

## Conference Report Notes

Shawlands is, geographically, a small area but is a busy and vibrant one. Home to a wonderfully diverse multicultural population of approximately 7000, a vast majority of which are working age (also known as 'young working professionals'), Shawlands has the reputation of being 'the place to be', with many people desiring to live there. With good transport links (it is close to the M77 and M8; easy access to railway stations; numerous bus routes), Shawlands is ideally situated for those who commute to work in the city centre. Housing is mainly tenement flats but there is also a small number of detached and semi-detached houses. A large portion of these properties (approximately 79%) are privately owned with other properties being rentals.

Shawlands boasts many 'trendy' bars, restaurants and cafes. There is a Co-op, various convenience shops, newsagents, primary schools, an academy, various places of worship and green space (Queen's Park) located nearby.

Shawlands Trinity church building is located in the middle of Shawlands, and within its parish boundaries there are two primary schools, one academy, numerous restaurants, bars, cafes, small businesses, five other churches and a large housing area. The building is ideally located to be of service to the local community

Shawlands Trinity church has a vision to become an intergenerational<sup>1</sup> and inclusive church. We seek to be a church that serves its local community, both within and outwith the church building, 'letting its light shine...to glorify God in heaven'. We seek to be an active part of the community, creating positive relationships, helping to meet needs within the community, showing the love and light of Christ through our actions and sharing the gospel.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2021, we gathered together in a conference to plan how we would work towards our vision. There were three topics that were discussed – Intergenerational and Inclusive Church; Presbytery and Congregational Planning; Children, Youth and Family (questions that were asked in these topics can be found in the appendix). From the responses, this report has sought to find the common themes and present them as foundational blocks for helping our church to begin the journey to realising our vision.

### **Communication**

Communication was predominantly the most common theme in the responses. It was noted that, as a church, we need to have better communication with those in our

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<sup>1</sup> "Intergenerational ministry occurs when a congregation *intentionally* combines the generations together in a mutual serving, sharing or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community." *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together for Ministry, Community and Worship* by Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Ross (2012).

In essence, intergenerational means a greater depth of relationships between all ages within the church community.

community. We also need to improve our communication within the church, acknowledging that some members do not have access to the internet and are at a disadvantage. Suggestions for us as the church –

- Have a more active role on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Continue with the WhatsApp group and encourage others to join.
- Refresh and update the website, ensuring that content is relevant and current.
- Use noticeboards.
- Use signage outside the church.
- Ensure that we have current details of church attendees and a preference for form of contact (i.e. emails, letters, etc).
- Advertise events in local newspapers.
- Send out leaflets/flyers with the church's calendar of events to houses/flats within the local area.

## **Worship**

There were a great many responses from the conference with regard to worship, it was strongly felt that there needed to be a variation in the way the church worships. It was noted that Sunday morning services were not suitable for many people, especially families and that more services should be offered throughout the week. It was also felt that there should be a variation in style of services (including Sunday morning worship) and should be more inclusive and intergenerational. Suggestions for us as the church –

- More intergenerational services.
- Expand worship group – include children, young people, families and others from the congregation.
- Have praise band (Rock of Ages) attend more regularly.
- Services – have a variety of teaching, worship, songs and outreach.
  - Have a service throughout the week, e.g. café style church<sup>2</sup>.
  - Have Messy Church.
  - Annual bereavement service.
  - Have coffee and a roll before Sunday morning service.
  - Have services led by the children, young people, families.
- Have a welcome team (which includes children and young people) at the door for services. They will welcome people and take them to their seat.
- Have a befriending team. If someone new arrives at the church, someone will sit with them, talk them through the service and introduce them to people.
- Have services outside. This allows us to enjoy the gardens and for people to see us worshipping together.
- Leave the doors open so that the public can hear the music and feel that they can attend, even if they are running late.

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<sup>2</sup> o Understand that services outwith a Sunday morning are not created to bring people into the Sunday worship service, but are valid forms of church in themselves and are to be celebrated.

## **Social**

It was recognised that we need to have more social events to enable us to connect with the community. Suggestions are –

- Within the building there are uniformed organisations and clubs which use the halls and rooms throughout the week. Have elders or volunteers from the congregation(s) befriend the groups and ask how we as a church can support them (ie – provide hot drinks to people waiting to collect children; help with fundraising or finding volunteers for them etc).
- Hold events in the evenings for younger families and/or working professionals.
- Hold film nights (especially at Christmas).
- Game nights/family nights.
- Intergenerational events – Skill sharing!
  - Baking days – older generation teaching younger generations.
  - Gardening
  - Technology – younger generation can help older generations use their smartphones, tablets (not the medicine), computers etc.
- Use the grounds.
  - Make the garden a place of peace and tranquillity.
  - Add benches and tables for people to use.
  - Covert part as a play area for small children.
- Open days.
- Quiz nights.
- Re-establish activities and events that were successful in the past
  - Trinity's Got Talent(intergenerational).
  - Spring Fair (again intergenerational and reaching out to the community).
  
- Create a quiet area for space/reflection.
- Create a safe space for people.
- Create welcome packs for new houses/flats being built in the area.
- Pastoral care for all who attend church (this can be an intergenerational task as well).
- Host gigs of a faith based nature (e.g. Stuart Townsend).
- Community Christmas carol service.
  - Could a group of families and Sunday worship attendees create a small 'choir' to sing in the centre of Shawlands near Christmas?
  - Could this be done ecumenically?

## **Outreach**

We need to be aware of what is happening within the community of Shawlands and look for opportunities in which we, as the church can help serve them.

## **Ecumenical**

Working with our fellow churches allows us to work on bigger outreach/missional projects. It provides us with more resources and opportunities to share the gospel with the community, meeting them where they are.

- Explore working with other churches around major festivals.
- What are the needs in the community and how can we, together, help?

## **Volunteers**

There are many great plans and thoughts for how we can achieve our vision, however, it is dependent upon volunteers. There is a common saying that in every church, twenty percent of the people do one hundred percent of the work. This leads to burnout and people leaving. We do not wish to put so much on to so few people, we need everyone to help. We recognise that sometimes people do not wish to volunteer as they are concerned that they will have to do it 'forever'. Again, we do not want this to be the case. For the tasks that arise, we will provide job descriptions, a volunteer contract (with a time limit), training where necessary, and reviews of the role. We do not want anyone to feel taken for granted, stuck or unappreciated.

We'd like to ask you to think about your skills and how you could use them to help the church. Perhaps you are great at connecting people; have good administrative skills; good at public speaking; happy to do heavy lifting/setting up for events; join with others to pray for ventures; have active listening skills; the list goes on. Volunteering is often about doing work in the background as well as work being done 'upfront'. Please share your skills with us and then we can approach you and ask if you'd be interested in volunteering for certain tasks.

## Appendices

### Presbytery and Congregational Planning

- 1) What suggestions do you have to make Shawlands Trinity attractive to (a) our current congregation and those who use the Church premises, and (b) those in the community who perhaps don't know where we are?
- 2) How can we make it become a reality, and what are you willing to do to make it a reality?

### Intergenerational and Inclusive Church

The groups were given some challenging statistics to consider as an opening question. Children in the Church of Scotland (Sunday school and uniformed organisations) – 1980s there were 250,000 attending; 2000 –that figure dropped to 80,000 attending; in 2020 –there were less than 50,000 attending.

- 1) Why do you think it is like this? What are the challenges/limitations this presents? What are the challenges/limitations this presents?
- 2) What are the challenges/limitations this presents?
- 3) **Inclusive Church.** What could it be like in our church community and what practical steps can we take?

### Children, Young People and Families

- 1) Thinking of the children, young people and families in the church, what did we do well during the pandemic and what did we learn from the pandemic?
- 2) What can we/you do to involve the children, young people and families in church life?
- 3) What can we do to connect with the children, young people and families within the community?