

Presbytery of Glasgow - Local Church Review

Report to the Superintendence Committee

[insert date]

Name of congregation: Sandyhills

The LCR Team: Tom Nelson, Helen Hughes, Mary Kelly, Fiona Thomson

Initial meeting: 6/10/15 (General introductory meeting)

Main Meeting: 9/5/16

Section 1 – Looking at the present

Brief overview

Sandyhills is situated in the north east of the city within an area bounded by the M8 and M74 motorways and is in a parish grouping with the linked charges of Kenmuir Mount Vernon and Carmyle. The LCR team was welcomed by the minister, Graham Atkinson, together with a lively group of elders and found an enthusiastic and committed congregation working hard to make a difference in its parish.

There are high flats in the area used mainly to accommodate asylum seekers and attempts have been made to engage with the residents by distributing leaflets inviting all for soup and sandwiches.

The church runs a food bank (a “branch” of the main bank situated in Parkhead Calton) each Tuesday afternoon and it is staffed by volunteers. This is an important initiative as no other food bank is open in the north east of the city on Tuesdays.

Prayer is given a high priority in the life of the church - prayer walks are conducted through the parish with people going out in couples after issuing flyers asking for prayer requests. On the last prayer walk 14 members went out and 14 others prayed for them in church. 12 prayer requests were received as a result of the flyers.

A prayer focus sheet is produced monthly giving guidelines of subjects for prayer.

There is a midweek fellowship group which begins with a time of prayer followed by a bible study.

The men’s breakfast club meets monthly for an hour. There is a speaker followed by breakfast and attendance is in the region of 15-20 each month.

The sanctuary is used monthly by the Syrian Orthodox church which originates - not from Syria – but from a state in south west India.

The Website is most informative and is up to date including (in July 2016) a daily blog from those members of the congregation currently visiting Comfort Rwanda.

What are the values that the congregation consider as shaping and directing the life of their church?

The church’s website states that “*We in Sandyhills Parish Church aim to serve God by being a loving, caring, sharing church reaching out to the people of our community with the good news of Jesus Christ.*”

These values are evident in everything this church undertakes, balancing well the activities and needs of the congregation with the responsibility for outreach to the parish.

Outreach emphasis is currently on promoting Comfort Rwanda and Congo and supporting Glasgow City Mission.

Innovations, celebrations and learnings

A “food ministry” is in early stages of development. This involves the giving of prepared food to individuals/households in crisis situations e.g bereavement, illness or new baby. This initiative is springing from what has been happening informally amongst the congregation.

The 25th Anniversary of the current church building was celebrated with the creation of a most impressive “timeline” of the congregational history. This is displayed to great effect in the lower hall.

Are there any significant challenges facing this congregation and how are they working to overcome them?

In common with almost all churches the greatest challenge arises from trying to engage with the younger generation. Negotiations are currently in progress with the Scripture Union to establish a partnership which would employ a youth worker.

The role of the eldership is currently being examined and the traditional pattern of “one elder , one household, visiting prior to Communion” is being questioned. Alternative pastoral care models are being considered.

There has been difficulty in the past in finding an “on the spot” Safeguarding Co-ordinator but this has now been resolved with a new Co-ordinator in post. Kenmuir Mount Vernon’s Co-ordinator has been most helpful.

It can be challenging to hold on to children in the X Group (Children’s organisations) because of competing activities. Tentative moves have been made to investigate “Messy Church”

Is there anything to note around compliance with Church Law and General Assembly Deliverances?

None

Section 2 - Looking forward

What key area(s) does this church wish to move forward with in the next 5 years?

Mission – Employment of a Youth Worker

Mission – Developing Rwanda Project

Mission – Engaging in Golden Age Project

Community – Developing Pastoral Care

Community – Re-visiting the role of Eldership

Worship – Expanding prayer life of the congregation

How do they look to achieve this?

To what key area does this action relate?	What actions will you take to move forward in this area?	Aim to start by	Aim to complete by	Who will be the key people responsible for taking this forward?	Who will provide support from the wider church? (NB the LCR team can help with this column)
Mission	Exploring means of employing a Youth Worker in partnership with Scripture Union Scotland.	May 2016	June 2018	Committee appointed with representatives from the congregation and SU	Presbytery Youth Development Worker and examples of good practice from other congregations
Mission	Team visit to Rwanda to identify next phase of support which will then feed back into the Mission Committee's plans for the future.	July 2016	On going	Kirk Session and Mission Committee	Comfort Rwanda Organisation
Mission	Setting up of a club for older people who may feel isolated in the community under the guidance of the Guild's Golden Age Project	June 2016	Autumn '16	Guild members	National Guild Office
Community	Exploring new ways of offering practical pastoral support for those in need in the parish	On going	On going	Elders and Outreach Committee	Examples of good practice from other congregations
Community	Kirk Session to re-visit the role of the elder in the context of Sandyhills congregation	Autumn '16	On going	Kirk Session	Mission and Discipleship "Learn" Material
Worship	Exploring new ways of developing the prayer life of the congregation	On going	On going	Kirk Session and minister	

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What additional help or resources will the congregation need?

The LCR team advised of various resources (within Presbytery and wider community) where advice and funding can be obtained for specific projects and initiatives.

How does the Presbytery Plan fit with these action points?

There is no conflict with the Presbytery Plan

Visiting Team - recommendations and advice

The visiting team was warmly welcomed and was most impressed with this hard working congregation which addresses so many of the challenges and needs in the community. These include the measures taken to reach out to the asylum seekers resident in the parish and to address the need for youth ministry as well as care for the elderly.

We would encourage the congregation to continue to work and develop their activities in terms of mission within the parish and in their continuing active support of comfort Rwanda and Glasgow City Mission.

This is a forward looking, lively, faithful and engaging congregation and the team wishes them well as they continue their good work.

Are there any specific points for the Superintendence committee to note?

No

Congregation comment

[This section provides the opportunity for the congregation to comment upon the report if they so wish.]