

Kintore Parish Church of Scotland

SC001406 Registered Scottish Charity

1 February 2018

Dear friends,

Since the start of 2016 our congregation has been part of the Church of Scotland's Path of Renewal pilot, investigating how existing congregations in the Church can make the journey towards becoming "missional" in their outlook and ethos. I have attended several national conferences each year to gain new teaching in the area of missional church development, a number of our members have attended similar regional conferences and here at Kintore we have established a small learning community of interested folk who have been wrestling with how we might apply our learning to our local context. As we have discovered new things together, I have tried to share these through the preaching and teaching just as others have applied these new insights to each of their respective areas of life and ministry. Similarly, the Kirk Session has remained informed about the journey along the way and has, from time to time, wrestled with some of the issues raised. In particular, the journey has now reached the stage where the Session believes it is time for us to reconsider our vision for the future and the strategic plans and structures that need to be put in place to take us forward – all based on what we have learned and are learning.

So, what have we learned on the Path of Renewal? It is very hard to condense two years of growth into a paragraph, but let me highlight some of the key ideas that have come into focus for us.

- Our first step was to come to terms with the reality that the place of the Church in nation, society and local community has changed forever. There is no future in trying to recapture the past. We need to find new ways to be the presence of Christ in the world within this new reality.
- We have been able to reflect on the areas of our congregational life that already bear a strong missional emphasis and which can serve as beacons towards developing new strategies and activities. These include our excellent mission to the elderly through the Lunch Club and Seniors' Club, our involvement in the Jam Gang at Kintore Primary, the occasional Women's Crafting events and special services such as "Time to Remember" and "Christingle".
- A helpful early discovery for us was the importance of whole-life discipleship – we investigated this idea with the congregation last summer through the "Fruitfulness on the Frontlines" series.
- The Messy Church and Sunday Night Live worship services as well as our sing-along at the turning on of the Christmas lights have helped us gain insight into the importance of experimentation.
- The equation: Church ≠ That thing we do on Sunday morning, has helped us think about Church life much more widely than we would if we boiled everything down to attendance at our main service on a Sunday.
- The definition of a "Missional Church" rests on three key elements:
 - A welcoming community and worship
 - Discipleship of our members
 - Service to the wider community

At its meeting in January the Session agreed a Strategic Planning Roadmap that will guide us through the first half of 2018. The idea is to apply what the Path of Renewal journey has taught us to our vision and leadership structures to ensure that we continue to grow in our participation in Christ's mission to the world. The process will take us through a series of strategic planning conferences, outlined below. They have been designed to be as inclusive as possible. We would like to extend the invitation to anyone interested in the future of Kintore Parish Church to participate in the process. We will do our best to advertise these events in advance and to report back to the congregation on any developments along the way. In addition to attending the events and participating in them, we also invite you to talk about them as widely as possible, to raise questions, concerns and encouragements with myself and/or the Session as freely as possible, and to commit this whole process to prayer that we may, above all, be guided by God's Spirit.

The programme of conferences will take place as follows: (All meetings will be in the **Church Hall at 7:00pm**)

Tuesday, 27 February **Leadership for Mission:** The roles of Elders, Session and other leaders in the light of the Path of Renewal. (Presentation & discussion led by Richard Lloyd, Path of Renewal mentor)

Tuesday, 20 March **Clarifying Vision:** Describing the future church to which we aspire and are called.

Tuesday, 17 April **Goal-setting/Year-plan:** Reviewing our Year-plan and setting goals in the light of the vision agreed.

Tuesday, 22 May **Committee Structures:** Restructuring Session Committees/Task-groups to assign and achieve goals agreed.

I look forward to your participation.

With much love,

Rev Neil Meyer