

St. Paul's Forth Church

Future Focus Session 2 (11/05/2017) Facilitator's Report

Introduction

A total of 26 people attended the session which was held, once again, in the church hall. It was noted that, due to a bereavement, the minister was not in attendance. Robbie led the group in a time of prayer for the minister during this time.

The evening then began with a recap of the previous weeks' exercises as well as an explanation of the evening's proceedings.

The Healthy Church Check Up

The format for this session was then outlined. Thereafter, there was a time of reflection on the *Church Without Walls'* definition of a healthy church, based on six key characteristics. Each characteristic was defined and explained by Robbie, along with allowing a few moments for discussion. Before moving on to the next characteristic, each person gave a "score" for the church, the choices for which were "very weak", "weak", "strong" or "very strong".

The six characteristics were:

- **Integrity** (everything geared around Jesus and "walking the talk")
- **Body & Soul** (caring for the "whole person" and the whole church)
- **Open House** (welcoming to all and reaching out to the unchurched)
- **Growth** (in spiritual depth as well as numerically)
- **Local** (truly engaging with all areas of the community in a relevant way)
- **Love & Care** (genuinely caring for the needy - action over words)

There then followed a tea/coffee break, during which time the scores were translated into numerical form as follows:

Very Weak = 0

Weak = 1

Strong = 2

Very Strong = 3

The limited choices discouraged "sitting on the fence" and helped to focus thinking. It should be pointed out that the scoring was private and all of the score sheets were completed anonymously. There were 26 score sheets returned.

The scores were tallied on a flip chart sheet and totaled up, to reveal the category with the highest score. With 26 participants, a minimum score would have been 0 and a maximum, 78 for each characteristic. Whilst these numbers may help as a guide to each characteristic's degree of "health", the ranking of the totals is more significant, as it gives some indication of the congregation's main strength and weakness.

The scores in this instance were quite close for some characteristics, but a perceived strength (top score) and a perceived weakness (bottom score) did clearly emerge.

After the tea break, the results were revealed by Robbie and they were as follows:

Love & Care	62
Open House	55
Local	51
Integrity	49
Growth	44
Body & Soul	36

The tally patterns can be seen in the image below:

	VERY WEAK	WEAK	STRONG	VERY STRONG	TOTAL
INTEGRITY					49
Body & Soul		 	 		36
OPEN HOUSE			 		55
GROWTH		 	 		44
LOCAL			 		51
LOVE & CARE			 	 	62

We then worked in five groups and were invited to look at the strongest characteristic and suggest up to three Action Steps (“quick wins”) that would help to build upon this perceived strength. Furthermore, the groups were also asked to suggest three measures to help address the weakest characteristic. The groups could decide amongst themselves which they perceived to be the strongest and weakest characteristic. The results for each group can be seen below.

Group One

Strongest Characteristic: Local

Action Steps to be taken to build on this strength:

- 1) Print out and monthly news letter
- 2) Weekly report in the Gazette
- 3) Approach council about “old man’s hut”- if church could help utilize

Weakest Characteristic: Growth

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Attend more training with Elspeth
- 2) Work towards gaining funding to increase Karen's hours
- 3) Start a choir

Group Two

Strongest Characteristic: Love & Care

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Invite more young people into the church
- 2) Set up a youth group and young person's group (20-30 age)

Weakest Characteristic: Growth

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Set up small study groups
- 2) Bullet points for prayer in the order of service
- 3) "invite a friend" Sunday – 2 times a year to begin with

Group Three

Strongest Characteristic: Love & Care

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Continue to build on our relationship with the community
- 2) Continue to support organisations out with the church
- 3) Encourage people to come to the Easter Code/Christmas Story
- 4) Monday teas in the morning

Weakest Characteristic: Growth

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Involve more children and young folk
- 2) Involve young mothers
- 3) Men's association

Group Four

Strongest Characteristic: Love & Care

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Continue with Planet Earth and give it wider recognition
- 2) Continue with church shop
- 3) Café/drop in men's breakfast, ladies day
- 4) 24/7 prayer initiative
- 5) Monthly restaurant nights
- 6) Healing Centre

Weakest Characteristic: Body & Soul

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Establish house/friendship groups
- 2) Pray for God to put a hunger for Spiritual growth in people
- 3) Café church once a month (Carluke could act as a role model for this)

Group Five

Strongest Characteristic: Love & Care

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Café
- 2) Social events

Weakest Characteristic: Body & Soul

Action Steps to be taken:

- 1) Opportunities for individual members to get involved.

In the plenary session, led by Robbie, everyone had the opportunity to hear all the suggestions and join in on the discussion surrounding the various ideas.

Robbie then drew the session to a close. The date for the third and final session has now been moved back until Saturday 8th July, in order for the minister to have the opportunity to join in on the discussions.

Robbie Morrison Facilitator