Vital signs of vibrant congregations

In February 2017 Presbytery instructed the Forward Planning Co-ordinating Group to do further work on “Indicators which might be used to determine whether churches are missional in nature.”

The work on this has focused on the three strands of work and witness which Presbytery has discerned we would like to see in every congregation across Presbytery and is an attempt to give something tangible which will give an indication of the health of a congregation in each of the three areas. As such it is based on outcomes rather than activities in what have been described as “vital signs of vibrant congregations.”

Alongside this, the FPCG recognise that it is important to take account of direction of travel – in other words, whether there is increasing or decreasing evidence of these factors.

**Strand 1: *Engaged in their local community and more widely; working in partnership with other people to meet social needs and bring about change so that justice prevails*.**

* Church organises projects or activities which allow it to engage positively with the wider community
* Church has members involved in local community projects or groups
* Church is engaged in an active partnership with work overseas
* Church has members who support work overseas
* The church or individuals in the church are actively engaged in issues of justice or peace
* The church provides financial support for other community groups, charities or overseas work

**Strand 2: *Sustaining & building authentic, engaging Christian community and worship which is relevant to daily life and living and which draws in people of all generations.***

* Numbers attending worship are healthy with a good balance of ages
* There is an active children’s & youth work programme with Christian teaching as part of the programme, with a good number of young people participating in this
* There are well attended activities outwith a Sunday morning which encourage fellowship and sharing
* There is a pastoral care programme which provides good support to members and others when they need it
* There are a good number of people who have become actively involved in the last 3 years who were not previously involved
* There are sufficient finances in place to sustain and grow the life and witness of the congregation

***Strand 3: Forming people in faith - helping people at every stage of their faith journey, from coming to faith through to becoming mature Christians who live out their faith in daily life and service.***

* A healthy number of people have come to faith or had faith re-kindled and have become active for the first time in church life and worship
* There are a high percentage of members involved actively in areas of service within the local church
* Proportion of elders under 65 is positive and additions have been made to the Kirk Session in the previous 5 years
* There are stories of people coming to faith and growing in faith through the witness and work of the congregation
* Some members are actively involved in Christian work outwith the congregation
* There are people who are not yet involved in the church who are being supported by the church or individuals as they explore their faith