

Parish synod meeting – summary

Name of Parish: OUR LADY & ST ANDREW, GALASHIELS

Date/location of meeting: 22nd November (Melrose), 29th November (Selkirk), 6th December 2021 (Galashiels)

Meeting leader and number of attendees: about 15 per meeting

.....

Discussion 1: Communion and Participation

What questions were discussed?

1. *What would my meaningful participation in the parish look like?*
2. *How can we, as a parish, reach out to those who don't feel welcome or are no longer interested in Jesus Christ or The Church?*
3. *How can we support and encourage parents whose children are leaving the faith or the Church?*

Please summarise three main themes that came out of your parish discussion.

1. *What would my meaningful participation in the parish look like?*
 - Make use of prayer to include everyone
 - Build community and relationships
 - Who needs help?
 - Who are the Parishioners, what are their skills? Data Base?
 - Skills that parishioners have – how can they be utilised? Perhaps a specific time limit to being on a committee/ helping would encourage more participation?
 - Forward looking – acknowledge Faith and other particular Faiths
 - More people acknowledging Catholicism & Christianity
 - Enjoy going to Church – reinstating the obligation, but encouraging people to come rather than pressing them. Not going to Mass is like saying you are friends with someone but not seeing them.
 - Encourage more people to take up ministries and participate in The Mass
 - Prayers to come from the congregation, children to participate e.g., lighting the Advent Candle
 - Listen to the Young People
 - Unless the Church is moving it dies
 - Bringing our unique contributions to the Parish Community re-establish groups
 - Being involved again in the groups which previously existed – we need a census
 - We need a Parish council – coordinating efforts
 - Need social activities across the Parish
 - Need leadership and enthusiasm
 - Tea after Mass on a Sunday

Please email this document to sranna.marie@staned.org.uk

- Calendar of Parish activities –Christmas / Lent / Easter
- Developing links with school –liturgical /social
- Ministry – practical running of the Parish supporting PP
- Need to be more outward in our communities.
- Parishioners reaching out to others
- Examples of parishioners phoning around others during lockdown to offer support / help or just a chat
- There are still people in a type of lockdown – not just due to the pandemic but due to illness or being housebound. How do we address this?
- Carry on with existing PC and train new leaders
- Participation not just dropped during COVID. Did it happen before?

2. How can we, as a parish, reach out to those who don't feel welcome or are no longer interested in Jesus Christ or The Church?

- Be more welcoming of the wider society - less judgemental of the marginalised
- Include young people in the Mass. Give them a sense of belonging
- Young people attract other young people
- Bidding prayers should be more 'local' (parish level) – box at back of the church for people to put in prayer intentions
- Praying for the sick and the dead by name
- Visiting sick etc (SVDP) help to support PP Request for a list of people needing visits or help
- Lots of visits happened but lack of confidence in communicating needs to all who are in the group
- Be Joyful
- Open welcoming atmosphere
- Public ecumenism
- Worship + Social Wednesday coffee mornings etc
- Contact people who may not have been back since ease of restrictions
- Back to Church Sunday?
- Assist elderly who may not have transport – Going out in the evening is difficult – They may feel forgotten / lonely
- Personal relationship with God / Holy Spirit
- How do we support different relationships with God
- Provide the environment
- Develop an open, welcoming atmosphere in the Church
- Back to Church Sunday – social /planning /involving parishioners
- Open Day to allow people to come in ask questions
- Name tags for people on Sunday?
- Check hymn books and say a prayer for person who donated book? Gala?
- Cross parish project for international partners
- Project to build a Parish Hall in Gala
- Church needs to be welcoming to people who have gone away for ANY reason
- Church should not be an exclusive club

Please email this document to sranna.marie@stated.org.uk

- Increase Music in all Masses
- Doors Open Day
- Church needs to admit when it is wrong
- We need to walk with others
- Scripture Groups
- Ecumenical
- Emphasise social mission of the Church
- Personal encounter with Jesus and with others
- Live out the mystical body of Christ

3. How can we support and encourage parents whose children are leaving the faith or the Church?

- Bring them to Church in the first place.
- Recognise different cultures and languages
- Reassure people that it is not their fault
- Grandparent Power!
- Plant the seed and let it grow at the appropriate rate – Don't force it
- Re-establish Children's Liturgy
- Involve teenagers in social activities
- Young Adults group
- 'Messy Church' for younger children
- Re-establish altar servers
- Why are they leaving the Faith?
- Are they encouraged to go to Church?
- Do Parents support their Faith?
- Are young people seeing a clash with their values and their Faith?
- The Abuse Scandal – lack of resolution /lack of justice
- Image of The Church is putting people off
- Youth and Youngish adults group need to not be attacked by the older generation
- Why are they leaving?-perceived hypocrisy. Role of abuse?

Discussion 2: Mission

What questions were discussed?

1. *What is the work of a missionary disciple? Do I believe that God has called me to follow Him as a disciple? If so, have I responded to this call?*
2. *How have I been prepared to live my faith at home, in the workplace, and in my social life?*
3. *What can my parish do to prepare me and others to be a committed disciple of Jesus? What would my meaningful participation in the parish look like?*

Please summarise three main themes that came out of your parish discussion.

1. What is the work of a missionary disciple? Do I believe that God has called me to follow Him as a disciple? If so, have I responded to this call?

- Understanding the Faith
- Ongoing process
- How would Jesus have behaved
- Standing up for the right way to behave
- Personal discipline of Prayer
- All embracing
- Where are we called? Does it have to be in a Church? No?
- LOVE – Do we accept that God loves us? How do we encourage other to accept that?
- Actions speak louder than words
- Missionary / Disciple dichotomy
- Work together in the Secular world
- Holy week initiatives
- Music – children
- Wishing to share Mission
- Call to discipleship can be a slow burn- growth in Faith Acknowledge that participation in Mass is a big part of discipleship
- Listening / empathy
- Pray
- Doesn't need to be Church or set liturgy
- Suggested reading: "21 lessons for the 21st Century "
- Comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable
- Staying around in bad times as well as good

2. How have I been prepared to live my faith at home, in the workplace, and in my social life?

- At home and in the workplace –It should be evident that you are a person of Faith
- Coping with being needled at work
- Peaceful - looking at Our Lady for an example
- Don't feel we are very equipped in the work place
- Sometimes the entitlement to be at the top of the tree comes across as arrogance
- Should we always assume WE are in the right?
- Generations of formation in the Faith - more challenging in a secular society
- Faith formation is different now. Not always passed on through the generations
- Role of the Church in the community – corporate responsibility
- Challenges to Religious Freedom and Freedom of Speech
- Outward symbols - Wearing a cross to work, having a Nativity on desk at work
- Use Social Media to share Faith / activities in the church
- Acknowledge people you meet day by day

Please email this document to sranna.marie@stanned.org.uk

*3. What can my parish do to prepare me and others to be a committed disciple of Jesus?
What would my meaningful participation in the parish look like?*

- Teach us to pray
- Different kinds of prayer group
- Contemplation – silent gap before the Communion hymn
- Options to join in ministries and action groups
- Show love to one another and to others
- If we take religion out of the questions sometimes we find people who are not bound by rules etc can be more Christian? Lots of people live good lives but don't go to Church
- What is most important? Love God and Love your neighbour!
- Education in the Faith – 'in service training!'
- Put foundations in place
- Regular spiritual exercises
- Come to Mass and leave feeling better
- Respect
- Acknowledge people who are at Mass
- Sign of Peace alternative
- Answer questions around issues such as contraception, relationships etc
- Alpha Course
- Sessions on the Gospel Easier to talk if supported
- Share belief in love of Christ to others
- Be responsive to the call
- Need for discernment. We frequently fall short
- Be aware of how we affect others
- Meet people where they are
- Groups – putting Faith into action – SVDP Food Bank etc
- Answers to moral questions – not alienating people for different views and practices

What do you want us to know about your meeting(s)?

We posed both discussion themes at each of three meetings held in different locations in the parish.

Please use this space to make any other comments about the meeting that you wish to highlight.

There was a good cross representation of ages and backgrounds. People were very happy to have been asked their opinion. There was good engagement at all meetings.

One written response was submitted by a parishioner who was shielding, which has been sent with this summary in a separate attachment.

Fr Andrew Kingham

Parish Priest

Our Lady & St Andrew's, Galashiels

Please email this document to sranna.marie@stanned.org.uk