**Parish Listening Evening: Sunday 3 October 2021**

***What do we want to do as a church?***

* We want to welcome everybody to our church and to show our love in active inclusivity
* We want to reach out and serve the community
* The group felt that the church practiced a great outreach programme but there is always room for improvement
* We want to communicate well through Facebook and Internet with up-to-date info
* We want to update parishioners, both new and old, with what’s going on regularly
* We want to create a space where teenagers are happy to gather.
* We want to create a loving atmosphere
* To be a loving church where everyone is treated equally.
* To consolidate our faith moving forward and then to increase it
* To use retreats / bible studies etc. to build up the bonds between us – and for the sharing of those experiences.
* To identify and reach out to those lost / marginalize people – people who may not know who we are – outreach in some way.
* Value conversation and care
* Value family and community
* Emphasis on presence. Modelling ‘living the message’.
* The Gathering Grounds is central as a concept – room to grow this?
* Be open to welcoming everyone.
* Involve younger age groups, for example teenagers and the 18 to 30 group. Suggestions include us in relation to teenagers some sort of transition year projects involvement with the church and the Parish Centre some sort of activities to engage.
* Point was made about involving all age groups from infants to all folks although recognising – in particular young people are missing from church worship and activities.
* There is the issue about resources and the need to ensure that church leadership in particular Rob and Julie Are not overly stretched. Related to this is the need to have constant engagements in order to be effective and not just engage now then.

***Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities***

*Isn’t it Good that …*

* Our church is a growing community
* There is a strong sense of community
* We have such a strong music tradition
* We have a strong tradition, but are willing to adapt / change
* Facilities, School, well resourced
* We have a Rector who is personable and welcoming
* We have Rob and Julie and a great leadership team
* Availability of rector and team
* Wonderful Community
* Willing to adapt and grow
* Strong Leadership team, supported by the parish
* Ability to bring Church outside
* We have a passionate pastoral team, church and School, we have opportunity to discuss our vision etc. tonight, we have a youth and family worker, we have a church Café for outreach
* A strong governance tradition
* A beautiful building and a long tradition of worship in Kilternan and are relatively well resourced
* Strengths: Rector, Staff, School, Young. Gathering Grounds, Nursing Home, Volunteers, Connection with each other
* We have an energetic leader and team
* The church has affectively used online Resources during the pandemic for example the The holding of services online And Rob’s tea with the vicar Friday night initiative.
* We have modern facilities that are being used.
* A welcoming atmosphere and support by the parish of the community outside of the parish.
* There is such positive energy.
* Julie’s involvement with younger people.

It’s a pity that ….

* that we don't maximise the use of the Gathering Grounds
* It's a pity we don’t have more young adults (18-30)
* It's a pity that the church isn't bigger
* We don’t have more mixing between generations / inter-generational services
* Children's activities / sport clash with church times
* Pity that we don’t have more facilities for teenagers
* different generations unable to be back due to COVID
* that there is no messy church currently
* it’s a pity that there is no connecting the community to volunteering
* Website out of date
* Community can be a weakness sometimes, may lead to people feeling outside the "Clique" the people who "always" do things
* we don’t feel confident talking about our faith, we don’t have a bible study, our teenagers/20/30's don’t feel church faith is relevant
* we don’t have more men in the choir
* We are letting people off having to put something back into the parish for example the cleaning of the church The same people are doing the work We don’t do more on social media beyond use by the gathering grounds of social media.
* There is a shyness about pushing our faith.
* The range of services didn’t allow more expressions of worship.

Wouldn’t it be good if …

* we ran an Alpha Course
* we could encourage kids in the school to come to church regularly
* single people are part of the family - e.g. Can be a mother figure to others
* to integrate families + morning service through the year
* we had a worship coordination team
* to have more pastoral visits by lay members of the congregation
* to connect with neighbours - Bishopsgate, Rockfield - Neighbourhood WhatsApp groups
* to have more afternoon entertainment for older people with "talks +afternoon tea" (Lectures)
* More ecumenical engagement
* Men's Shed - Support of the grounds
* Welcoming Committee - organise Tours / Dinners / Gatherings for new members
* Knowing what’s on
* integrate youth with nursing home
* More involvement + participation during the services
* Leave Church door open during office hours
* Saturday Afternoons - learns a few hymns together + then go into the Church for evening Song + include them in the service
* To show that "religion" and "Spiritualism" do not need to be in opposition - You can be both
* we reached out to marginalized groups - people with disabilities, homeless, carers etc.
* Buddy System for new families + individuals
* We had a curate to share the load
* Mission trip - share the good news and meet other committed Christians
* Wouldn't it be great if we had lots of missions + micro missions?
* Family competitions - each family presents their favourite poems - space it out throughout the year and final at end of year clappometer
* groups in grounds to construct helpful things - men's shed
* wouldn't it be good if every child in the schools knows Jesus? School is an opportunity
* if there were more inter-generational services/events/interactions
* We were learning from other churches
* if the folk who come to 10am service could mix with 11am folk over coffee once a month
* if we had more contact with other churches in the area, blue church Kilternan
* if we added a section to the website with a section that is dedicated to attracting youth/growing adults
* at beginning of a service start rehearsing a new hymn for 5-10 minutes before service with whole congregation
* more social events - pot luck suppers / Sunday lunch /concerts etc
* Increase youth club activity
* better connection/more overt connection to lay community
* delegate worship co-ordination/community leadership/teams with different ages/volunteers
* There is a lot going on and there is a need to keep the momentum going.
* We recognise more of what has been done by the rector and his team.

***Building community***

* It was agreed that we had a very solid foundation on which to build community
* We need to show people that we are a church that welcomes and encourages everyone in their faith journey
* Encourage people to become involved by meeting socially, suggestion was meeting for a swim at 7.30pm before church on Sunday or Women’s breakfast
* Inviting people to volunteer or take part in parish life for short periods of time so that they aren’t put off by a long-term commitment.
* voluntary work or get involved.
* A young parent made a point that although he and his family enjoyed Messy Church, he would welcome the opportunity to attend church.  This is likely to be possible when the Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted.
* We discussed the importance of every member of the church having their own Micro mission by giving them the opportunity to get involved.
* I think you are doing a great many things right. The Gathering Grounds is a wonderful concept but it does need to be promoted more. Although most people in the parish know about it many people in the local community still do not. It needs better signage and I know you are working on this. A leaflet drop around the various new estates was suggested which is a good idea. I know there are also additional plans for social media. All these will help promote it to a wider audience. The offering could also be expanded with perhaps soup and sandwiches on additional days.
* How is the space used in the evenings? Apart from table tennis could other activities be introduced and promoted. Could the halls be let out when not otherwise in use. This is a wonderful facility with excellent access and parking.
* Lunches on Sundays?
* Need for more social events
* Need for small intergenerational groups
* A need to reach into new developments – ideas: mail drops, carol singing
* Promote and develop the Gathering Grounds as a ‘doorway’ into the community.
* Transformation of older people to worship?
* Need to address signage
* How we can strengthen relationships in the church Getting to know people. There are plenty of opportunities here for example the table tennis club. Getting to know people in a context or setting outside of the church. Having group activities for example Bible study groups. There is recognition – because of the pandemic there hasn’t been the ability to drive many of these types of initiatives. New blind conscious about being open and inclusive and welcoming especially when the parish has the school attached and it is very easy for Cliques to form.
* Better bridge the gap between the church and the wider community The effectiveness and popularity of the fete Have a leaflet drop in local and new Estates engage with the locality.
* Need to have a vibrant church to begin with.
* Do use of the facilities at the parish centre

**Strengthening Worship**

* Intergenerational worship (some of the older people miss the presence of little ones).  Interaction on Friday was very positive
* It is hoped that as Covid 19 restrictions are lifted we will be able to worship together again.
* Messy Church is wonderful and the children enjoy it so much but some of the parent’s faith needs aren’t being met
* Suggestion of worship outside of Sunday services
* Suggestion of holding a ‘Sausage Roll service’ once a month at 6.30pm for those who are unable to attend early Sunday services due to sports, i.e. rugby (thought it was worth a ‘try’) This would be aimed at children and teenagers 10 years plus
* Possibility of opening the church for Quiet time and Contemplation
* The question was asked is the 9am service really necessary? Could the few people who attend not come to the 11am service? You can answer this better than most.
* The 10am service has become very popular. I know you have plans to develop this. I would like to see more involvement by the children and young people for part of this service. More interactive singing, involvement in readings and prayers. Although popular many of the young children are not really engaged. For the last twenty minutes or so could the children not go out to Sunday Club and the rest of the service be aimed at adults.
* There was a concern that the two services could become “them and us” which has happened in Dundrum Methodist between the contemporary and traditional services. Could there be a family service once a month which would involve everyone, perhaps held in the hall because of numbers. Involve all members of the congregation young and old. Once again the younger children could go out to Sunday Club for part of the service.
* Could we bring back messy church as soon as we are able. Many people last night said they miss it and it was a great way of bringing children and adults together in a different way.
* More lay participation in services
* Possibility of evensong
* More afternoon / evening talks
* Cross denominational events
* Do we need the 9am service?
* Open up the church for private prayer
* One large family service once a month
* Return to some form of Sunday Club
* Name badges for greeters / welcomers.

**Growing in service**

* A ‘book of help’ – directory of people and services – who you can reach out to
* A ‘resource well’ – to serve the community
* Are there people in the community that need our help. I don’t know what the homelessness situation is in our area or whether there are other vulnerable groups that need our help and support. We have a wonderful facility with kitchens and showers. Perhaps talking to our local representative might provide some guidance.
* More delegation away from Rob and Julie – Development of ‘community leaders’ to take away some of the day to day duties.
* Consider particular initiatives such as a clothes bank Need to know what’s needed by the community.
* Have opportunities for new families to meet there was mention of initiatives in the past where there were lunches outside of the church allowing families to meet in that setting There are various initiatives already undertaken by the school or the creche.
* Look to see what particular needs there are as and when they arise for example there is mention that older man are meeting for the weekday service and stopping to have the soup afterwards –Is there a need for a type of men’s shed initiative?
* How better to keep other people to serve? This is a difficult one. Suggestion – we would guess ideas as to how other parishes are dealing with this and provide adequate support.