

PPC ACTION PLAN SEPT 2022 – DEC 2024

**This Action Plan has been written to address the parish responses to the Synod questions presented to the parish in relation to; Communion, Participation, Mission, Holy Spirit.
It does this holistically, acknowledging the findings in the diocesan summary document while also addressing the responses made concerning the parish of Drummaul.**

“The views expressed, both in the in-person meetings and the remote submissions, were not uniform but they do reflect the diversity in our church, they give witness to the life experiences of our people and express the heartfelt love for the Church; a love that is expressed through challenge, compassion and care.” *Diocese of Down and Connor: For a Synodal Church*

This Parish Council acknowledges the responses made by the parish to the Synod questions and through this action plan will now begin to address the key points made by the parish.

The Parish Response and a Summary of the Diocese Report

Communion: Who finds welcome and who might feel left out?

Parish - Most responses here revolved around the need for tolerance and acceptance of people regardless as to their background, their personal circumstances some of which are beyond their control. The church needs to make allowances for the fact that we are only human and we all make mistakes. Comments included that the Catholic Church should be opening its doors and welcoming everyone.

“The issue of belonging resonated deeply and was spoken of and written about very often and very strongly. Many people find the Church to be a place of real belonging and a spiritual home where they have been cared for, nurtured and challenged to grow in faith. Throughout the synodal moments, people were conscious of those who were not in the room; it was with compassion that they recognised that the number of people from different ethnicities, younger people, and working families was low and that the synodal experience was poorer for this. There was a resounding desire to respond to the call of Pope Francis to be with people on the margins; the homeless, people suffering from addictions, the poor, and the lonely but uncertain of how to make those connections. Many recognised that the Church is for everyone as we are all sinners but that “there is an impression that the church is for the faithful, goodie-two-shoes.”

Overwhelmingly, the people who contributed to the synodal process expressed a desire for the Church to be more welcoming of people in general, and to acknowledge;

- **people from the LGBTQ+ community**

- Divorced and remarried people who are mentioned often.
- Other people responded to the synod question on communion stating that Church teaching is clear and those who felt they did not belong to the Church were excluding themselves by their decisions about sex and relationships. This was a minority!
- LGBTQ+ community - their faith is fundamental to who they are and it comes with a lot of hurt when they are being excluded or not welcome.
- Parents of children who identify as LGBTQ+ spoke of the Church not recognising their children as equal. One parent said that the Church should embrace its brokenness in welcoming all people without exclusion.
- People with learning disabilities and their families want to be included in the activities of the Church and to have opportunities to take on meaningful roles within the Church. Accessibility should not be simply a tick box exercise and should include things like easy read publications, support with transport, signing of hymns, and specially adapted services. Being part of groups such as Spred was important. Receiving Holy Communion and the Sacraments emerged as crucial for people with disabilities as it is in the reception of the sacraments that they feel close to God.
- There was a call for specific programmes on disability and deaf awareness.
- People commented on the importance of the Sunday Mass in our lives and how the pandemic had made this more obvious. They see it as an opportunity for joy-filled liturgy, compelling preaching and an opportunity for reverence and gratitude for Christ truly present in the Eucharist.

Diocese of Down and Connor: For a Synodal Church

Participation: How is dialogue and participation in the life of the church enabled and how is it hindered?

Parish - There was quite a range of responses here – from relating to the parish but also to looking at the way forward for the Church. Comments included that priests are too isolated and this needs to be addressed while others suggested women need to be need to be ordained as well and allowed to participate fully in church ministry. The Church needs to make use of social media – because that is where our young people are! Other comments include encouraging people to get more involved in the ministry of their church - as readers, joining the choir, becoming Eucharistic ministers.

There was a deep recognition that by virtue of our Baptism God calls all of us to service. There was recognition of the diversity of vocations in the Church and gratitude for those vocations lived well.

- **Acknowledgement of the work of Priests who have encouraged participation as a faith community as well as encouraging participation in lay roles. Some comments that Priests need to step back more!**
- **Deacons welcomed and Ordination of women something to be considered. Leadership by women in local church to be considered.**
- **Language used within the scriptures and prayers are too difficult and need to be more accessible – too complex.**
- **Use of social media is essential.**
- **Nurturing people in their faith journey is not just the responsibility of the Priest – the role of lay minister is equally important.**
- **People miss the role of functioning committees/organisations within their parish especially seeing how successful they are elsewhere.**
- **Recognition of the importance of safeguarding in parishes is acknowledged.**

Diocese of Down and Connor: For a Synodal Church

Mission: What enables or hinders us in speaking up for the Gospel?

Parish - A whole range of responses here – the scriptures are too difficult to follow, nothing is child friendly and young people don't understand their relevance. Other comments that young people are not listening and young parents are not encouraging them to do so. Some commented that the modern world hinders us in our mission because we are afraid of being laughed at or made fun of. One comment was that the church is being challenged by society and forced to give up our beliefs for a more secular lifestyle. Scandals also make it difficult to encourage people in their faith.

There is a desire to belong to a Church that deepens our love of Christ, feeds our deep desire to know more about our faith, and readies us for mission in a more secular world.

- **People spoke of their love of their Church and it's importance in their life journey.**
- **Pastoral care given by Priests commented on.**
- **Recognition of the need for Pastoral care in care settings.**
- **The Church should be able to go to the people when they are unable to go to the church.**
- **Secularism means that people are uncomfortable talking about their faith.**
- **A strong call for Adult faith development.**
- **A strong need to feel part of a community that supports and encourages those who wish to grow in their faith.**
- **Church activity too centred around the retired and elderly – another approach needed/ being more creative in organising events/services.**
- **Many recognise the personal responsibility we each have to enhance our own communities – see a need- fill a need!**

- **Acknowledgement of the work of local and world wide charities. Need to show more appreciation of the work done at a local level – current difficult circumstances.**
- **More opportunities to learn about other faith communities was considered important especially in the Protestant faith where there is so much emphasis and knowledge of the scriptures.**
- **More opportunities to meet with those from a variety of Christian traditions to discuss the role of the churches in working for the common good in society.**

Diocese of Down and Connor: For a Synodal Church

The Holy Spirit: What steps is the Holy Spirit calling us all to take at this time?

Parish Responses revolved around encouraging us to keep our faith, to pass it on to the younger generations, to love one another. One commented that we are being asked to open our hearts and minds to a rapidly changing world and to address that faith with courage and determination to take the Church forward. Another comment was that we need to stand firm in our faith and gently and slowly encourage people to return to their faith. We need to be kind and supportive towards one another. The holy spirit is calling us to listen, to love and to move forward together as a Christ centred community.

As a diocese, the Holy Spirit is prompting us to find new and dynamic ways for everyone to encounter the love of God in the world in which we find ourselves today.

Next Steps

In reflecting on Communion, Participation and Mission there are five areas of priority for the Diocese to discern further and to make concrete proposals for adoption in the life of the Diocese.

The five areas identified are;

1. **Encountering God's Love** – We will equip each person to deepen their spiritual lives, through vibrant liturgy, faith development programmes, and gathering for fellowship, prayer and worship. Special care required to ensure that programmes are created for families with young children, people with disabilities, socio-economic difficulties and different ethnicities. **a,b,d,e,h**
2. **God calls us to serve together** – Everyone is gifted, everyone is called – we all have a vital part to play in the life of the Church. We will work together to create structures, pathways and opportunities which enable us to build a vibrant and sustainable faith community where vocations of all are recognised, supported and valued. **c,d,e,f,i**
3. **Being a Church where everyone can find belonging** – we must commit to ensuring that our parish extend Christ's loving embrace to everyone no matter where they find themselves on life's journey. We will encourage respectful dialogue and pastoral accompaniment as each of us strives to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. **d,e,f,h**
4. **Being an authentic witness in the world** – We are committed to sharing the teachings of Christ so that with transformed hearts and guided by the living word of God we make our choices to live in respectful relationships with people and the planet. We will put our faith into action, working in partnership with other churches and faiths, to create a just, equitable and sustainable world for all. **b,c,e,f,g,i**
5. **Our Church as a loving family** - We are committed to journeying with people through all stages of their lives – helping them to encounter Christ, offering supportive, creative and appealing opportunities for everyone to engage with the Church. **All**

As a Parish Council we have identified a number of areas which we believe need to be a focus moving forward as a result of the parish responses to the synodal questions;

- a. More opportunity for prayer, including the Rosary and the Reflections -" more like this please!" – **1, 5**
- b. Create opportunities for people to learn more about their faith – **1, 4, 5**
- c. The church needs to reach out and connect with our local community – **3,4**

- d. People need opportunities to get involved - including our young people - involve the schools, any groups working with young people -2,3
- e. Get in touch with the digital age - mass online should continue; website, facebook, twitter etc - "that's where our young people are!" Communication needs to improve – 2,3.
- f. More opportunities to meet and socialise -make more use of our parish centre-1,5
- g. Introduce sign language in the church – the Priest cannot be heard in the church – 1,2.
- h. Create opportunities for people to voice their opinions/ideas - 2.
- i. Bring back the Children's Liturgy. 1, 5

Breaking this down into –

-More opportunities for prayer

-More opportunities to learn

-More opportunities to socialise as a parish faith community.

-Improve Communication throughout the parish – including the possibility of sign language/sound system

-More opportunities to connect with our local community

-More opportunities for parish feedback

ALSO Consider – being eco-friendly – what can we do to help our planet?

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL ACTION PLAN –September 2022-Dec 2024

Areas where there needs to be a focus. <i>What do we want to achieve?</i>	Success Criteria <i>How will we know if we have been successful?</i>	Actions to bring about improvement <i>What are we going to do?</i>	Resources needed <i>What resources are needed?</i>	Members taking responsibility <i>Who will be involved?</i>	Dates for Completion. <i>Can a completion date be included or is this ongoing?</i>	Final Review
1. More opportunity for prayer.	<p>The Arrangement of opportunities for prayer as a parish, including Advent and Lenten reflections.</p> <p><i>This has been successful as this is something which is now an established part of active prayer in our parish.</i></p>	Plan and implement a series of reflections after Mass on Tuesday nights	A series of resources will need to be prepared and delivered for each of these reflections.	All members of the ppc will be involved with various members taking ownership at different times	This will be ongoing once implemented.	<p>Advent, Lenten reflections in place. Stations of the cross.</p> <p>Also - Rosary Group Adoration Prayer Group Divine Mercy Legion of Mary. These groups exist within our parish creating opportunities for prayer.</p>
2. More opportunity to learn	<p>As a Parish Council we are looking at opportunities to lead learning through scripture. <i>This has been successful to</i></p>	We will source materials from the Living Church. We will consider what is available there and decide what resources/learning programmes will	Any materials/resources available from the Living Church will be adapted as/if necessary to be more accessible for all.	<p>LP MS EH MB CD Will take the lead on resourcing materials for</p>	This will be ongoing as we continuously look at what programmes and materials are available to us from Pathways	<p>Lectio Divina The Seven Joys of Mary <i>Further development – Children's liturgy GIFT Bible study</i></p>

	<i>some extent as we have implemented the use of new resources available from the Living Church to look at pieces of scripture after mass during lent and advent as well as implementing the use of scripture to lead reflections during evening mass.</i>	be of use/interest to our parish faith community		learning and delivery of.		
3. More opportunity to socialise as a parish faith community	We understand the importance of creating opportunities to meet and socialise and we will address this by organising a “Welcoming Sunday” after Sunday mass at regular intervals as well as creating an opportunity to allow the various groups within our	We will source opportunities and create events to allow our parish faith community to meet and socialise.	Links to the various organisations which exist within our parish. Meetings with other groups who have ran social events before.	All members will be involved in sourcing opportunities and linking with groups already working within the parish.	This will be ongoing.	Bi-annual Guest Tea Bi-annual promotion weekend Bingo Line Dancing Welcoming Sunday Thursday morning tea after mass. Foodbank

	<p>parish faith community to advertise and promote their organisation over a weekend after the masses. We will also seek other opportunities such as Bingo, Line Dancing, Guest Tea events to create opportunities for meeting.</p>					
<p>4. Improve Communication throughout the parish</p>	<p>The Parish Council recognises the need for communication to improve throughout the parish. We will seek to establish a new website and make more use of Facebook. We will seek to determine who looks after our Facebook page.</p>	<p>We will use the skills, knowledge and expertise which exists within our parish council to create and improve opportunities for communication throughout the parish.</p>	<p>Computer access and ICT skills. Photography and background information referencing the parish are essential to get started. A breakdown of areas to be accessed on the website will also need to be considered.</p>	<p>A Sub Group will be established to look at our use of social media; MMK MW MS MME EH will look at this area.</p>	<p>The maintenance and updating of social media means that this area will be ongoing with one or two members of the ppc having to take ownership for this area.</p>	<p>Website established and use of social media to be developed</p>

	<p><i>Success will be determined by the establishment of a new website. We will design this website together based on what we see on other parish websites.</i></p>					
<p>5. More opportunities to connect with our local community</p>	<p>Randalstown is a thriving and busy town with several active churches with a range of denominations. We will seek opportunities to meet and pray together using events such as “Songs of Praise” as well as carol services to meet and socialise together. We will also look at the various cross community groups and organisations which exist within the area and seek opportunities to meet.</p>	<p>We will use the links and contacts we have already established within our local community to create opportunities to connect with other churches and organisations already existing here.</p>	<p>These are mainly human resources where relationships are already established.</p>	<p>All members of the parish council will be actively involved.</p>	<p>This area will be ongoing. As a parish faith community we will always look for opportunities to connect with the other churches within Randalstown.</p>	<p>Foodbank Carol service/songs of praise. Tidy Randalstown Historical society. Church Unity Week</p>

	<i>Success will be determined by several events taking place, the number in attendance and the type of feedback received afterwards.</i>					
6. More opportunities for parish feedback	This remains an area for development, but the parish will be asked to provide feedback on the parish website.	We will request feedback from the parish as and when it is considered necessary – in preparation for and after events, following the launch of social media platforms and at any other time considered necessary.	Members assistance to create opportunities for feedback – feedback forms, paperwork, posters etc.	All members will be involved.	This will be ongoing.	Parish survey carried out at time of synod used to create this Parish Pastoral plan. Parish survey used to feedback on the parish website.
7. How can we become more eco-friendly as a parish?	This remains an area for development			Season of creation attended by JMK		Recycling, use of bins, posters around church to encourage responsibility

						Eco group to be established.