



2015

Developing a **Vision for Mission** in Argyll & The Isles

Year 5 of Building the Vision will culminate at the Diocesan Synod of 2016 when each congregation will be asked to present 'Our Mission'. This pack is designed to guide you through the process, drawing on the work you have been doing and setting intentions for the future. It includes:

- The story so far
- A 5-step process
- Taking Stock: discussion suggestions
- Choosing Priorities: a tool for exploring your congregational vocation
- An example of a simple mission plan
- A template for your plan

We share a common purpose in seeking to proclaim and live out the Gospel in our communities. The diocese invites each congregation to identify its unique calling and to decide how it will express this through worship and service.

The story so far...

2011 - Building the Vision

Taking stock of our history and what we value in our church life. Working to find a 'foundation of trust' on our past and present for building the future. Our view from 2011 of the past, present and future remains a fixed point for all our subsequent mission activities. Some simple actions were proposed and delivered.

Over the past five years congregations have been encouraged to explore what it is to be the Scottish Episcopal Church in Argyll and The Isles. Each year has explored particular areas and aspects of our life as Christians.

2012 - Compass Course

Rooting congregations in the sacramental life of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the course explored many aspects of Christianity but most of all our Eucharistic tradition. The course remains a tool for spiritual exploration, confirmation preparation and congregational work.

2013 - Mission Possible

Three questions were asked: What is Jesus calling us to do? How do we share the vision within the congregation? How do we share the vision in the community? This work draws together the vision and discipleship work of the first two years, and starts to encourage charges to think about mission as an outside-facing activity. Actions were proposed and delivered.

The mission planning in 2015's 'Vision for Mission' will not be heavy with paperwork, and it will build on the existing strength and confidence of the Scottish Episcopal Church in Argyll and The Isles. This is not the end of a journey: this is the next marker on our "Spiritual Road to Growth."

2014 - Reflection for Action

Spiritual health of individuals and communities are essential for mission to be sustainable and kingdom-focused. This year individuals in charges were encouraged to explore theological reflection, spiritual direction and retreats/quiet days. These, and other spiritual exercises, remain as a parallel and essential activity to mission planning and development.

2015 - Vision for Mission

This year all the threads of the previous four years are drawn together. From the baseline vision work in 2011, revisited in 2013, charges will now be invited to take a more structured approach to their local mission. Equipped by the Compass Course in 2012 and Reflection for Action in 2014, disciples in the charges will be encouraged to grow in confidence and engage with their communities.

The 5 - step Process

- Step 1 **Review**
 Review your notes from Building the Vision or your parish profile
 Study them and compare them with your current concerns.
 Do you **Recognise** yourselves?
- Step 2 **Resource** yourselves spiritually and materially as we've been doing
 with Reflection for Action
- Step 3 **Record** your situation by completing the 'Taking Stock' task by **August 2015**
- Step 4 **Reconsider** your priorities and create your 'vision for mission'. The list of activities,
 'Choosing Priorities', is offered as a prompt.
- Step 5 **Re-create/create** your mission plan

Agree and complete plan	by 31 December 2015
Send copy to the Dean and CDO	by 31 January 2015
Celebrate 'Our Mission'	At Synod 2016

- Step 1 **Review** Start the cycle again using your unique mission plan

Taking Stock (Step 3)

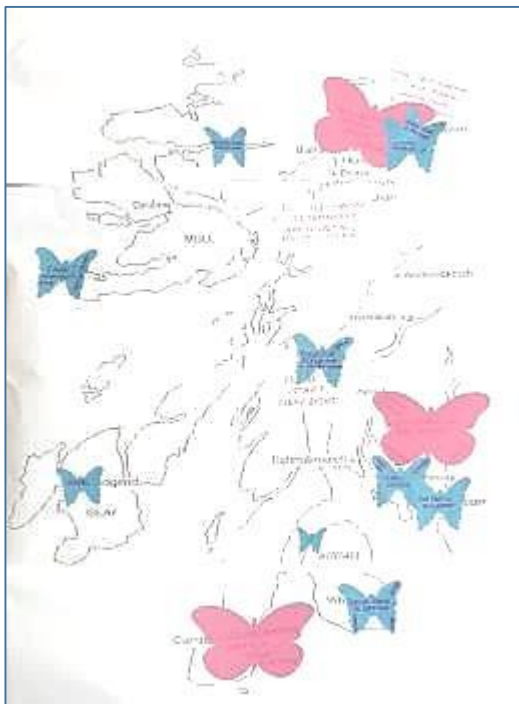
The following questions may be tackled as a group discussion or series of discussions in your vestry and congregation.

In 2011, *Building the Vision*: we asked:

“Trusting in God, 'the sure foundation', what will our church look like, sound like, feel like... in 3 years' time?”

- Discuss and record the changes you have made since this question was first posed. Include any changes or activities undertaken independently of the Building the Vision process.
- In what way have these activities increased your ability to witness to God's love in your context?
- What fresh challenges have you encountered?
- What do you think is the most important thing you can do as a congregation to be part of the answer to 'your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven'?

In the 2014 synod conference, 'butterflies' were used to represent significant events and feelings in congregations. What 'butterflies' do you see in your church in 2015?



Reconsider priorities (Step 4)

In the discussions above, you may have identified things that you love and help you to encounter and share God. You may have talked of things you would love to do more of. You may have talked about things that you can't wait to stop doing.

Review these.

Each charge has its own particular situation and gifts and tasks. Some aspects of church life may be a more appropriate focus than others in your situation.

The sheets that follow have short lists of aspects of church life and activities that can help a church move into growth. The areas have been divided into four broad groups: worshipping together, meeting together, reaching out and spiritual growth.

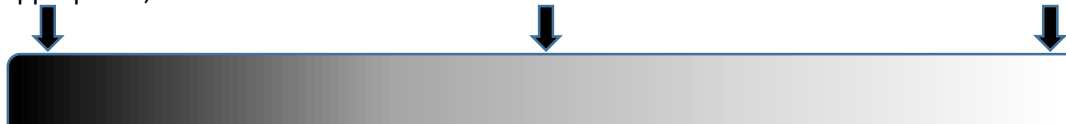
There may be some activities or areas that came up in the group discussion that do not fall into the lists below: the ideas given below have helped growth in other places, but you may have better ideas for your church and your local area! Add new ideas as an extra area into the broad group that feels most appropriate (but not more than one or two per group – don't swamp the sheets). Aim to have no more than 6 or 7 ideas per group.

On each broad group sheet, mark the aspects of church life as 'we do this', 'we could do more of this' 'this is not appropriate in our situation'. Challenge anything that you want to stop: why?

Not appropriate, no thanks...

We do this

More of this...



The exercise can be done in small groups by marking personal points on the sheets, rather than trying to get a consensus. To explore the lists any group, and especially in a larger, congregational group, use large copies of each of the pages and offer 'sticky spots' for everyone to vote where they think the charge may be. Everyone should have a spot to place on every bar.

Worshipping together

Regular sacramental worship (and not just in the church?)



Lay led worship



Feast days and 'special' services



Regular ecumenical worship



Home communions for the sick and housebound



Meeting together

Bible study



Small groups for theological reflection, prayer etc.



Social and fund-raising events



Lay leaders trained and supported



Welcoming planned for all ages & comers



Reaching Out

Known about and relevant in the local community

Bring friends to church events & services

Church presence outside: advertising, website, social media, etc.

Ecumenical projects

Discussions/collections for special appeals, justice, poverty

Spiritual Growth

Prayer groups



Prayer/study resources available



Quiet days, pilgrimages & retreats



Church open for prayer in the day



Pastoral care by priest / lay visitors



‘Our Mission’ (Step 5)

Step 4 will have produced a feel for where you are, where you could now go and how the congregation feel about this. This will now be turned into a simple plan.

In some or all of the four areas above: worship, meeting, building bridges and spiritual growth, pick areas where ‘**more of this...**’ has lots of spots.

Identify achievable actions that would help to give ‘more of this...’

The areas above are deliberately rather high level and non-specific so in discussion in the vestry or a smaller group, work out at least one specific thing that could be done. For each of these ideas, the plan should identify who would take on part of an activity, when and where it could happen and a plan to review it in the future. If it would cost money to put on the activity, this should also be thought about.

An example might be a desire for more social and fundraising events such as starting a simple regular shared meal. The plan would cover the specifics of what it would be like, whether it was intended to raise money or not, how often it would happen, who would look after what aspect of it and so on.

Some more examples are given in the following sample mission plan document.

Plans can become complicated, as anyone who has worked in an area that requires planning documents knows. ‘Our Mission’ is intended to encourage a simple and straightforward approach to some very specific mission planning. A clear and simple plan will make it easier to encourage people to understand and to take on new initiatives. You will find a blank template below the sample plan.

The plan should be a ‘live’ set of ideas. Feel free to drop things that aren’t working and try new ideas instead. The diocesan officers (Alison Clark and Dean Andrew) would like to see a copy of the plan, but the plan is for **you** and your church.

From the ‘steps’ page above, this is a reminder of the timescale:

Agree and complete plan	by 31 December 2015
Send copy to the Dean and CDO	by 31 January 2016
Celebrate ‘Our Mission’	At Synod 2016

Contact Alison (alisonclark52@gmail.com) for any help or guidance, or to arrange for help with running the 5 step process.

Sample mission plan for: **St Mungo's, Isle of Muck**

Worshipping together	<p>Action: Try a one-off 'pop-up' eucharist in the Muck Hotel, summer 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violet to 1) contact the hotel and find a date that would be suitable and 2) check when the Reverend McDonald will be on the island and available • Bill to contact St Margaret's Arran to get advice on running this sort of service • Flora to put advertisement in the Muck Observer and to out notices in the shop and hotel. Also to chat to other churches to see if they might be interested. • When it has happened, we will decide in autumn 2015 if we want to do it again, if it might be regular, seasonal etc.
Meeting together	<p>Action: Start a monthly soup lunch in the church annex, raising money by donations for the Muck Food Bank. It will start in January 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flora will arrange invitations for the other churches and posters in the shop & hotel. • Bill will arrange a rota of soup makers and soups each month. • Jean will check that the soup urn and catering equipment is all OK – she has a food hygiene certificate so will make sure that all volunteers are briefed on hygiene and safety. • We will review this in March 2016 to see how it is going.
Reaching Out	<p>Action: Offer to write a church column for the Muck Observer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George to contact the Muck Observer in April 2015 to offer a monthly column of comment on local issues from a church perspective. • Violet to sound out possible writers as 'volunteers.' • Violet to write some sample copy and meet with other volunteers to discuss a rota and copy style. • If the offer is take up, review in February 2016 if it is manageable and seems to be working.
Spiritual Growth	<p>Action: St Mungo's quiet day on Iona in autumn 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean to contact Iona venues (Bishops' House, Abbey) for availability for a quiet day with an overnight stay – by April. • Jean to contact potential quiet day leader (she has a contact that may work) – by April. • Violet to make a leaflet and poster for the congregation and announce at services, requesting expressions of interest – by August 2015. • Violet to manage list of who wishes to attend, payment of accommodation deposits etc. • Review in January 2016 to make sure numbers will work. • Review a month after the quiet day to see if we will repeat it and what lessons have been learned.

Mission plan for:

Worshipping together	Action:
Meeting together	Action:
Reaching Out	Action:
Spiritual Growth	Action: