



Towards our Union of the 4 Cs

News from Cairnlea, Calderbank,
Chapelhall & Clarkston Churches

Issue 1: September 2024

This is the first of a series of monthly newsletters to keep us all informed of what's happening towards the union of our 4 churches.

Elders and Ministers have begun discussions on a number of topics and we share something of what has been talked about with you in the hope that you also might be part of the ongoing conversation.

We are all aware that there are plenty of topics not covered here! We are at early stages of trying to flesh out how in a new set-up church life might flourish.

Whatever changes may be coming, I hope that we all might both pray for and love one another through this process. A bit of Bible I find myself going to at the moment is 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-24. I encourage you to read it and to read it again!

Peter

Dear friends,

I am pleased to share with you an update of some of the work carried out over the summer as we journey towards a union of our four congregations.

Representatives from all four congregations were invited to two meetings in August to discuss Governance and New Visions.

The first meeting was largely concerned with issues of Governance – i.e. the way the new united church will be managed and structured. At the moment our four congregations have a mix of constitutions – some with a Board and a Kirk Session, others where all decisions are made by the Kirk Session. In the new union, we will operate under what is called the Unitary Constitution, which means all decisions will be made by the Kirk Session. However, there will be committees and groups set up by the Session and members of the congregation would have opportunities to serve on these committees/groups.

Whilst all this may seem rather dry and technical, getting the governance right really matters. We hope to empower and equip people across the church to enable them to carry out the work of mission. One of the opportunities of this new beginning is that we can ask questions we have not really asked

before – such as, what would be the optimum number of Elders serving on the Kirk Session at any one time? How can we free up as many Elders as we can from the day-to-day management of church affairs so that they can engage in the work of mission? What, and how many, committees/groups should we have? What should be our priorities going forward?

The question of priorities was the focus of our second meeting on New Visions. We discussed ways in which members of the church could be given opportunities to grow in their own faith and discipleship. We also discussed opportunities for outreach and evangelism in our local community. Whilst there is already a great deal of mission going on across our four congregations, we explored how we might become more intentional in our mission – focussing on changing lives and helping people to grow in their faith.

The above is a just a brief overview of our discussions – discussions which were exciting and encouraging. Discussions which encouraged us to imagine the ‘church of tomorrow’. By putting in place the right governance structures, and by facilitating the congregation to engage in the work of mission, we pray and hope for a revival of the church in our community as people come to know the love of Christ in our worship, witness, and outreach.

God bless,

Hanna

FROM 4Cs to *United in Mission*

September 2024: two representatives from each congregation with the three Ministers met ON WORSHIP: to think through what worship might look like being “united in mission”. The discussions took us towards these points.

Given that

- ~ worship is the beating heart of church life: that without worship, we will not be offering the mission of Christ
- ~ gatherings for worship bring people together *and* send them out to live their daily lives
- ~ styles of worship can vary, and people do tend to tune into worship that “works” for them
might we aim for

- 1) a three-prong approach on basics?
 - a large gathering for worship on a Sunday morning in Cairnlea
 - also, whether on a Sunday morning or at some other time, gatherings for worship in other locations, recognising village identities and matters of easy access. These to be led not necessarily by “the Minister”. Would these be weekly or less often? Using technology? Messy Church? Café Church? House churches? etc
 - Also, whether on a Sunday morning or at some other time, new gatherings for worship – new in the sense of location or style or constituency. The Group agreed that unless we do new things, there will be too little extension of outreach through worship.

There would also be a worship element to all meetings and church groupings.

- 2) The equipping / training of people to help lead worship – from contributing a prayer or a reading all the way through to leading full services?

Rationale

- “God wants everyone to be saved” (1 Tim 2:6) So it is vital to maximise and multiply opportunities for worship and witness: one large service is not enough.
- “He came into our neighbourhood” (John 1:14) For seeing the presence of God, and for seeing the neighbours amongst whom we live, all sorts of “neighbourhoods” invite our engagement, i.e. wherever or however people can be brought together. Neither one place nor one style nor one time will meet the needs of all. And as well as our current places of operation, new initiatives, starting “from nothing”, are both exciting and important.
- “We are to use our different gifts” (Rom 12:6) Worship fundamentally is not dependent on “the Minister”, but it does ask people to offer themselves. We need to commit to practices of training and growth.

Share your thoughts!

- 1) On how a three-prong approach to worship could meet the needs of 2025
- 2) On what you might be able to offer to one or more of these approaches

Marjory MacDonald, Jacqui Munton (Cairnlea), Sharon Martin, Ruby Smith (Chapelhall), Joan McPhee, Ian Buchanan (Calderbank), Joy Codona, Campbell Sefton (Clarkston)

FROM 4Cs to United in Mission

September 2024: two representatives from each congregation with the three Ministers met ON MINISTRIES: to think through what ministries might look like being “united in mission”. The discussions took us towards these points.

Given that

- ~ Ministry or service is something offered by anyone and everyone, for the glory of God and the blessing of His people and His world
- ~ Some are ordained for particular roles: currently two Ministers of Word and Sacrament are in place with identical remits, and it would be unworkable to carry that situation forward without clear delineation of responsibilities
- ~ And then amongst Elders and others, roles and responsibilities are currently shaped around four separate geographies

might we aim for

- Strong thinking and intentionality about building up people’s gifts for service across the area of united mission
- Serious thought about how two persons ordained or appointed

into full-time roles might both complement one another (not to mention others in their ministries) and serve (aspects of) the united mission. Would this be by specialisation, e.g. with one post being “pioneering”? What are the priorities of the new set-up for which we need deployment of resources?

- Careful planning on what Elders and others might bring into the new united set-up

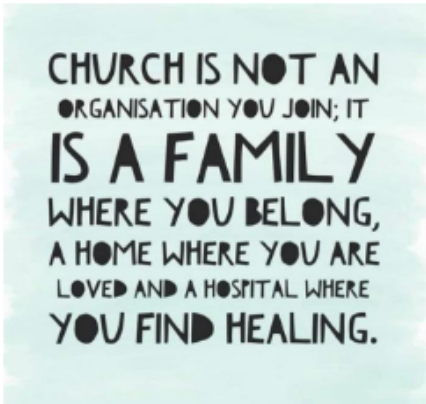
Share your thoughts!

- 1) On how to make the very most of people's gifts and strengths in this new era
- 2) In thinking through what kind of remit would be taken up by two full-time equivalent (FTE) appointments so that there isn't unnecessary overlap and duplication. P.S. Hanna and Peter will themselves give thought to how they would prefer to serve; and we shall all have to discern in due course whether that fits or not

Rationale

- No one part can say “I don't need you” (I Cor 12:21)
- For all that Hanna and Peter are currently in the mix (and do need themselves to consider how best they can serve and where), the creation of a new unit requires thinking that is not built around particular individuals. (cf. I Cor 1: 10-13!) Currently we divide up by geography, but this is not the only conceivable way of apportioning full-time appointments. Studies of how it works in England or in Scotland would be timely.
- Getting a new set-up going requires full-on attention (cf. Titus 1:5) Simply adding together what we currently have is not necessarily wise. Some streamlining and improved ways of working will be possible!

Marjory MacDonald, Jacqui Munton (Cairnlea), Sharon Martin, Ruby Smith (Chapelhall), Joan McPhee, Ian Buchanan (Calderbank), Joy Codona, Campbell Sefton (Clarkston)



CHURCH IS NOT AN
ORGANISATION YOU JOIN; IT
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WHERE YOU BELONG,
A HOME WHERE YOU ARE
LOVED AND A HOSPITAL WHERE
YOU FIND HEALING.