

CLUSTER REPORT: APRIL 2017

Cluster Parishes of St. Margaret's Memorial Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, Holy Name, St John & St Columba and St Peter in Chains

INTRODUCTION

We welcomed the opportunity to meet as a Cluster of Parishes and have been inspired by the enthusiasm, commitment and support of our parishioners in considering how we can further develop our parishes and spiritual lives both individually, within the cluster and beyond.

In the course of our meetings we have reflected on the strengths of our parish communities, established that each parish is financially viable and have identified many areas where we can share our resources, learn from each other and further develop our parishes to enhance their spiritual and physical vibrancy and our pastoral provision.

As a cluster, we are motivated to make joint working successful and believe we have the foundations on which to build and deliver the pastoral and outreach work as described in *We have found the Messiah*.

COLLABORATIVE PASTORAL PROVISION WITHIN THE CLUSTER

There is a lot of good work happening across all parishes in the cluster and a strong sense that people are open to change and want to be involved in developing and strengthening their parishes both at an individual level and across the cluster.

Parish Priests and parishioners have a diverse range of talents and these are being used to good effect in individual parishes and we identified opportunities for sharing learning, resources and expertise to support development across the cluster such as: -

- Liturgy groups could share talents and resources e.g. music ministry, children's liturgy
- Fabric committee could share expertise e.g. in refurbishment, maintenance and funding
- Fundraising enterprises could be developed across all parishes
- Cluster training to support the laity in their ministries would be beneficial and could facilitate further delegation of ministries, where appropriate, to support the Parish Priests

- Welcoming returning Catholics through wider development of Landings programme and initiation of new Catholics through RCIA
- Website development
- Lourdes Group

There is a strong desire to engage children and young people more and to forge stronger links with the primary and secondary schools. We also recognise that this needs to be supported through focus on family life. Suggestions included:

- Support for Caritas and Pope Francis Faith Awards
- Offering opportunities for work experience in range of roles in the Church
- Using technology more
- Propagation of Faith
- Family engagement e.g. in sacramental preparation, family focusses services
- Strengthening Children's Liturgy

Communication amongst and within parishes is considered to be important using a variety of media e.g. newsletter, website, more use of technology.

Although it was considered that social care was being delivered well through SVDP there are opportunities for further development through joint working.

Mass provision across all parishes is good and it was suggested that consideration should be given to having a mass centre for daily mass to broaden access.

There are many good social activities within individual parishes and using these opportunities to develop cluster wide social events will bring the parish communities together and build good relationships. In addition, resources such as the use of parish halls could be made available for use by all the parishes.

It is recognised that there is a high administrative burden for each Church and consideration should be given to how this can be more streamlined and integrated where possible to reduce duplication and effort.

SINGLE PARISH PASTORAL PROVISION

There is a need to understand locality and the distinctive nature of each parish in the cluster and to recognise, encourage and make use of the talents of parishioners in determining the scale and scope of pastoral provision.

With the Eucharist and the celebration of mass at the heart of our faith, it is essential that this is celebrated and accessible in every parish to maintain its vibrancy and strengthen the parish community.

Pastoral care of the sick needs to be responsive to individual need and provided locally.

Parish Priests are currently supported by the laity in liturgical activities and we will seek to widen the scope and build our capacity within each parish. This will be supported with appropriate training which could be delivered on a cluster basis.

We acknowledge that some sacramental preparation is already shared with RCIA and our Catholic Schools however it is important that the celebration of the sacraments continues within each parish to welcome and support all parishioners in development of their faith and enhance the spiritual vibrancy of the parish.

The Parish Pastoral Councils should continue as they have an important role in all aspects of daily life, administration and finance of the parishes.

Each parish will need to continue with its administrative functions although we recognise that opportunities to rationalise and streamline these should be undertaken where possible.

SIGNS OF VIBRANCY

Our eyes have been opened to the vibrancy of parish life and the signs of outreach and influence within our existing parish communities. The core values of friendliness, openness & compassion are evident as we endeavour to promote a welcoming atmosphere in our parishes.

There is a wide range of mass provision attended by growing congregations. We are encouraging parishioners of all ages and abilities to be more involved and actively participate in our celebration of the Eucharist and this is evidenced in the wide range of groups and individuals involved in our Sunday and weekday masses including music groups/ choirs, readers, Eucharistic ministers and altar servers. Faith development is further supported through provisions of Children's Liturgy, SPRED, RCIA, Landings, prayer and scripture groups, Caritas and Pope Francis Faith awards.

Social care is supported through active SVDP in all the cluster parishes and there are opportunities for more joint working in support of this. The parishes also support Fife Open Doors, have active One World Groups and are supporting various charities and projects through fundraising activities.

St Margaret's Memorial Church is custodian of the ancient relic of St Margaret of Scotland and hosts the annual St Margaret's Pilgrimage. The relic and pilgrimage are attracting visitors from all over Scotland and affords them the opportunity to explore the various local historical sites, see the holy relic and attend mass. The pilgrimage is important both for development of our parishes and in reaching out to the wider community locally, nationally and beyond.

In terms of stewardship, there are active Parish Pastoral Councils, supporting and assisting the Parish Priest, in each of the cluster parishes. Finance and fabric

committees have also been established in some of the parishes to assist in the administration and refurbishment of parish buildings.

PASTORAL GOALS OF THE CLUSTER

Across all three meetings there has been good discussion and opportunity to share what we are doing well and to learn from each other.

There is already a strong willingness for collaborative working and full recognition that changes are required to strengthen our parish communities.

We agreed the cluster needs to develop an identity with a cluster name that we can all use and refer to and that we need to agree a joint vision and communicate this to create a common sense of purpose.

Better communication between parishes and within parishes is vital. We have learned a great deal from the meetings about what is going on in our respective parishes and recognise that we need to promote this better within the cluster through better use of media and technology.

There has been a strong emphasis throughout our discussions on how to engage children and young people more and how to forge stronger links with the primary and secondary schools. In order to encourage the involvement of younger parishioners in ministries within the church we will work to identify and promote roles and work experience which may enhance their personal skill development and promote learning in support of their personal goals.

There are many good social activities within individual parishes and using these opportunities to develop cluster wide social events will bring the parish communities together and foster good working relationships.

It is recognised that everyone has a part to play in our parishes and in our cluster, and everyone has unique skills and talents. We will aim to provide equal opportunities and encourage everyone who wants one to have a ministry in the church.

We will continue to share our expertise and resources in Catechesis and look to broaden the scope and scale of provision across the cluster through joint training and more involvement of laity in meaningful roles.

It is recognised that there is a high administrative burden for each Church and we will consider how this can be more streamlined and integrated where possible to reduce duplication and effort.

Whilst we consider each parish needs to continue with their own Parish Pastoral Council we will seek to establish a Cluster Council to take forward the pastoral goals and ambitions of the cluster.