

Discussion starter questions: a changing church in a changing world

Basic information about our current situation and future trends - present it again, forcefully and clearly and about how the church has adapted to these up until now.

- Consider where we are **now and where we will be in 10-20 years** time.
- People: what is the **membership** in each congregation, the age profile, those actually attending worship, the number of children, young people if any, ...

core tasks - "do less, better": The 3-circle-exercise - write on big paper circles whilst discussing with each other our use of time, our standards, what is really vital core.

1st circle: DOING - what we actually spend our time and energy on, busy 'doing in church':

daily and weekly routines, must-do's, office-holders tasks,

2nd circle: IMPORTANT tasks of church:

expectations of us, seen as important:

3rd circle: VITAL CORE of church = absolutely essential; should we leave one of the core tasks away we would not be church (but e.g. a social club, a sect, ...):

Now compare the three circles: - do our circles overlap, especially with the core?

Some name the 'core' simply as three activities: **praying**/worshipping, **teaching** the faith to others and self (not only as a curriculum but also in hands-on lived ways), **servicing**, in the community and world (e.g. parish funerals, social enterprise, campaigning, ...)

Do you agree these to be our core calling? What would you say?

In future we need to give these priority?!

If you had £30.000.- to spend ...

to enable local church(es) to support new ways of doing church, deepening faith, sharing faith and engaging in the transformation of our communities ... how would you go about it, **what would you do?**

If you felt held back by admin. (complying with OSCR, GDPR, H&S, Safeguarding, Ford, Session, ...) **and someone took it off your shoulders**, doing it for you, and you could actually share the faith in new ways, create new types of worship experiences, be out and about in the community connecting ... what would **you LOVE** to do, ENJOY to do?

If you had the means (space, ideas, material, encouragement) **to** organise and **welcome neighbours, friends, ... to a house meeting** around the table eating or around the fireplace talking or both ...

1. would you do it? Why? Why not?
2. When your guests asked about your faith, or a difficult bible passage, or a life question, how would you go about finding an answer?

Are there any other Christian groups or organisations in your area you think you could do something together with? Who are your church and ecumenical neighbours? And interfaith neighbours?

What education, training and support would you need or benefit from:

1. as congregational leader (elder, minister, ...) ?
2. as 'a person in the pew'?

Name the people under 40 (age 0 to 40 = children and young people) connected with or occasionally seen around your church, or connected somehow.

Now how can you deliberately **engage** with these?

Is there any way you can **support** them?

Maintain personal contact?

Be their friend in their exploring life, life's meaning, spiritual quests?

Some congregations pay more than their own staff and activities cost. **Is it OK** that they **support 'poorer' congregations?**

Would you be happy to sponsor a new or experimental 'church plant' in our area? Even if that 'new church' did not do traditional hymn singing nor formal worship nor feed new members into your own congregation?

More and more 'charges' (congregation or linkage) 'are vacant'. In 2023 around 50% of all 23 charges in Kdy Presbytery will be vacant. Would you be happy to share 'your minister' with the people of other charges? **Would you be ready to see less of your 'own minister' so others have a minister (at times), too?**

Often leading worship and funerals are seen as main tasks of a minister. **When less ministers are available, but there is training / resources / scripts available, could you help with these tasks?**

Are you tired of Kirk Session meetings? Either because you feel too old, or physically struggle? **Would a smaller kirk session be a good thing?** Under what circumstances? What would be needed?

Do your kirk session meeting take time to discuss the elephant in the room? Do you feel frustrated about too many "spiritual matters" or too many "practical matters" taking up time?

Many congregations struggle finding volunteer staff to see to: **buildings, Safeguarding, Financial Accounting, local staff fundraising/ recruiting/employment/management and with Developing Effective Partnerships with community, with other (ecumenical) churches.** Would you welcome regional **support?** Can any of you offer support?

"Too busy" already with 'what we do' is often the answer stopping new growth. "No thanks we already struggle as we are". **What about a 'Sabbatical'?** e.g. from July 2019 – December 2019 all session/board/group meetings take a 6-month "sabbatical", meeting only as required - to ensure that prayer, worship and the nurture of faith are integral parts of any meeting ... an idea you like?

key characteristics of our present situation

- Finance: what is your congregational giving (total, per head, compared to Presbytery / National), and your **income** generated through use of church premises.
- Parish: **size and population of the Parish area** and a discussion of how relevant that is to the present ministry of the church.
- Buildings: age and condition of **buildings** and potential for development, location within the community. Use for church organisations, use by community groups. Suitability.

discuss the feedback from area meetings (that congregations delegates have given and S&R has collected), see <https://www.presbyteryofkirkcaldy.org.uk/committees-2/strategy-resourcing/>

Kirk Sessions please cascade information, and offer **discussions right down to the membership of the churches with agreed statements on these issues.**