

First Larne Presbyterian Church Congregational Mission Plan 2010 to 2015

Introduction

The family which is First Larne Presbyterian Church “Our Congregation”

As one of the oldest Presbyterian congregations in Ireland we value the tradition of Gospel service to our community passed on to us. Our forbearers responded faithfully and imaginatively to the challenges of their generation, and we strive to emulate their example.

We are a congregation whose confidence comes from an established history and a present dependence on the inspiration and vision of the Holy Spirit. We fully realise that we dishonour our past if we attempt to survive on the spiritual and material capital of previous generations.

Therefore we are constantly seeking to respond to God’s call and direction for us.

As a congregation in the Reformed tradition we seek to affirm the authenticity, relevance and challenge of God’s Word for our community and world. We also celebrate in our worship and weekly programme, the diversity God has given to His people.

The central feature of our congregational life is our celebration of worship on Sunday to which everyone is made welcome.

First Larne - Everyone is made welcome



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The Mission Planning process in First Larne

The General Assembly of our Presbyterian Church in Ireland has called each Congregation and each grouping of congregations within a Presbytery to clarify and refocus their mission through the development of a MISSION STRATEGY PLAN.

The members of Kirk Session led by our Minister Rev Dr Colin McClure and supported by assistants Linda Keys and Richard Houston have devoted much prayer and considerable time at meetings, in Session conference and personally to discern the direction we believe God is calling us to take in our Congregational Mission Plan.

We have benefited from the "Tell It Again" resources made available by the PCI Board of Mission in Ireland and from the encouragement, support and prayers of our colleagues in the Carrickfergus Presbytery.

Working Groups were established within our congregation to consider the different areas highlighted by the Board of Mission in Ireland, namely the WHY, WHO, WHERE, WHAT & WHEN of mission and mission planning.

One working group carried out research into the age, employment profile and particular needs of the districts of the Larne area in which our church members live. They researched government statistics and public records, consulted with representatives of neighbouring congregations and analysed a survey of community needs distributed throughout our congregation.



Special Sunday services throughout 2009 and 2010 focused on mission and mission planning. Through these our ministers and working group members engaged with and listened to members of our congregation and visitors as together we worked through key aspects of developing a mission plan for our congregation.

A Vision, Mission and Values summary developed as part of this process was distributed to members of our congregation during April 2010 and this has provided the framework around which our mission plan has been formed.

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During March and April 2010 over four Sunday evenings in our Coffee Bar / Room 4 venue, our evening service took the form of a more informal time of worship after which we broke into discussion groups to consider and respond to questions about our congregation and what God is calling us to do. These times were particularly valuable as young people and their youth leaders participated fully alongside those of older age groups. Comments and feedback from these evenings recorded by Richard Houston, our student assistant have been invaluable in the development of our mission plan.

A mission planning group made up of our working group convenors and our minister, Rev Dr Colin McClure prepared the text of our mission plan based on the information and feedback received during this process.

A draft Congregational Mission Plan was discussed with David Thompson, Mission Development Officer with PCI Board of Mission in Ireland in early May 2010 and his helpful comments noted.

The draft plan and our priorities in mission were prayerfully considered by Kirk Session members and the Mission Plan of First Larne Congregation for 2010 to 2015 approved in May 2010.

Against individual points, we have indicated our target timescale and whether financial implications are involved. Some items can be completed quickly with little expense and already a number are underway within our congregation. We expect to further prioritise the practical steps indicated and realise that we may need to carry forward items which cannot be completed within the target timescale.

This is OUR WORKING MISSION PLAN and is presented to the Convenor of the Carrickfergus Presbytery Mission Planning Group as such. This plan is to be launched to First Larne Congregation in September 2010.

***"OUR WORKING MISSION PLAN
FOR 2010 TO 2015"***

First Larne Presbyterian Church Congregational Mission Plan

2010 to 2015

WHAT GOD IS CALLING US TO DO IN MISSION

A. CHALLENGES

As we have prayerfully reflected on the stories of God's mission, the life and witness of our congregation, the needs of our community, and opportunities for wider involvement in mission we discern God challenging us concerning:

A1. BEING A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH FAMILY, WORSHIPPING AND SERVING TOGETHER

Practical steps

- Resourcing fully our services of worship including musical direction, choir, praise group, ministers and all others involved in leading worship.
- Considering the best way for our Evening worship on Sundays to complement, rather than duplicate Morning Worship.
- Including in our worship services regular opportunities for those of all ages to share their stories of service and witness.
- Developing our ability to regularly record our services and distribute recordings to members unable to attend.

A2. CHALLENGING APATHY AND COMPLACENCY IN OUR CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY

Practical steps

- Providing up to date, relevant and accessible information about our congregation and our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ including invitations to our services and activities to the many people from our community who use our premises each week.

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- b. Taking a survey of our congregation to assist our mission planning and help identify needs, gifts and talents amongst our members.
- c. Developing new publicity opportunities and materials to better engage those of all ages with what First Larne has to offer. Re-establish our Communications Group to take this forward.
For example:
- i. Creative publicity for youth ministry including BB, GB, Guides, FLY (First Larne Youth), STOP (Summer Teenage Outreach Programme), Youth Club, Sunday School & Bible Class.
 - ii. Attractive invitations to our growing Parent and Toddler group.
 - iii. Publicity outlining opportunities for senior citizens.

A3. BEING RECOGNISED AS A WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY CONGREGATION

Practical steps

- a. Ensuring that our church buildings, activities and worship services are made as accessible as possible to all who may attend.
- b. Developing and resourcing our Welcome Team, identifying a co-ordinator and including a broader range of members regularly involved.
- c. Developing and maintaining up-to-date Welcome Packs for visitors and new members.
- d. Researching ways of making welcome packs and other church material easily available through our www.firstlarne.org.uk website.

A4. DEVELOPING OUR OUTREACH TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Practical steps

- a. Resourcing our community outreach including Community Fun Night, Nightlight ministry and Youth and Children's Ministry with our prayers, our finance and our practical support.
- b. Further developing our website www.firstlarne.org.uk as a means of sharing both

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Christ's love and the vibrant story of our church family.

- c. Making recordings of our services regularly available through our website www.firstlarne.org.uk and by other electronic means.
- d. Updating church signs welcoming people to 'First Larne' taking into account our mission statement when adopted.
- e. Investigate the possibility of additional daytime opportunities and new volunteers who may be long-term unemployed or retired. For example: friendship club, community lunch and / or lunchtime group.
- f. Building on our new initiative taking an evening congregation out in teams to sing Christmas Carols in local care homes, nursing facilities, sheltered housing and with our neighbours in the Tullygarley area.

B. TO RISE TO THAT CHALLENGE WE BELIEVE GOD IS DIRECTING US TO THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE MISSION

B1. PROVIDING A CALL TO FAITH AND GROWTH IN DISCIPLESHIP

Practical steps

- a. Encouraging and resourcing our Sunday Schools and Bible Classes to enable them to fulfil their full potential for mission.
- b. Encouraging new communicant membership of our congregation.
- c. Assessing how our programmes and activities meet the aims of our Mission Statement being developed.

B2. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW IN DISCIPLESHIP, COMMITMENT AND SERVICE

Practical steps

- a. Resourcing and developing our recently established small groups' ministry to enable it to

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play an increasing role in the outreach and service of our congregation.

- b. Developing our eldership team through the election of new members, providing training for elders and investigating fellowship events including an elders' dinner.
- c. Developing a skills register to enable our members to better use their gifts and talents in the work and witness of our congregation.
 - For example: identify members who are long-term unemployed or early retired and encourage them to consider how they can offer time to their church.

B3. DEVELOPING STRONGER LINKS WITH OUR SISTER CONGREGATIONS

Practical steps

- a. Identifying mission opportunities and making practical plans with sister congregations and other Christian organisations when working together will enable us to achieve something in mission that we could not manage on our own.
- b. Building on the good relationships with Larne Methodist and St. Cedma's Church of Ireland congregations developed through our joint Boys' Brigade Company which meets in First Larne halls.
- c. Developing further our relationships with sister congregations in the Carrickfergus Presbytery and in particular with Gardenmore, Craigyhill and Cairncastle congregations.
- d. Investigating the possibility of shared worship services, for example, community praise on Sunday evenings with an attractive format and encourage members to invite friends and neighbours to attend.

B4. CREATIVELY INVOLVING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WORK AND WITNESS OF OUR CONGREGATION

Practical steps

- a. Including our young people more often in working groups including as Collectors, Audio Visual team and Welcome Team members.

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- b. Encouraging younger members to be involved more regularly in leading, praying, singing, speaking and sharing in our services of worship.
- c. Investigating “Growing Leaders” and similar resources and take an appropriate programme forward to enable our young people and young adults to be more fully involved in the work and witness of First Larne.
- d. Developing opportunities to listen to and learn from our young people and involve them more in decision making within our congregation.
- e. Finding ways of supporting our young people and young adults more fully including prayer and finance as they serve on mission teams and projects.

**C. AS A CONCRETE OUTWORKING OF
GOD’S CHALLENGE AND DIRECTION
WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO TAKING
THE FOLLOWING STEPS IN MISSION**

C1. PRAYER

We aim to be a congregation with our foundation in prayer.

Practical steps

- a. Promoting our newly established prayer diary and distributing this widely to our congregation around 10 times per year.
- b. Encouraging greater use of the annual PCI Points for Prayer booklet.
- c. Encouraging more regular use of weekly prayer updates including from PCI Board of Mission in Ireland and PCI Board of Mission Overseas and investigating link from www.firstlarne.org.uk
- d. Developing prayer through our small group ministry including prayer fellowship.

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- e. Establishing new opportunities for prayer ministry available to respond to prayer requests. These may include prayer triplets, telephone prayer links and using technology available including texting, tweets and facebook.

C2. STEWARDSHIP OF ALL OUR RESOURCES INCLUDING OUR TIME, OUR TALENTS, OUR FINANCES AND OUR CHURCH COMPLEX

Practical steps : see appropriate section for priority

- a. See development of Skills register.
- b. See further development of our church website.
- c. See section involving young people more.
- d. Working well with Congregational Committee.
- e. Maintaining our church complex as an effective base for the mission of our congregation.

C3. DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT FOR OUR CONGREGATION AND SHARING THIS WIDELY

Practical steps

Developing with our congregation a mission statement for First Larne and sharing this widely. Agreeing on what “Mission” means for our congregation will enable us to go forward in a meaningful way, better prioritising competing demands on the time and resources of our congregation.

C4. REVIEWING PROGRESS

Practical steps

Developing our mission strategy is a continuing process. We commit to reviewing progress on our mission plan at least annually over the period 2010 to 2015 and refining our mission plan and priorities in the light of these reviews.

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Appendix A
First Larne “WHY” Mission Working Group

Why Mission?

The Bible’s story of God’s mission to the world.

Jesus’ command:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” *Matthew 28 v 19*

Jesus’ promise:

“Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28 v 20

Our Task:

God calls us in First Larne to share His love with our neighbours both near and far as part of what He is doing in Jesus to redeem and restore the world.

John 20 v 21 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'
2 Corinthians 5 v 14 'For Christ’s love compels us...'

Our response:

2 Corinthians 5 v 20 'We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors...'

As Christ’s ambassadors we go out from the ends of the pew to the ends of the earth to all who need Christ’s love in the way God has shown us in Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Appendix B

First Larne “WHAT” Mission Working Group

Initial report – November 2009

At the Session Conference in September the goals and objectives of the working group were laid out and covered the following areas:

- To help others come into a personal relationship with God in Christ
- To help our community to experience the benefits of living under God’s rule in Christ
- To help restore lives and communities broken by the harmful effects of sin from which Christ came to redeem them.

It is important that all working group initiatives pull together and input will be required from all groups as we progress on this journey to ensure that a shared vision for our Church is agreed.

The following initial thoughts will form the basis for discussion within the working group as we begin to formulate our thinking.

- Agreement on a Church mission statement for First Larne. Only if we all agree on what “Mission” means to us can we go forward in a meaningful way.
- “Mission” should be a combination of people being confronted with the Gospel message in a way which leads to salvation, creating the environment to promote discipleship to Christians of all ages and at all stages of their walk with God and the Church offering a place of solace to those in need.
- Our Mission should not be focused solely on those currently attending worship on a regular basis, but must include our members who attend infrequently and indeed the wider community / people who have no attachment to any church.

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Appendix C

First Larne “WHERE” Mission Working Group

LOCAL CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Some statistics which have assisted us in our mission planning process:

- **2001 – population of Larne = 30 832**
- **2001 – 22% of Larne residents were aged under 16. (6783 people)**
- **2001 – 20% of Larne residents were aged over 60. (6166 people)**
- **2006 – 358 babies born, 162 to unmarried mothers.**
- **2007 – 38.4% of working age adults classed as long-term unemployed.**

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Appendix D

CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN

Following the Special Meeting of Presbytery in January 2009, the presentation of the Strategy For Mission Group report, and the discussion and comments on it, the group has held further meetings and offers this document for adoption as the Presbytery Mission Plan.

UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

There are many different understandings of what the term 'Mission' means, even within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Board of Mission in Ireland has a particular understanding, perhaps summed up in the BMI Vision statement: 'To create vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland.' We can all readily assent to that, yet each Presbytery, including Carrickfergus, and each congregation within a Presbytery will have different understandings of the theology of mission and therefore of our goals in mission and motivation for mission. We observe that within our congregations there are many whose theology of mission (often unformulated, but not the less real for that) is founded on a sense of innate human goodness rather than original sin, salvation by works, rather than by grace through faith in Christ, and human free will rather than the sovereignty of God. And this is despite faithful preaching of the gospel week by week by our ministers. This theology leads to seeing mission as getting people involved in church life and improving our statistics, and it is not surprising that this fails to motivate. There are, of course, those in all our congregations who understand that man is a fallen creature unable to secure salvation outside of the grace of God in Christ and, who have, therefore a zeal for Christ and a desire for the salvation of souls. But that desire and zeal do not by and large *characterise* our congregations. In order, therefore, to avoid thinking of a Mission Plan as simply the formulation of new initiatives with no tangible outcome, we need to see that desire and zeal more widespread among our people, and that in turn must come through greater dependence on the Holy Spirit and greater commitment to prayer.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In East Antrim, new housing development has largely shielded us from the effects of the worst aspects of growing secularism. Most congregations, even most in rural situations, have benefited from an influx of people into these new houses, and our statistics, while showing some decline, are relatively steady with some showing increase in attendance. Some of these new residents are commuters with little local interest and most congregations note the growth in secular attitudes and disinterest in the Church – we need the appropriate tools to engage in mission with these people. Some other families have an interest in our children's and social activities. As far as making connection with the gospel goes, we are least successful with two groups. One is the 15-30 age group: many on this group who would once have re-connected with the church after marriage and the birth of children are no longer doing so and some of this is due to the secularisation of society which rejects many of the moral teaching of the church. The other group is those who formerly would have been called 'working class' who live in public housing estates dominated to a large (but thankfully diminishing) extent by paramilitary groups. Another group, not greatly represented in our congregations is those who belong to migrant communities, but they are a very small proportion of the East Antrim population.

At the same time valuable work is being done by all the churches and many people are

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engaged in work which clearly involves 'outreach'. A considerable number give many hours to children's work and to that of youth organisations which seek to attract all in the area, regardless of religious affiliation or social background, and there are leisure organisations, such as indoor bowling clubs and badminton clubs which have an eye to drawing in the outsider. A few congregations have done fresh and imaginative thinking about mission activity but by and large in our Presbytery this is an exception.

Summary Sheet

April 15th 2009.

Feedback from individual congregations about draft plan, especially congregations who did not return the original questionnaire.

May 2009.

Final version of the Presbytery Mission Plan.

June 2009.

BMI feedback from other Presbytery Mission Plans.

October – December 2009

A Presbytery programme for Training, Motivating and Resourcing, with support and expertise of BMI.

Prayer Co-Ordinator appointed in each congregation.

January 2010.

Establishment of Presbytery Mission Support Group.

March 2010

Congregational Mission Plans

April 2010

Identifying 'on-the-ground' opportunities for Mission by groups of congregations working together in a defined area of the Presbytery – activation of such plans.

By Autumn 2010 at the latest.

Initial implementation of Congregational Mission Plans

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Appendix E

Carrickfergus Presbytery Mission Support Group

THE PRESENT CHALLENGE

Our weaknesses define our challenges. We need to find a way of successfully reaching out to the 15-30 age group, of influencing those living in public housing estates, of engaging with commuters who live in but don't identify with the local community, of discovering and ministering to migrant communities and of countering the growing challenge of a secularism which is becoming more hostile to the Christian faith. We have to ask ourselves how to organise church life so that the outsider coming in will not feel an alien.

Worship services must honour and glorify God, but they must also follow the Scriptural injunction to be intelligible to the outsider. This begins with the appearance of our buildings outside – what do they communicate? It moves on to the welcome received on entering the building – both from people and architecture – and into the service itself. Is it intelligible to someone who is not into church jargon? Can the outsider identify with aspects of worship such as the musical styles used, or are we running a Museum for the Preservation of Mid-Twentieth Century Worship? There is no point alienating existing faithful members of our congregations with needless innovation for its own sake, but if a new generation, raised in a post-modern, mobile, visual, and technological age, is to be drawn in under the sound of the gospel, then zeal for Christ and a desire for the salvation of souls must lead those very members not just to acquiesce in change that will facilitate this, but actually to desire it. Otherwise we fall into one of the sins of old Israel, which is keeping God for ourselves and not sharing Him with the lost.

We observe that it is not ministers, by and large, who resist creative change – rather they embrace it – and that increasingly Kirk Sessions are grasping this vision, but that there are still too many influential members who, like Hezekiah, want what will do them their day, with no concern for the future when they are gone. This undermines something which is at the heart of our Reformed Faith, viz.: covenant theology. We ask the members of all the congregations within our Presbytery to consider seriously the implications of the vows they themselves make when parents present their infant children for baptism. There is also the invitation test: are the services we organise such that our members will feel confident in inviting outsiders to them without embarrassment? We present also the challenge of aiming in our worship services at both saving the sinner and teaching the saint, and urge Ministers and Kirk Sessions to think creatively about how this can happen, and in particular how the 'Evening Service' slot can complement, rather than duplicate Morning Worship.

While we have given a lot of space to worship services, there is much more to 'church life' than this. How much is mission to the locations where we are an intentional part of what happens during the week? Some congregations have moved from a traditional mid-week, itself a reflection of an evening service which duplicated morning worship to small groups. Is there a further step that needs to be taken in that the needs of the communities in which we are located are identified, understood, and then, in so far as we are gifted and it is appropriate, met in the name of Jesus Christ? And that, not to evangelise by stealth, but simply to love as we have been loved.

However, if congregations are lacking a significant number of people who have a zeal for Christ and a desire for the salvation of souls then they will not be ready for mission and are not in a position to implement a meaningful outreach programme. Understanding the nature of the

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church is also vital so that members can understand that mission to the world is an activity in which the whole congregation must be involved, not just ministers, those elders who have a particular passion for it, and a few others.

In what follows we set out a strategy for mission in our Presbytery which has 2 main aims:

- a) An on-going strategy for Training, Motivating and Resourcing the congregations of the Presbytery.
- b) Identifying on-the ground opportunities for Mission by individual congregations or by groups of congregations in a defined area of the Presbytery.

An on-going strategy for Training, Motivating and Resourcing.

In September 09, Presbytery will begin a co-ordinated programme of activities which are intended to teach, develop a mission mindset, and envision our members for Mission in the Carrickfergus Presbytery and beyond.

- A Saturday morning Mission Breakfast / Conference for Ministers and Elders held in May.
- The Presbytery Communion Service in early October would have a devotional and motivational Mission focus.
- Mission Teaching and Challenge Material sourced in the BMI guide for the formulation of Congregational Mission Plans which we want all congregations to use in Sunday worship and in other ways over a 6-8 week period between October and Christmas, so that every congregation clearly recognises this as a top priority matter throughout the whole Presbytery.

For each of the elements in this training and envisioning programme, we would require the significant advice, speaker input, and recommended resources of BMI.

Our hope would be that this autumn programme would move many of the members of our congregations from a 'maintenance' to a 'mission' mindset.

- A Presbytery Mission Support Group: We recommend that in order to provide an on-going

support and resource point within Presbytery, the committee for Evangelism and Christian Training should be reorganised into 2 separate committees (in line with the separate BMI and Christian Training Boards at General Assembly level), and that this Mission Support Group which would draw on expertise beyond its own membership, would be available for consultation by local congregations, and might have a role in making more formal contact with congregations to ensure that the mission mindset is active.

- We feel that it would be very helpful and stimulating if BMI was able to provide feedback from other Presbyteries and their Mission Strategy Plans.

Identifying 'on-the-ground' opportunities for Mission by groups of congregations working together in a defined area of the Presbytery.

We believe that congregations within the same general part of the Presbytery area could benefit greatly and be more effective in mission to an increasingly secular community by establishing focus groups to identify mission opportunities and practical plans in their area.

We see the following as likely groupings and strongly recommend that they consult on how they could work together to:

- a) **achieve something in mission that none of them could manage on their own, or**

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b) achieve more in mission than any can alone.

- Ballyclare, Ballylinney, Ballynure (1st and 2nd Ballyeaston would also fall naturally into this area, but are in a different Presbytery)
-
- 1st Carrickfergus, Downshire, Joymount, Woodlands and Greenisland
-
- 1st & 2nd Islandmagee, Whitehead and Ballycarry.

(In the case of the Islandmagees it is recommended that they should intentionally forge close working relationship looking towards a union or amalgamation within the next ten years)

- Craigy Hill, 1st Larne, Gardenmore and Cairncastle
- Loughmorne, Magheramorne, Raloo, Woodburn (And possibly Ballynure since we recognise that they have a rural hinterland as well as growing housing developments in the village.)
- Presbytery will facilitate joint training for initiatives into loyalist public housing in Ballyclare, Carrickfergus, Greenisland, Larne, Whitehead

Recognising the complications caused when congregations are vacant, nonetheless these groupings should meet and report back to Presbytery through the Mission Support Group by Easter 2010, and thereafter about longer term practical plans.

Initial Feedback from individual congregations.

The amount of information received by the Presbytery Mission Plan Team was patchy. However, based on this, and on local knowledge we recommend that individual congregations should use the following ideas to further define, and do something about, the following Mission challenges. These ideas may provide individual congregations with a starting point for the Congregational Mission Plans which they will be drawn up during the coming year, and in which there will almost certainly need to be a two way exchange of information which will enable both Congregational and Presbytery Mission Plans to be more definitive and effective.

BALLYCLARE – make meaningful contact with local housing estates and sports clubs, presenting the gospel in a way that connects

BALLYLINNEY – target the Ballyrobert area, especially the young people, exploring the possibility of establishing a drop-in centre along with Youth For Christ

BALLYNURE – bridge the gap between community and church

CRAIGY HILL – Reach the unchurched and spiritually illiterate in local estates

DOWNSHIRE – Equip and envision all members to reach out to neighbours and friends

GARDENMORE – Reach people where they are in pubs and clubs

GREENISLAND – Develop a strategy for 20-40s

1st ISLANDMAGEE – Build bridges into the community, equipping members to live well in the community

2nd ISLANDMAGEE – Draw in the unchurched (especially in new housing) and the lapsed

CAIRNCASTLE – Break through the competing busyness of people's lives in a way that connects

1st LARNE – Connect nominal members to the worshipping community

MAGHERAMORNE – Develop Mother and Toddlers Group as an effective means of outreach, especially into the new housing development

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RALOO – Reach new housing developments

WHITEHEAD – Connect with young men

WOODBURN & LOUGHMOURNE – Develop the ministry to those who use the forest

It is without question that all our congregations need to meet the challenge of winning young people and young adults for Christ and integrating them into the life of the church.

All congregations are encouraged to use human and other resources available from organisations such as YAC, the YMCA, Youth For Christ, from government and statutory initiatives where appropriate, and through co-operation with other denominations represented in their area.

Further, it isn't enough to attract people to join us and to enter into membership: we must then go on to facilitate their spiritual development and on-going discipleship. This could be through the various evangelism and discipleship courses that are available, and local congregations will need to make this an essential part of their mission plan, and promote them to people in a way that is appropriate to their situation.

The Presbytery Mission Plan Team wants to particularly encourage the following initiatives in mission.

BALLYCARRY – Visiting new housing developments by elders

BALLYCLARE – Mission links with Tullamore & Mountmellick

GARDENMORE – Drop-in centre

1st ISLANDMAGEE - Community Projects

2nd ISLANDMAGEE – Joint Alpha

JOYMOUNT – Special Needs Ministry

WHITEHEAD – Genesis project

As well as the main local mission groupings outlined above, there are potential partnerships between larger and smaller Congregations within Presbytery that could enable resources to be shared and directed to the points of greatest opportunity or need:

- An attempt should be made to co-ordinate GriefShare/Divorce Care initiatives across the Presbytery.
- Joymount should make itself available to help resource other congregations in special needs ministry.
- Congregations which employ additional pastoral personnel should make them available to help resource youth, family and other ministry in other congregations

CONCLUSIONS

Sometimes we excuse our spiritual impotence and failure by saying that all that is required of us is that we should be faithful. We want to add 'fruitful' to 'faithful.' The True Vine statement of our Lord surely teaches the need for fruitfulness arising from abiding in Christ. If we are not being fruitful in mission, in seeing lives saved and changed, we need to discover afresh our resources of power in the Holy Spirit which refreshed and renewed the Church in the past and which are still available today.

We re-iterate the need for prayer and for dependence on the Holy Spirit. Where there is zeal for Christ and a desire for the salvation of souls, action will surely follow.