

**Review of Rutherglen URC
held on Sunday 2nd October 2016**

Pastorate Partner: Maureen Stewart

Visitors: Margaret Wilson and Iris Gillan

Appraisal Partner: Mary Buchanan

After worship and a light lunch the above group met with 12 members of the church including the president, finance convener, several deacons, organist and three young people. Unfortunately neither of the secretaries were able to be present but they had both sent their apologies.

The meeting began with prayer.

Maureen then asked for comments on what was good about being part of Rutherglen URC and two main areas were highlighted. The first was about resources from Spill the Beans which were used in the Sunday worship, with the young people in their groups and children in J team so it all tied together and was seen as relevant to all ages. Secondly the church was seen as very supportive of older people through pastoral care and mid-week community groups.

The only drawback articulated was the difficulty of bringing into the church young people, both former participants and new youngsters from the youth organisations.

From the profile it had been noted that the membership had fallen significantly over the last 4 years but that had been mainly due to deaths. The young people had also fallen away from the Criss Cross group and J team partly due to moving on but also because of other Sunday attractions.

The review group noted that the church was very well organised with the Hub and a number of groups feeding into this central body and the response from those present was that this was still working well and apart from one vacancy all posts were filled. Extra church meetings over and above the three regular ones had been called when necessary for specific issues.

Having experienced the **Worship** it was noted that the church was very vibrant and there was lots of participation by the congregation. On this particular occasion a video was used to illustrate the theme. Generally the members were delighted at the variety of worship experiences that the minister provided each Sunday. A suggestion which was made by the young people present was that young people from other churches and schools might come and take part in an ecumenical youth service. In the summer, worship generally takes place around tables, cafe style as the chairs can be moved. Tea and coffee are provided after the service. One member intimated how wonderful the church was for children by saying that on one occasion her young grandson who had been so caught up in the story that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky that he went home and excitedly told all his family what he had learned in worship.

Since the last review a bible study group has been formed but so far numbers are small.

The congregation are happy with the two Communion Services held each month on Communion Sunday and anyone is free to attend either or both services.

As highlighted earlier **Pastoral and Community Care** is seen as very important as is inclusiveness and welcome. The review group certainly experienced a very warm welcome by a number of the congregation. Being asked about the strategy for trying to make links with hall users the president responded saying that the Hub is in discussions about inviting the hall users to a special service and that this might become an annual event.

The profile stated that John as minister is Chaplain to Rutherglen High School but didn't explain that the pupils actually experienced worship but we were assured that they come to the church at Easter and Christmas.

When asked how well did the congregation care for John and his family the answer came back, "perhaps not well enough." As of now however the president and minister are having one to one meetings and will look at roles and responsibilities. We were also assured that John did have a day off and that on another half day his time would be flexible to work or not.

Youth, children and vulnerable adults

All the people currently working with the above have disclosure certificates. Although there is a lot of good work being done with children and young people the church does not possess a 'Child Friendly Award' certificate. Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers all meet in the church halls but the only boys are in the Sunday evening youth club named Criss Cross. There is also a connection to a scout group but they have outgrown the church hall and now meet elsewhere. The review group made the suggestion about trying Messy Church perhaps on a Saturday morning but those present felt they would not have the people resources to set this up with all the other activities going on.

It was agreed by all present that Rutherglen URC was a **Place of Welcome** but that no special strategy was in place. However it was explained that on entering the building on Sunday morning the atmosphere presented was genuinely friendly and strangers were always recognised and made to feel welcome. One member was aware of the radical welcome training but had found it a bit overwhelming and convoluted.

Church meetings are being held presently to come to some decision regarding acceptance or otherwise of the use of the building for same sex marriages. The outcome to be reached on Sunday 13th November 2016.

Ecumenical and wider URC links

Rutherglen URC is a member of the Churches Action Partnership in Rutherglen (CAPiR) and works with other denominations through this body. Ecumenical services and events take place in Holy week and Easter which are supported by most churches in the town. Rutherglen URC is one of a number of churches that supports the Cambuslang and Rutherglen Christian Reachout Trust which, in partnership with Scripture Union employs a full time Schools and youth Worker.

The church is also involved in supporting Christian Aid in Christian Aid Week and twice at other times during the year. As evidenced by the large quantity of harvest donations given this morning Rutherglen are very supportive of 'Starter Packs' Glasgow and this is an ongoing commitment throughout the year.

Although there are a number of individuals involved in the 'wider URC ' the church does not support any of the 'Commitment for Life' projects at present.

Rutherglen URC sees themselves as considerably far down the cluster process and contributes significantly in discussions and by supporting the other three churches through pulpit exchange, provision of lay preachers, attending joint services and including all Elders/Deacons in joint training events.

Finance and property

It was noted that the accounts were in excellent order and stewardship of resources was important including the buildings which were well maintained. One thing had been omitted from the accounts as an oversight but Synod costs had been paid. Due to a legacy received last year the surplus was reasonably large so it was suggested that as the church had been scoped at 100% they should pay the full M&M of £45,937. However it was reported that usually they are working with a deficit each year and although they have a large reserve fund this is needed for repairs to the manse which is let out. This year alone £13,000 had been spent on repairs.

As one person employed by the church is paid over £10,000.00 it was suggested that they should have a pension fund set up. However it was explained that this person doesn't wish this to happen.

The treasurer was then advised to check with Leslie Morrison on the legal status for the

church in this matter. The green trustee file was evident and in use.

A maintenance group meets weekly to maintain the building and the work suggested in the survey of 2012 is continuing to be carried out, also the PAT testing.

In conclusion the Rutherglen church is in good heart and is working well through being intentional with their priorities for ministry and mission.

The following recommendations were suggested:

- 1) Prioritise discussions on setting up a Hall Users Service in order to make new links between members and hall users.
- 2) Setting up a messy church programme which could be ecumenical and which might also encourage the children in the youth organisations to participate.
- 3) Be intentional about updating the profile as and when things change.
- 4) Consideration be given to increasing their M&M contributions.

Maureen Stewart
October 2016