

# Questions for Breakout Groups

## *General Synod 2020*

### **QUESTION 1**

**Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, what have you found encouraging in the course of the last few months?**

#### **Maureen's Group**

Not much was an initial reply, followed by saved a lot of money as a Church (SEC).

When we got going:

Joy of re-opening of churches, although conscious still a number of people not able to attend.

Encouraging that we used technology to keep services going, although we found not everyone has digital confidence – not always the elderly! Concerned that some people have not been able to attend Zoom meetings, e.g. Annual Meetings.

Ministry to Young people has moved online easier and we heard this had been creative – e.g. online sleepovers replaced Glenalmond camp.

Feedback from the young people has been really encouraging.

Some of us were surprised and encouraged by the fact that congregational giving did not go down (albeit there was a drop in fundraising income and income from hall rental).

We reported that much effort had gone into staying in touch with members of congregations, regular newsletters, live streaming services, recorded services, telephone tree pastoral support, etc.

#### **Alistair's Group**

Zoom prayer groups mid-week been helpful and in fact more accessible for some eg people with caring responsibilities but there are others (eg older people) for whom Zoom just doesn't work.

Experience has been mixed but mostly positive in terms of accessing provincial services and a wider range of voices/services than was previously the case. Downside has been the lack of physical interaction. Online presence at services has at times seen four to five times the previous normal physical attendance. Hope to maintain some level of online presence in future.

1<sup>st</sup> lockdown focussed on keeping community together. Successfully developed online activities which people turned to in place of their previous regular non-church activities. Now getting to the stage of looking to re-start previous in-person activities once restrictions reduce. Positive coming out of the season – stronger family feel to wider church. Sadly, small number of people who just can't connect on Zoom – other ways, door-step visits, dropping off cake allowed a different kind of contact. Downside: weariness, missing human contact – church has lost community members to CoVID and there are people in the congregation whose businesses are struggling.

Recognise a lot of what people have said. Miss human connection but find some church meetings much more efficient. Seems to work best though when you know one another already – in future may need to invest in opportunities for social connection to help the online relationships. Example given of a very successful and moving memorial service which because it was online was able to attract international contributions and attendance. Also congregational AGM was very successful and as well attended as previously. Have put a lot of effort into online services. How do we teach people in this area? Not just about facilitating live-streaming but learning how to do this well – money should be focussed there eg rather than just buying bandwidth, buy a decent microphone. Does need to be some discernment.

### **Victoria's group**

- The way everyone has kept in contact, including ringing round at least once a week.
- Ensuring that those without a computer don't miss out by not being online, for example by sending weekly pew sheets and service booklets by post, and for one church there's plans to send out weekly service DVDs for those without internet.
- Increased attendance at online services compared to pre-pandemic in-person attendance.
- Good to see the Church embracing digital more widely!

### **Liz's Group**

- **Many positives from lockdown and being compelled to look at new ways of being church.**
  - **Members who were excluded by infirmity or distance were able to connect again online.**
  - **Much more effort at keeping in touch, making sure everyone was contacted, online, phoning, regular mailings and the time available to do that.**
  - **Created the need for expanding horizons and being innovative in worship and conveying the drama of worship particularly the Sacrament.**
- **Discussion on the Eucharist online,**
  - **If just delivered as we do in church can be flat and leave people unsatisfied and unmoved, Do we need to create liturgies especially for online worship. Don't just do what is done in church because this is a missed opportunity.**
  - **The Eucharist online, discussed consecration online, very mixed feelings here, congregations had felt deprived and comment made of how CofS had allowed in places online consecration. A huge question which we need to confront**
- **We all felt that online worship was not second best but a valid medium for mission.**
- **Outreach and Mission in a time of COVID**
  - **Opportunities to reach out beyond that regular congregation which had been shown by the numbers of others joining in online services.**

## **Fay's Group**

Growth in spiritual interest from many quarters – people questioning themselves and the situation

Standing in queues being able to talk to people

Opportunity to bring a word of hope

Being able to provide online worship has meant connections with members, former members and people completing outside the church

There was the worry about losing people but the faithful have remained faithful and have been happy to get back TO “live” worship

Benefits of having a “decent” house where we had room to move around struggle for families working from home and kids working at school and even more so people stuck in a one bedroom flat with kids

Tremendous opportunity and blessing to have people who knew what they were doing with the technology

Study groups, prayer groups and having 20 people online instead of the usual 4 or 5

People willing to participate because they didn't have to come out and sit in a cold room or cold church

Aware of the difference of live streaming being a spectator sport and of the need for us to be aware of participation doing different things in different mediums.

Need to avoid the ecclesiastical version of Goggle-box!

The reduction in Quota is very encouraging

Opportunity to invite people from across the country and the world to teach us, lead us, worship with us

Opportunity to be able to attend seminars and webinars from all over at no or little cost and no travel involved

Delighted with the proposal to make funds available for professional staff to train us in the use of different technologies whether at a Provincial or Diocesan level.

Coffee morning and ZOOM studies although you need a question or too to get started

Difficulties of engaging young people who although used to the technology didn't want to use it

## **Group 1**

Positives- general - vaccines,

Churches Bishops meeting layfolk

Engaging with individuals in a congregation through phone calls

No travel and zoom meetings

Online worship despite church being closed, a good experience which could continue

By writing to congregation got more people to move to standing orders so income went up

Disenfranchisement of those without wifi or internet experience

Easy to lose sight of the more complicated things that are difficult to quantify  
Loss of human contact and touch

## **Group 2**

### **Positives from the past**

- The group found it very encouraging how many people wanted to positively engage with the Church, for example putting on a local Community Advent Calendar
- The generosity of the individuals and corporate local bodies in responding to the needs of the foodbank run by the church. The rediscovered sense of community. Hoping that this focus to assist with being a good neighbour will continue post-pandemic.
- When starting a new charge the month before the first lockdown, the Rector was heartened by the church's willingness to engage with new IT systems including setting up a database for emails, organising worship videos and zoom evening prayer. In a charge where there had been nothing electronic ever for 40 years, it was encouraging to see how everyone chipped in to help and be willing to engage in new technology to keep connecting with the church.
- For some their church had drifted away from engaging with the local community and the positives of the pandemic has been the reversal of this. The local community and local Church has come together once again to focus on community events like Christmas Lights and a community Nativity Video. There is a sense that the community wants the church to be involved and there is a space for the church to enter into.
- Many were encouraged about how engaged with people are in being good citizens and how to keep worship going although this can be an inward focus for some. Hoping that this will encourage outward movements for positively sharing the good news of Christ.
- The fact that General Synod are not debating a financial crisis in that individual Churches and Dioceses are showing tremendous resilience and strength, that finances and Human Resources are, for the most part, relatively doing okay.
- That a wonderful resource called 'Green Craft' was born out of the Rector simply visiting people in their gardens and birthed a popular local community newsletter. Bought the community together and had more of a focus on contemplating God in nature – encouraging and affirming for all.
- That Zoom Evening prayer was begun which brought two churches together who would never have prayed together in person before the lockdown. This will be continued post-pandemic.

## **Group 6**

We spoke about what it is to be church and how we embody that. We felt that already we have learnt that online services/gatherings are different in nature to our physical services/gatherings and streaming a "live eucharist services one kind only" is not the way to go. Could online provision be handled provincially or on a diocesan rota? it raises questions of membership of the church and the purpose of communicant rolls. it has been our experience that some have stopped attending and will not return to a worshipping community of faith. We feel we are partly responsible due to the lack of discipling of those that attended. However we have noticed new people attending physical worship, with no history of what the "old normal" was.

There is an opportunity to partner with organisations within our locality to provide drug rehabilitation or other services as it has been observed that due to the pandemic our travel is much more local as is what is provided locally. Local covid testing centres, local healthcare provision etc. It was commented that it would be a tragedy to go back to what we were doing before the pandemic and therefore our processes and procedures need changing.

## **Group 7:**

- Getting to know each other better – members of the church, the vulnerable, neighbours, families out together ..... "mutual care" " people have looked out for each other"
- Shared pastoral care – no longer a 'service' offered by the few but shared amongst the church
- Digital means have reached further and to a wider demographic than we expected
- People coming back to church - Making things feel as normal as possible
- People working together
- Posting material through letterboxes – seeing folk outside their homes. Increased exercise!
- Searching for and accessing good quality material like family worship, produced specifically for use in the home, as we are too small to provide excellence in all areas
- Ministry team meeting weekly instead of monthly and the level of mutual support
- More people attending evening meetings on Zoom than would in person because of issues with travel in the cold/dark etc. i.e. better accessibility
- Appreciation of Communion brought about by the 'fast'
- Opportunity for creativity and bending the rules
- Receiving/Sharing of uplifting Christian messages/posts to all sorts of people

## **Group 8**

### Worship

- Discovery of online worship - that it can work.
- Online worship attracting increased numbers and new people
- In rural areas being able to offer online worship has enabled offering of worship to ecumenical partners where church hasn't been reestablished
- Increased participation of laity in leading worship.
- Growth in confidence in people who had not participated before (readers, intercessors)

### Local Communities

- Space and time to walk the local & learn new things about it
- New connections made, & local community relationships being built
- People are less anonymous & more "known" - saying hello and acknowledging one another in new ways.
- People have got to know their locale better and noticed its features - increased connection with the area.

### Working with limited resources

- It's been encouraging to see what we can do with nothing when we work together with other.
- Local Authorities have seen much more clearly than before the huge contribution faith groups make to meeting community needs

### Ecumenical working

- Exploring new ways of working together as churches. One person's church has been working with others in the wider community: partnering with Salvation Army, CofS and others is to offer prayer walks without claiming them for a particular denomination
- Congregations WANT to get together and work together.
- People attending - sometimes in large numbers - who are new to us
- People responding to requests for help (eg for a church-run clothes bank and foodbank).
- Help help from ecumenical friends, other faith groups and people of no faith. Working together has mushroomed

### Embracing Technology

- Experimentation and growth in use of websites, Zoom, Social Media.

## **Group 9**

Good and deepening ecumenical relationships – especially to make partnerships for relief of the community – food / gas / electricity etc. Has really opened up partnership possibilities with secular agencies.

Including increase in numbers as people can join zoom services – housebound or geographically separated.

Has enabled new changes in churches to be accelerated and connected people in ways that haven't been possible before.

With the lack of busyness and activities, more yearning for spiritual sustenance – which has been fantastic to see nurtured and experimentation with different ways of getting messages out.

Has made clergy gatherings much more straight forward and easy, coffee times and informal gatherings much easier.

As we go forward need to think how to use digital not as an excuse not to gather when we are a community / incarnational faith ... and hold both community and congregation together in person while recognising the benefit of online for certain things.

Rural experience – felt abandoned with the closure of churches and in areas where churches are only ‘once a month’ and priests have a wide area / many charges to care for. A lack of digital experience or confidence. Connections and communications have been really poor and so felt distanced from the church.

## **Group 11**

Very positive experience of on-line services (mostly recorded rather than live). In one case the average Sunday numbers increased from about 15 to 50-80, with many people from a distance (such as NZ) as well as locals. It allowed people moving into the area to find the Church and join the congregation also.

There was a general willingness of (especially older people) to take the plunge and embrace technology and many people really appreciated the opportunity to hear familiar voices and see familiar faces via technology.

A facebook group in existence before lockdown, which was small and mostly a discussion group turned into a much larger support network, which is continuing and much valued.

Whilst many feel that all of these new things should continue and in most cases are continuing, there are worries about whether clergy and laity can manage to keep everything going both on-line and face-to-face in the future.

In areas with low bandwidth for broadband much can and has been done with email and snail mail and over the telephone.

Many non-worship activities have sprung up on-line: coffee mornings, quiz nights and study groups and many of these may well continue.

## **Group 12**

- The increased availability of groups via Zoom/other digital platforms has been greatly increased especially in city centre churches where the congregation are dispersed and often some distance away.
- Groups have been mostly, but not exclusively, set up by lay people which has been of enormous benefit in different ways; lay people being able to exercise a ministry, bring their gifts and skills, and has enabled clergy to be clergy.
- There have been more online opportunities to meet each other and get to know each other.
- Different groups have emerged, such as Book Groups, but not in the usual sense of a book group, but rather groups where people have brought their favourite books/ films etc. to the discussion
- Coffee gatherings have moved online.
- Telephone contact
- Doorstep contact
- Provincial and Diocesan Online worship has been invaluable and hugely appreciated and the amount of work that has gone into these noted and appreciated with thanks. A note was made of the more intimate provincial worship, e.g., the ones

from homes were considered to be the ones that made engaging much easier than from an empty church.

- There was one note of concern- for churches with a Choral Tradition and the devastating effect of not being able to meet and sing for choirs has been very hard.

### **Group 13**

- 150+ viewing services on Facebook (helped by very tech savvy priest!)
- Group from congregation participating in SEC morning prayer by Zoom
- People sharing in Compline each evening
- Services posted on church website / special services at Easter and Whitsun) (Question: can a standard way of live streaming be developed?)
- Growth in quality of fellowship
- More people thinking about digital services and willing to interact digitally

### **Group 15**

Despite the challenges of the new rector moving in from down south later than planned and then not able to meet people, the two small congregations have flourished and grown.

Learned how to celebrate Holy Week and Easter at home.

An 80 year old from the congregation told the retired priest about Zoom!

Have found more people engaging over zoom than did before.

More Sunday and midweek engagement, with maintained commitment.

New ideas about supporting each other.

Encouraging that the worshipping community came forward in August when churches reopened.

Older congregation stepped back to allow the young church and families to come back to church as well.

Offering the church garden space to the community, and making it a place of welcome.

Churches have been encouraged to serve each other, self-motivated to encourage each other.

Online services have been good. This church had a creative director who was a talented videographer. 400 views on YouTube, with even people from the local grocery store saying they had seen the video online.

Online Alpha Course has been successful with 7 participants, of which 4 would say they were not Christians already.

Have had 5 family units join the churches through online services.

Chance to share church services with friends who live far away. Cross pollinating and learning from each other far more than before covid.

Thanks for the creativity in the church throughout lockdown. One church had compline twice a week and some had never done that service before. New types of worship being encountered.



## **Group 16**

There was a universal appreciation of online church:

- enabling many housebound to attend, feeling more connected
- midweek morning prayer attended by so many more people
- spreading wider to family, friends, ex-members
- one church reported 22 new members, spinning off a new Alpha Course
- easier to lip-read and hear for those hard of hearing
- Some have now purchased of broadband facilities and technology for church in future

The strengthening of congregational life:

- the appreciation by congregations of what has been possible and tolerance for what has not
- resilience of people
- in a tier one situation, the willingness of most people to return to being a physical worshipping community. (Balanced by other reports of others not returning)
- the deepening of congregational relationships
- (tier one) more time for pastoral contact one to one

Mission:

- With hall space closed, a chance to reassess and think strategically about their use
- Using a banner to proclaim church is not the building but the people
- Use of quiet garden to offer space for prayer and contact with nature (in city centre)

## **Group 17**

People really liked the zoom services, older people were set up by relatives or using the phone. There are fears that this might stop after lockdown, but they have continued online chats. Housebound have been phoned, really useful for much improved pastoral care.

Phoning has provided more awareness of people's needs, this increased focus has been very beneficial.

Daily Zoom morning prayer has been really good - and built up confidence of lay members to take part.

Very positive and useful new links made with other faiths over lockdown, hope to continue.

Despite the cultural barriers of joint charges expecting communion weekly and being difficult about working together, there is joy to be found in helping each other to learn to lead services and experiment.

## **Group 18**

People's response to the difficult situation we've found ourselves in. Being kind. Love. Offers of help. Humbling for the rector. Pulled together. Zoom. Telephone. Turned up when asked.

Morning Prayer – more people attending because of zoom. From outside of own church – maybe from diocese? Offer of help from congregation. Downside – very elderly no technology. May not return to church.

Housebound before COVID now enjoying joining in if they can use computers. If can't attend on Sunday can join in on-line worship. Different ways of reaching out unexpectedly.

More conversations with congregation about God in last nine months than before – apart from personal crisis situations. Liturgy more engaging, rhythm of daily offices. Psalms came alive.

Small groups contacting members and keeping communication going. Volunteers for delivery of magazines etc.

Because of social distancing, receiving communion far more reverential – no chat as you gather to go up. More spiritual. Calm. More meaningful.

Hymns and quiet at start of service.

Wider general public, lock down, a time of spiritual questioning. How is the church reacting to this and reaching out? If you're not part of the club – how do you get in?

Evangelism is relational – if you know someone who is asking – give them the zoom link.

Online services give anonymity – as usually happens at the cathedral.

## **Group 19**

- Pastoral response fantastic—both established and impromptu reactions. 'We know there's need out there, and we can do this'.
- Amazed by response of folk to connect with each other—folk coming to grips with tech and offering to help others; inventiveness; multi-age connections
- Technological response, even with mixed aged groups; encouraged so many have risen to challenge; impressed some people actually turned to Church—not put off by restrictions
- Now that church is open, regularly getting max number of people attending public worship, with increased interest
- Encouraged by Provincial services; surprised by people coming back to church
- Encouraged by creativity and diversity of creation; ownership of laypeople—leading services (more lay led services); new people joining the Church; ability to have diversity in worship offering times and places
- Encouraged that local community is pleased that someone is offering support; seeing the local congregation come together to offer support
- Encouraged to see outdoor space at church used by community; engagement with people who came—never realised what impact building has in the community

- Seeing people part of the community, even though they're from around the world; online presence has allowed people to feel part of the church, although possibly from thousands of miles away
- Encouraged by clergy supporting each other—a drop-in group enabled by the pandemic

## QUESTION 2

**As we reflect on our experience since March, and as we look forward, what new missional or pastoral opportunities might there be for your local situation and which might benefit from some provincial funding, if available?**

### Group 19

- Interested in getting 'connected'
- Realisation that we cannot do this alone—Provincial programmes to bind us together; ways of collaborating more
- Looking for support for reaching beyond ourselves to people that might not otherwise consider coming to church building
- Mental health support; projects for healing in local context
- Technical training for clergy who are struggling
- Continued use of Zoom and technology—even when things return to 'normal'; enabling all kinds of people to access it; mini-grants for charges to have business accounts for Zoom; make this feasible for all kinds of people
- Hybrid ways of interacting with each other to allow more and more people ability to gather

- **Group 18**

Longer conversation needed. Technology needs to be accessible to everyone – how do we do this. Buddy churches for help that is needed.

On line bible study conversation – people who aren't coming to church may have difficulty in coming back. Not only church, re-engage with society. Resourcing church / wider communities to help people re-engage.

Pastoral telephone conversations – 80's and 90's too frightened to go out or use technology. How do we help them get over the fear to get back to church before their funerals.

People like on-line – can be viewed at any time of day. Biggest challenge – how do we get them back when they can't fast forward.

Climate change – wider society – green recovery. If we pass CinS motion today, a lot of resourcing and work on buildings needed. Invest in that. Take green recovery seriously. Ground source heating. Fund for capital investment. Concretely show how we will do this.

Also for rectories.

Financial support and expertise needed.

Not all can have the heating and lighting we would like. Conservation areas. Listed buildings.

Historical Scotland may need to shift their way of thinking. How can we be supported instead of facing barriers?

Area of poverty very concerning. What happens after furlough ends? Where is the church in all this?

Less people being able to come to church, less possibilities of doing things but costs still happen. Just keeping going is a challenge.

Hall lets reducing income. Support smaller / poorer churches. Demotivating for the congregation to see deficits increasing.

Need to grow congregations for financial sustainability.

## **Group 17**

There's a severe shortage of priests, especially stipendiary, in the West of Scotland. Could new fund provide stipends for linked charges?

Syrian refugee women coming to Knit & Natter, and their men meeting for Muslim worship in church hall.

In linked charges where there are no spare priests available, lay members need training and encouragement for leading worship. This leaves the priest as an administer. Funds could be used to provide administrative help to free up the priest.

IT can be good but also a barrier, no substitute for the experience of meeting together, it must not be the main focus. Needs careful thought as to how it is used. Probably churches now have the equipment / set-up that they need already.

Mission - money needed to help set up local groups - hall hire, insurance etc.

Cathedral worship is increasing - how can we translate that interest into local churches.

## **Group 16**

Digital Church, even when also physically possible:

- Smaller churches may need help purchasing equipment

- The need for new tech skills in church provides chance to draw new people into the ministry of making worship happen
- Some congregations will need help with technical training, advice and support - so there will be a need for more funding for the digital team at a provincial level
- Digital missioner is being thought of in another diocese (other than Glasgow) - important for this to be built into training
- (One person reported accessing Scottish Government Places of Worship grant provided £500 in a week for covid compliance and recovery)
- Have a "brand" image for SEC online worship across the province
- Sharing and cross-fertilisation might be easier if we all used the same software? (video-conferencing; video editing etc)

### **Group 15**

Worship via zoom can have an immediacy of gathering, despite people coming from all over.

Capturing worship in church, though, needs good kits and camera plus a stable internet connection.

Could reach more people with better internet in church. Also training vital. If the priest was not there (or if the priest is not technically minded)

Buddying system sounds good. Especially a buddying system with a young person who might be good at tech!

We need to find a way of ministering to people in their own homes,

How to share an important service with other churches?

Remember we are part of a massive body of God, how can that be made to function online?

Wifi in church needed!

Very happy to be able to gather together in church again. How to gather a spread congregation from over several glens and multiple churches? A minibus would really help get people together – for older people, for youth work, for many reasons, providing transport is key.

Great not to have to travel up to Edinburgh for meetings all the time. To sit at home for meetings instead of all day out is an advantage, and not something to return to.

What is the cost of virtual meetings? Can it be the gift of General Synod to Diocesan Synods to help with the cost and tech of virtual synod meetings?

There are now new areas of pastoral encounter – on peoples porches, or garages, or gardens.

Seconded, the usefulness of a minibus.

Need for training for offering digital content. Too many poor offerings online, that could so much be improved through training. Not all clergy are tech savvy!

Had heard of 1 congregation that had tablets for all their people. Many members, say elderly in homes, not able to be visited but also not able to be contacted – would be useful for pastoral contact.

Great to note Reflections on the quay coming back. That being taken off was a huge loss, especially for elderly members.

Noticed Zoom works especially well for courses. A parenting course was held that had 15 attendees, and worked well.

### **Group 13**

#### **Having used time in lockdown to get things done on property maintenance / upgrading, reach out to local community more intentionally**

- Funding for much needed stipendiary priest who will be able to give time to combat loneliness in community and restore community activities / lunches etc
  - Develop foodbank activities in deprived area
  - Increase digital awareness and skills within congregation
  - Fuller engagement with community projects
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- **Group 12**
  - Comments were made that folk would like to see a wider remit here for this question over and above mission and pastoral and to be able to add in other suggestions, such as the use of the money at Provincial level for recruitment of posts/roles where people with the expertise of grant funding etc. for the maintenance of our buildings would be widely and massively appreciated throughout the Province.
  - Training/resources to enable a much wider involvement of lay ministry within our churches, to enable both the ministry of lay people (beyond lay readers etc.) and to enable clergy to do the 'things' that only clergy can do. This will bring a breadth of life and witness to the church and recognise how much clergy are expected to do at present. This is reflecting on the involvement of lay people during the pandemic and building on this great resource.
  - Training and resources for digital knowledge/skills and equipment in some places.
  - Recognising the number of 'young' people who have engaged with the church online and inviting them to bring their skills and gifts and how we reach out to them.
  - Recognising that very short input on digital platforms responds to a younger audience and engages them much easier as a first step into church rather than a 45-minute service where they are spoken at. In this is recognising how different education is these days and the use of social media etc. An example of a 3-minute on-line Advent calendar was given.

### **Group 11**

Help both support and financial with setting up live-streaming facilities in Churches. Generally felt that the 'start-up' costs need help, but the ongoing costs need to be provided by the local charge.

Provision of help for individual people (especially those who live alone) to get on-line, both equipment and practical training etc. recognising the difficulties of getting that help to people if you can't actually sit with them and even if you can, the PVG implications of that. However we see that as a longer-term goal.

A recognition of the time constraints on everyone to provide a broader range of 'offerings' to the world both face-to-face and online, but an enthusiasm that we have seen opportunities and must try to meet the challenges.

Development of resources for use online and reduce the effort required by each charge (the Liturgy Committee Advent resources are an example of the sort of thing that might be helpful, but music resources that can be incorporated into services would be another.

There are concerns that safeguarding risks increase in the on-line environment and that issues may go unnoticed or unreported.

## **Group 9**

Welcome the narrative of reflecting on added value of SEC to nation of Scotland and our communities. What does human flourishing look like? What can we contribute? Good to see the renewal and development fund – thank you!

Funding of a communication person in each diocese – with time and expertise to encourage local congregations – clergy **and lay** to be responsible for connectivity.

Fund each congregation to have a Pro-Zoom account with training to use it.

Issue to be addressed: governance issues especially in smaller congregations – they have the possibility of great work – building and people resources, good hearts for the community - but often not the experience to put in safe practices.

how to use our churches which are 'covid safe' for activities other than worship – would enable rural churches where there are infrequent worship services to support community again.

Invest in leadership roles that are not ordained – enable the grassroots stuff / digital to happen, build up relationships and connectivity, do missional work and hold communities together – not lay readers, but something different, shorter training and support.

## **Group 8**

1. Funding for Comms development: Highlands: desire to continue offering relational online (Zoom) worship for rural dispersed communities post-lockdown. Limitations of broadband / 4G mean major tech investment required. Getting fibre broadband into the area being mentioned would cost around £1.2m. Support to provide IT solutions (projectors, screens, broadband) for churches for blended worship provision.

2. Engagement with Addiction Communities. In Dundee (highest level of drugs deaths in Scotland) and some other places churches are working with addiction recovery groups - SEC, ecumenic and 3rd sector partnerships are being grown. There's an opportunity to consider what rehab and recovery look like. Funding for a pastoral post (a development officer) to work between the churches and addiction community in every city in Scotland could be huge.

3. Street Pastors - learning from the COVID experience of taking work outside our buildings.

### **Group 7**

- Why do we need to wait until summer 2021 to apply for funding. It needs to be now! We have prayed. We have spent money from our limited resources already. The need for help is right now!
- We would have appreciated knowing this question in advance to formulate our thoughts
- Purchase of digital broadcast hardware – microphones, cameras, broadband connection or 4/5G hubs, etc
- Purchase of receiving hardware – tablets, phonecards etc
- Funding for post lockdown events such as trips for youth, dementia groups etc which help renew relationships/fellowship/joy
- Help with providing resources for Women's Aid/Prisons (e.g. cosmetic/toiletry bags)
- Training:
  - ❖ Proclamation of the gospel (not just a formulaic approach but one which raises confidence in our ability to share our story/experience of God,
  - ❖ how to do things on line,
  - ❖ how to pray resources,
  - ❖ how to have a decent website/FaceBook/twitter/ presence, good broadcasting guidelines specifically for our way of worship

### **Group 6**

That £230K is a drop in the ocean and many projects will need this level of funding in its entirety and some considerably more, some projects may be smaller perhaps £10k parcels of support, however we don't see much mileage in repeating projects to provide online services, worship or gatherings. do we fund 1 or 2 very large projects or 25 small projects?



We didn't have consensus however we did have a consensus that the money is not enough, and a mix of projects ought to be funded.

We spoke about what it is to be church and how we embody that. We felt that already we have learnt that online services/gatherings are different in nature to our physical services/gatherings and streaming a "live eucharist services one kind only" is not the way to go. Could online provision be handled provincially or on a diocesan rota? it raises questions of membership of the church and the purpose of communicant rolls. it has been our experience that some have stopped attending and will not return to a worshipping community of faith. We feel we are partly responsible due to the lack of discipling of those that attended. However we have noticed new people attending physical worship, with no history of what the "old normal" was.

There is an opportunity to partner with organisations within our locality to provide drug rehabilitation or other services as it has been observed that due to the pandemic our travel is much more local as is what is provided locally. Local covid testing centres, local healthcare provision etc. It was commented that it would be a tragedy to go back to what we were doing before the pandemic and therefore our processes and procedures need changing.

For the specific proposal of providing streaming capability for those churches that don't have it fails to recognise that many communities don't have wifi or 4G let alone 5G. In some instances local gatherings in buildings other than churches ought to be explored and also maintaining what church buildings we have for those that wish to attend "church" other church buildings could become community hubs and resources for the local community. We spent sometime thinking about what is church as well as what is worship and how we serve the communities in which we are located. Different solutions for different contexts.

Finally how do we support clergy within this highly diverse context, it was pointed out that it isn't just clergy but how do we support all ministry, however the discussion was mainly around stipendiary clergy particularly incumbents, we in our group were all incumbents except a bishop.

A pay freeze, although understandable and unsurprising, is still unwelcome however the bigger issue is lack of clergy support and lack of time off, the vast majority of clergy are tired and have not taken enough holidays or time off this year, a move to reduce the working week from 6 days to 5 days and allow clergy time to wrestle with these issues highlighted above would be helpful, alas there is no evidence it was even considered.

## **Group 2**

### **Future needs post-pandemic**

- That with a charge of 5 churches none of them had livestream. So looking at the possibility of funding for at least one of the churches to have this facility. Funerals have been lost because of this lack of outreach.
- There was a big request for centralised assistance in setting up, training and providing online safety guidance in delivering the IT required for live streaming etc. Impetus on it being supportive, relative to situation and to be safe.

- Not just important in focusing on steam worship but to remember there are other ways of being church – focus on Pilgrimage, ecumenical outreach and developing fully what new ways there are to be ‘church’.
- Looking at who belongs to the church now we are in every front room.
- Greater and more in-depth theological discussions on how we do the Eucharist as a remote worshipping and faithful community is required.

## **Group 1**

Noted that there were many more links to services in addition to known attenders, but difficult to contact them, how to we make the connection?

### Digital Support

If you don't have tec skills in your church provide IT facilitator service  
 Backup for knowledge and know how.....buddy churches/share bright ideas  
 WiFi in all churches/ help with modernising websites etc  
 Kit for live-streaming

### Phone

Help with the know how , support to make it work, support to have more diverse ways of worship and contact without everyone having to reinvent the wheel. Getting IT help of good quality can be expensive but is important for small congregations who need/want to grow

Balance of 'back to normal' older smaller congregations and reaching out to the none churches who may use/like other means of access eg digital

Whose desire? Balance of real-time worship(more engaging) with recorded so can fit with shifts and family activities

Support to help congregations to look out as well as in

## **Fay's Group**

Funding for live streaming equipment

Training to use it and other technologies

Different forms of engagement for different situations

Sharing experiences and resources across the Diocese or Province

Better contact in pastoral situations through using technology but desperate lack of social contact which define us as human beings

Opportunity to reach out to former members, past members and others with no church connection

Teaching our people to bring words of hope to others out with the church and those who are questioning

Being aware of the opportunities to provide different spiritual experiences to suit different occasions.

## **Liz's group**

### **We would welcome support from the Province and dioceses with:**

- Support and sharing of ideas across the province, particularly how to become more visible in our communities, what others are doing and how we might adapt to different situations.
- Financial Support
- IT Support

We reflected on the amount of time we had spent on pastoral care and mission, instead of fundraising and how to maintain buildings. This is a very big question for the future as we go forward. But also on how we could be helped to create with technology the use of music and pictures and videos that inspire the emotional aspects of worship. Training and additional skills support will be required for ministry and for congregations.

## **Victoria's Group**

Opportunities where provincial support would be useful, which may be of a supportive/training nature, and not necessarily always require financial funding:

- a. Support for increased engagement with the community to support people experiencing loneliness, mental health crises, domestic violence.  
This may require training for supporting people experiencing these issues (incl. pastoral care and mental health first aid training), especially for laity who may not be in formal licensed lay ministry. In addition financial support might be helpful for building and heating costs to provide a 'safe' space for people to go and talk.
- b. Support from provincial digital comms to provide training was very much welcomed.  
There was a feeling that a lot of churches have had to go it alone, and it would be good to be given more support and training, especially as we look to continue livestreaming post-pandemic.
- c. Support from the province to relax rules on number of singers in church services.  
Whilst digital has been seen as a great mission tool for many, for some, moving to online has been problematic for some churches as their choral music with full choir is one of their USPs. Also for some, music is a key way in which they connect with God, and current methods can't fully replace what we had pre-pandemic. This has seen a drop in numbers for some churches. It was recognised that whilst it's technically possible to have a virtual choir, or have one person singing

in a church building, this is not the same thing as having it in person. Therefore there was a request from the Province that rules on how many people can sing in a church can be relaxed, with the proviso there is appropriate social distancing as seen in English churches.

However there were other voices within the group which appreciated the current set up, as it did mean there could be some music, and that this was better than nothing.

- d. Financial support for initiatives to foster connection/community with those who aren't online.  
For example, one church would like to purchase DVD players for members of the congregation without a computer or a DVD player, so that they can send weekly recordings of services by post.
- Opportunities where provincial support *isn't* needed, but to continue:
  - e. being mindful about those who would normally be left out, either because they aren't online, or in 'normal' times, for those who cannot be at church due to illness, disability or old age
  - f. livestreaming, not just for those who might be excluded due to not being able to be at church, but also as a mission tool to reach those who don't yet feel comfortable to engage with church inside a church building
  - g. supporting food banks in the post-pandemic or 'new normal' era

### **Alistair's Group**

Training and equipment. Excellent IT equipment in churches where there isn't other basic infrastructure might seem strange (example was a rural church which didn't have appropriate toilet facilities). May need to select consider focussing resource on venues where people can come together in a venue which works for the equipment/skills available. Also a suggestion that too many churches seem to be trying to replicate cathedral-style worship and should consider other forms.

Lots of positives from internet connections (eg numbers) but must be careful not to think 'this is it' – the panacea that solves all.

Additional numbers are not bringing increased funding. As a church we may need to consider more cross-funding within Dioceses. Congregations still getting older. May be some erosion of local link – people becoming more choosy/peripatetic.

How realistically do you engage with the online congregation?

People are opting for multiple churches – not necessarily a bad thing. Criteria for deciding on funding? Not just about pointing cameras at worship. Suggest broadening of the Quinquennial Review concept so it doesn't only encompass physical infrastructure. Focus

to date has perhaps been on existing community when there are definitely opportunities to project further.

Need the right people to evaluate funding bids – eg people who have already shown themselves to be doing this effectively. Also need a resource base of people willing to advice/train/buddy other congregations. Guidelines for application would be helpful. Noted there would probably have been a role here for the Communications Board had it not been disbanded

Don't simply try to replicate what we used to do. Lengthy things online can be very difficult for people to maintain engagement. Thinking about how to be church online can inform changes we might want to enact when we can return to doing things in person.

### **Maureen's group**

We found a training session in the technology (particularly Zoom) was useful and wondered if a series of these could be developed at Provincial level and then used locally to help those not digitally minded.

We felt assistance to provide live streaming of services would be very welcome

We were all very concerned that smaller congregations would not survive and wondered whether a scheme could be put in place either at Diocesan level or at Provincial level where richer churches could be encouraged to help out poorer ones struggling to survive.

There were occasions where vacancies had occurred, and these were particularly difficult to manage in the pandemic. The concept of a church having to depend on a non-stipendiary priest did not sit well with us and maybe governance funding could be used in these circumstances.

We felt that if there was any available funding at Provincial level, this should be used to help each and every member of clergy in some way. We all felt that they had had very difficult roles during the pandemic and their health and wellbeing must have suffered. Each situation is different, but suggestions such as extra holiday, a sabbatical, a cash sum to use as they liked were all suggestions put forward.