

Notes from Hospitality Focus Group Wednesday 11 October 2016

Present

Robyn Eastgate-Manning, Trina Laurence, Lois Holmes

Welcoming at the Door

- We thought that a training session for welcomers at the door could be held before the new service commences if possible. The content of this and who would conduct it were uncertain. Need feedback on that.
- Trina remembered the “firm Presbyterian” handshake and wondered if that was something that might help make people feel welcomed. Need more discussion on this and sound boarding
- Need to consider ways of getting details form to new people as they come in rather than leaving it for them to notice and pick up in the pews. Could put it in the newlink but wasteful to give it to everyone. Would people at door recognise new people? Could ask if don't recognise and hand them a form.
- Help new people find a seat and introduce to existing parishioner? How could this be done efficiently and seamlessly?
- The question of whether we should have members of the parish acting as welcomers at the door for funerals was raised. Is this appropriate and feasible?

Food and Fellowship

After Service

- Lunches at church seem to be working – these should be continued as part of the new service initiative even though the time is earlier. Could bill them as brunch?
- Suggestion that people might feel better if they brought some food themselves to share. Consult on whether these should become shared brunches?
- Need to investigate how well the lunches in parishioners' homes are working. If numbers attending are low and small numbers offering to host could we make this monthly instead of fortnightly?

Outside Church

- Suggestion that we extend shared dinners and film evenings beyond Lent event. This was a great success and people felt sorry they ended.
- Could also have ad hoc video evenings where watch a relevant talk and discuss

Reaching Out

- A number of miscellaneous ideas came up about reaching out to the community which we felt linked strongly to hospitality
- We thought there could be a follow up visit to new people by a member of the parish that lived nearby – this is too onerous for clergy to always do so parishioners who are happy to do this could step in
- There was a query about whether “On the Way” had been published this year. This is a good opportunity for deliverers to knock on the door and make contact. Have we got enough people tasked with doing this?
- The past practice of having a Baptismal family support group was raised. Robyn was to talk to Liz Friend who used to organise this. (Robyn has reported back that Liz is intending to reactivate this)
- Something that was closely linked with hospitality was the information available to people when they were new to the church and letting people know in the community what we are about as a church. It was felt that a possibility was to have a good pamphlet available to give to new people and to have them available on a stand in the foyer so people who came to concerts, funerals, weddings or just casual visitors to the church could pick them up. They would need to be in a very visible place like on a separate stand that was unmissable [*this links to the communication focus group so there is a cross-over*]
- Also it was thought that what we do could be promoted more widely – like the great quality of the music, the contemplative service (which might attract people who are not regular worshippers and who are looking for something different.) [*cross over with communication focus group*]
- We should maximise the opportunities to bring the public into the church such as with the concerts, art show and possibly being a venue for the flower festival. Perhaps more co-ordination with City Council?
- Another idea of welcoming people to the church was to investigate opening the foyer once a week for people who wanted to play board games or something similar (perhaps a mini version of Anchorage and similar to what All Saints are doing).

Consultation/Queries

- Who would conduct welcoming at the door training? Various questions about how this would work – appropriate form of greetings, how to get details form to new people, how to best connect new people to existing parishioners?
- Is it appropriate to have parishioners as welcomers at funerals?
- Have we got enough people delivering “On the Way”?
- Feedback on how after service food and fellowship works. What do people like? What would they like to see changed?
- What do people think about “new” hospitality ideas raised - using foyer for fellowship for outsiders once a week, dinner and film evenings – have we got enough resources and enthusiasm?