
- Choir
- BBC Radio Songs of Praise

1988 – 1997

- 100 years Flower Festival
- Soup lunches
- Talent auction
- Bible study classes
- Memorial garden
- Electric organ

1998 – 2007

- Safari Dinners
- New church organ recital from George McPhee
- BB Started
- Legacy from Claire Orr
- Open day

2008 to present

- Church shop
- Link with Dunlop
- Senior Group
- Rev. A. McBrier
- S. Clerk serving for 50 years
- Good links with school
- Seniors' discussion group started
- New housing estates
- Building well maintained
- Weekly shop

Struggles

1967-1977

- J. Gunn Minister died
- Railway closes

1978 – 1987

- Struggle for money

1988 – 1997

- Demise of 3 village shops
- Scouts/Cubs folded

1998 - 2007

- Demise of Guild
- Demise of BB
- Fewer younger members

2008 to present

- Membership down to 220
- Sunday School 4
- Summer Sunday School
- Reduced Sunday School
- Congregation members down
- Competition with activities on Sunday mornings

- Crèche folded
- Nothing in church for teenagers
- No minister for 2 years

Everyone then had the opportunity to browse amongst the other tables and see each group's timeline, noting any commonalities. In a short plenary session, comments were invited as to what common themes participants noted.

Mapping Exercise

The second exercise of the evening was the mapping exercises. Each group were given a different task to complete, in order to gather as much information about the parish as possible. Group one were asked to draw a map of the parish, noting any schools, housing estates, shops, etc. and then highlighting where they lived.

In addition to a number of housing estates within the parish, it was also noted that there are:

- Playing fields/Park
- Hotel
- Farms and farmland
- Golf Club

Groups Two and Three were asked to complete an "Appreciative Map", where they divided the paper into two sections, one with a ☺ and the other with a ☹. Below each section, they were then asked to write down what they were happy about within the parish, as well as the things that concerned them. The results for this task are as follows:

Positive

- Welcoming and friendly community
- Safe environment
- Outdoors – Glen Park
- Good activities
- Library
- Low crime rate
- Improved age demographic
- Village school linked with church
- Bridge
- Art club
- Badminton, bowling, outdoor tennis court
- Rainbow and guides
- Hotel
- Development trust
- Fundraising – charity
- Curling

Concerns

- Poor public transport
- No shop/P.O
- No medical facilities
- Church members in decline
- Large % of employment out with the village

The evening was concluded with a time of plenary discussion, before Robbie reminded the group of the second session, due to be held on Tuesday 21st November.