



Thurso and North Coast Free Church of Scotland

Reaching the North for Christ

Development Plan

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Foundational Framework

This development plan is an act of faith.

‘shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;

it shall not return to me empty,

but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,

and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.’

Isaiah, 55 v 11

This plan is built upon our foundational premise that all growth within the church comes from God alone. We are His workers, serving Him so that He will be glorified in all things. We view our role as one of labour in service, planting and watering, but it is God alone who will grow His Church.

‘So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.’

1 Corinthians, 3 v 6

We view the core roles of the church as those who are called to worship, share the gospel, and serve as follows:

Preaching

‘Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.’

1 Timothy, 4 v 13

The preaching of the Word is to be central. Preaching should be a means to proclaim the Good News of Christ crucified to all who will listen. Preaching should additionally meet the needs of God’s people within the congregation; providing them with teaching and encouragement in their walk with God both as individuals as well as a church family.

Prayer

‘The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.’

James, 5 v 16

As a congregation we want to remain focused on the essential and powerful place of prayer. We want to encourage each other through prayer, care for our community through prayer, and give praise and worship to God through prayer. We recognise the temptation to view prayer as passive, but in framing our development plan we have been reminded anew of the privilege of prayer that is mighty before the throne of God.

Praise

‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.’

Colossians, 3 v 16

In our praise and worship of God through psalms and hymns we are able to come to Him in thanksgiving. In all things we aim to be Christ focused and give Him all the honour and glory. In

our thanksgiving we recalibrate our lives as one full of thankfulness so that we do not become 'weary of doing good' (Galatians, 6 v 9).

Proclamation

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Matthew, 28 v 19-20

We desire to see our community transformed through the work of a Gospel with people coming to Christ and putting their trust in Him. We yearn to see lives saved and God glorified.

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Our energy, encouragement and cause for Christ comes from His love as the one who loved us first, as a people who are already victorious in Him. This should be our ultimate perspective in all things.

'Darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.'

1 John, 2 v 8

Where we are now

We are a small congregation with a mixture of members and adherents (we currently have 23 members on the Communion Roll). The attendance at our morning services has an average of nineteen with a range of ages and stages represented (See Appendix 1). The breakdown of the age range of those attending services highlights very clearly our lack of young people. However, these numbers reflect attendance since a return to in-person services; prior to COVID-19 we could have a Sunday School attendance of up to 5 on a regular basis. Looking forward through our development plan, this drop in attendance of young people since lockdown is something we would like to address.

Our most recent growth has been through a small number of young adults moving into the area. However, we acknowledge that this development plan needs to be built upon the recognition that as a congregation we are not seeing new growth and we need to adapt and change in order to revive our congregation and share the gospel with the community we love.

In 2019 the congregation had the great encouragement of appointing three new Deacons: Stuart MacDonald, David Mackay, and Ben Nicolson. These three Deacons joined the work of the two Elders: John Hymers and Iain Mackillop. This leadership team provides a solid foundation for the congregation as they are each passionate about Christ and passionate about reaching the community of Thurso and the North Coast.

As a congregation we went through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to gauge the status of the congregation and give us a clear view of where we are in order to use our strengths effectively as well as recognise the changes needed as we move forward (See Appendix 2). The SWOT revealed that as a congregation our strength is our attitude and willingness in the service of God; our weakness is our financial status and the scale of the work for the number of people we have. However, our weaknesses were also reflected in our opportunities as the size of the County, the need, and the possibility to make connections allows us to view Thurso and North Coast as a community with a wide window for outreach. In

considering our threats the congregation were able to discuss our worries moving forward and it highlighted the importance of unity and a cohesive attitude that will support us in putting our development plan into action. In order for our strengths and opportunities to outweigh our weaknesses and threats we need to continually focus on Christ centred worship that refreshes us in our love for each other as well as our love for the community.

A Note on Context

We are ministering to a rural community that is a microcosm of our wider society. We have a population of 9,000 in Thurso town alone with a range of economic backgrounds, levels of education, and understanding of Christianity. To look at the SIMD Index or to outline a demographic of our community would show the complex demographic that so many rural congregations need to minister in. Our starting point and our lens for ministry cannot be the same as those in urban areas, as Stephen Witmer writes in 'A Big Gospel in Small Places': '...context matters greatly for theological vision...We need to understand how doctrinal commitments will translate into small-place ministry values, which will then shape small-place ministry practice' (pp.65).

We view our ministry as one that is powerful in our sustained, often small, day-to-day interactions. We want to live Christ-centred lives and witness the truth and love of God every single day, creating friendships and building relationships in which we have opportunities to show and share the love of Christ.

Ministries

Under this heading we have included discipleship and outreach. Our premise for the formation of our ministries is the importance of doing the small things well. Within this premise we identified two areas we want to have constant focus and dedicate our efforts towards cultivating: we want to deepen discipleship and establish hospitality.

Sayers in 'Reappearing Church' asserts that, 'Discipleship patterns align us with God's kingdom, creating habits and discipline in our lives that shape us for God's kingdom, shaping us into Christlikeness and Christlike community' (pp.158). Sayers suggests that through our discipleship and our patterns that are formed through these encouraged routines of worship, we strengthen our individual relationships with God, we strengthen a Christ like attitude in our Church, and we prepare ourselves well to interact with the society we live in. We see this in the early church with communal time together reflecting the good patterns of Christian life and worship. In Acts 2 we are told: 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer' (v42). We too want to devote ourselves to listening well to the teaching and preaching of the scripture, spending time together focused on our faith, and praying together so with 'one mind and one voice [we] may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans, 15 v 6).

Through hospitality we want to emulate the warmth and friendship that Jesus showed to both his followers and those forgotten by society (See list of meals with Jesus in Chester, pp.13). Through a culture of hospitality we want to show care and love for each other as the family of God but also reach out the love of Christ to the people we interact with day to day, providing help for those in need; showing Christ care for them as we put effort into pursuing and maintaining relationships. Hospitality gives us a means of sharing our lives and sharing our faith, or as Tony Merida puts it: 'it is about meeting, welcoming, listening to, and loving people'.

Sunday Services

Currently the Church holds two services on a Sunday: one in the morning at 10.30am which is in-person, and a second in the evening at 6.30pm which is hosted online via zoom.

The praise in all our services includes a combination of psalms and hymns. In our morning service we try to have live accompaniment with our hymns, when possible. This is something we would like to continue to expand as currently we have only a few people able to provide accompaniment. In recognition of our limitations as a small congregation with only a few able to present the psalms or lead the worship music, we will purchase a CCLI (Church Copyright License) which will give us access to a greater number of hymns and will also provide us more freedom in recording and sharing services.

We recognise the need to adapt to a post-covid world and adjust our services to fit our congregation and community. One way in which we would like to make a conscientious move to adapt our services for our setting is to reinstate what had been called 'Cafe Church'. This was originally held at the time of the evening service and took place in the Church hall rather than the sanctuary. The service begins with food and drinks around tables to allow for conversation as an informal start to the service. The intention behind this is to make a service more accessible, especially for those who have not been brought up with any connection to religion or church. There is a shorter service after this time of relaxed fellowship which presents a simple, gospel focused message that is suitable for all ages and all levels of knowledge along with a couple of praise items; in this we see our foundational principles at work in a missional way. We intend to use the outreach of hospitality to reduce the stigma around the unknowns of religion and open the gospel message more widely no-matter an individual's background.

Prayer Meeting

The prayer meeting for the Thurso and North Coast congregation is held on Zoom every second week at 7.30pm. At the moment these meetings are being led by the Deacons and include praise

in the form of psalms or hymns, a short message, and prayer, also allowing opportunity to include a time of open prayer and discussion about the passage.

In the future we intend to alter the format of our prayer meetings to centre around hospitality and purposeful discipleship. In order to do this, we will host the prayer meeting in homes with the opportunity for time spent together over food - whether that is a meal or a packet of biscuits. We want to create a comfortable atmosphere so people feel at ease and begin to get to know each other's lives in greater depth. We want our time of worship, bible reading and prayer to all be intentional with a strong aim of getting to know God better together. We want to take this time to have a missional outlook in our time of prayer: praying for our local community, our local presbytery, the wider free church, and mission abroad. This time together should be a time of encouragement and a pit-stop in the week to recharge and refocus on our gospel outlook and a time to cultivate the perspective of both a personal and a universal God who knows us each individually but also has power and dominion over all the earth.

Monday Night Group

Pre-pandemic, a local couple in the church ran a bible study group for young adults (18-30 year olds). This group was interdenominationally welcoming - with members from the local baptist church being involved - and provided an opportunity to invite along anyone curious about the gospel, or anyone new to the church through a relaxed, friendly and more familiar environment. This meeting took place in the homes of members of the congregation once a fortnightly and provided time for getting to know each other over teas and coffees as well as disciple each other in their faith. The more relaxed setting also provided the opportunity for difficult questions surrounding Christianity to be engaged with by those who may be curious about Christianity as well as those more mature in their faith.

We intend to restart this group as soon as restrictions are lifted enough to allow this. We hope to re-engage with those who were already regularly attending, especially those on the fringes of the congregation or those whose contact with Church was mainly through this group. We hope to provide solid teaching, discipleship, and fellowship through these meetings that will be both

an encouragement to younger christians as well as an opportunity to be missional in an informal, approachable way.

Bettyhill

Currently, due to Covid and our ongoing vacancy, services in Bettyhill have not been able to run. With the changes in restrictions, when possible, we wish to return to conducting a service in Bettyhill once a month. We want to encourage the support of the services in Bettyhill from members in the Thurso side of the congregation who may not have prior links to the Bettyhill congregation so that we can spend time in fellowship together. Through the support of each other we hope to witness the love of the gospel as a church family. We hope that in the future that as we see growth as a church our presence in Bettyhill may too grow and develop.

Youth Work

As mentioned above, since COVID-19 we have had no attendance of young people to our services. However, we feel it is important to have good structures and provisions in place that make the young people we have had attending in the past feel welcome and included in the congregation when, God willing, they return, in addition to having a solid sunday school provision in place which creates a welcoming atmosphere for children and families as we pray for growth.

Due to the size of our Sunday school we have a range of ages attending a single group and this means any resources we use need to be accessible for the youngest but also provide interest and teaching to the older children. The Sunday School leader selected the Scripture Union Sunday School resources due to its scope and ability to follow the same programme of Bible stories while using differentiated booklets to engage each age group.

The decision has also been made to have our Sunday School for primary aged children alone and provide alternative support for secondary children to stay in the main service. Worksheets with questions, tasks, and various listening assists will be used to help the secondary aged children access the sermon but also encourage them to actively listen to the teaching provided to start them on more independent discipleship encouraging the good patterns of a Christian life.

With our focus on discipleship and hospitality it is crucial that we include children as part of this. We want the Sunday school to introduce them to the stories of the Bible giving them a good foundation to progress into the services when they reach secondary age and that the worksheets to scaffold their learning will further establish this foundation as they grow and develop in their personal faith and walk with Christ. We want children to feel included and part of everything we do, welcome everywhere. We want our hospitality to extend to the children so they can feel part of the Church family and know their value there.

Development

Online Presence

For people new to the church or seeking to find out more about who we are and what we do their first response will usually be to google Thurso and North Coast Free Church. In recognition of this, we intend to update our online presence to give clear information about who we are to provide those curious about the Church an insight into what our ministries (services, meetings, etc.) look like.

Two of our deacons have taken on the role of updating the Church facebook page. They have made sure that the times of services and contact details for the church are easy to find on the page and are clearly presented. We want to make it as easy as possible for people to join with us and keeping our facebook page clear and up to date provides an easy and manageable way of doing this. As restrictions open up further and we have opportunities for events, such as an Easter service or carol evening, having these advertised and shown on facebook will allow us to make the Church appear welcoming and non-threatening as people can see with transparency the ethos and actions of the Church.

We would also like to update our website to have a second source of information and allow us to have more control over the layout and information given. We are currently seeking out further information about the creation of a website to allow us to have a smooth and professional finish. On the website we intend to have a statement of faith so it is clear what we believe. We will make the service time and locations obvious to find with a short description about what happens in each service: what we wear, what to bring, a 'come as you are' statement that allows people who may never have stepped foot in a church to feel welcome and prepared to come into a new environment which could be overwhelming. We want to make sure we do not make assumptions about people's knowledge of what church is and what happens there. Through having a short description of what takes place in our services we can hopefully remove as many barriers as possible to people coming and find out more about Jesus. To this end, we would also like pictures

of our minister and leadership team on the site so that people know who we are in the community and can feel they know a face they have seen before if they join us for the first time. We also want the email and link to the facebook page clearly presented on each page so that people have a chance to be in contact with someone from the leadership team to ask any questions they may have. Ultimately our goal with the facebook page and the website is to make who we are and what we do clear while removing any stigma or barriers that could hinder someone coming to the church for the first time. The church should be a place for everyone and anyone and we want to prevent the feeling of being an outsider while everyone else knows what is going on, to convey our openness and welcoming spirit as a congregation and the love of Christ we want to share.

Communication

A recent update since our vacancy has been to set up a weekly email to everyone who has given their contact information, a task taken on by one of our Deacons. The leadership team recognised the importance of making sure dates and information were shared with all those attending the Church. We are a congregation with a wide geographical spread and the remote services of lock-down meant it was important that each individual felt informed and, as a result, more involved. The benefits of being clearly updated weekly are two fold: firstly, it gives a simple method to keep everyone up to date of services, events, congregational news and prayer points, and secondly, it creates a feeling of unity as no matter your situation, your connections, your regularity of attendance - everyone is able to be included and feel a part of what is going on in the Church. We hope this continued weekly update will aid attendance of services and events, as well as create a good ethos for the Church.

Monthly Outreach Services

In the near future, after the re-establishment of Cafe Church, we would like to adapt Cafe Church so that once a month it is used as a specific outreach service where people are encouraged to invite others along. These services will be more informal and will include a

simple gospel message. We would like to make Cafe Church more social with the possibility of specific events that would make the service open and welcoming. The intention of these services would be to get new people through the door so they can see what church is about, we can make connections, and those that attend are given the opportunity to hear the gospel in a simple, clear way that conveys biblical truths that are comprehensible so we can emphasise the love of God for them and the love that His people share through Him.

Future Opportunities

As we grow as a congregation and with the hope of a full time minister in the future, we can identify areas for growth in the connections we make within the community and the opportunities for outreach. At the moment there is no official contact with local schools or care homes; by seeking to find available spaces to minister in these places we can expand our ability to care for and reach out to our community. In the past, one of our Deacons, who works as a teacher in the High School, has been involved in the Scripture Union and as a congregation we can see the vast opportunities to further and deepen these connections while providing service to integral structures in the community.

We also see the employment of a large group in our community by Dounreay as a possible place to offer chaplaincy and pastoral support. Although where the congregation are presently makes these ministries unrealistic alone, we pray that with a committed minister and the growth of the congregation we can expand our outreach beyond what we could have ever imagined.

Leadership

Minister

As a congregation, particularly a congregation in decline, a resource we see as essential to the work of the gospel in Thurso and North Coast is a minister.

As a church with a limited number of members that are able to fulfil the needs of serving the church and community, we see the devoted, focused time of a preacher and pastor as indispensable in our goal to spread the Good News of Christ.

As we are a small community with limited gospel outreach we recognise the importance of having a minister that will provide a constant reminder of the need to focus on Jesus, that will provide a source of direction and leadership for our vision outlined in this document, and that will have a willingness to engage with and love this community. We need deep discipleship that equips us as a church to spread the love of Christ and the message of the gospel in our daily lives; through steadfast preaching and teaching provided by a minister we will develop together in our knowledge of the Word and our relationship with Christ.

Common threads within our goals for the ministries of the church are those of hospitality, sound teaching and encouragement, and the need for an approachable tact with those unfamiliar with the practices and beliefs of the church; these are all things we would hope to see mirrored in the attitude and life of a minister leading the congregation as we strive to glorify God greatly in all we do.

Elders and Deacons

We recognise the need to have a strong, united leadership team that does not solely rely on one man. Through this time of vacancy the Elders and Deacons have taken on greater responsibility and have been involved in preaching, pastoring, as well as the organisational, administration tasks needed to ensure a church works well.

Consistent care for the congregation through this vacancy has been identified as a key concern for the leadership team. In order to address this and ensure that each individual in the

congregation is looked after and supported it was decided to create pastoral teams. This would mean that each elder and deacon would have responsibility for checking-in and supporting certain members of the congregation. In setting up these teams early into the vacancy the leadership hope to ensure steady support that helps uphold each individual as they run the race, and not just reactionary care in times of crisis. We intend to maintain these pastoral teams even if a minister were to be in place to help share the burden (and privilege) of care so that we are a church family that knows and cares for each other.

The leadership team acknowledge the benefit that further support and training would provide in helping them serve the church effectively. The leadership team hope to seek out further opportunities for instruction in preparing and delivering sermons, advice on looking after a congregation's needs and knowing how to help people during difficult times in life including bereavement. The Deacon's Court has already sought opportunities to hold training on Deaconship run by John Angus Macleod. Through seeking further training opportunities this will give the leadership team greater skills and knowledge to provide teaching, as well as providing them the knowledge and an empathetic attitude needed to have effective pastoral teams.

The Elders and Deacons want to be able to continue their practical service of the Church and hope to provide support, encouragement, and care for a minister so that the care for the congregation and the outreach to the community is done in partnership as those who have been given the responsibility to guide and care for the congregation.

Action Points	Responsibility
Reinstate Cafe Church	Leadership team
Starting of home based Wednesday night meetings	Leadership team
Running of Monday Night Group	Deacons

Starting of monthly Bettyhill Services	Leadership Team
Organisation of Sunday School resources and leading the teaching team	Stuart MacDonald
Continuation of Weekly Updates Email	Ben Nicolson
Updating of Facebook page	Stuart MacDonald, David Mackay
Development of Website	Outsourcing
Sourcing Training for Leadership Team	David Mackay

Resources

One of the greatest challenges we face as a church is our limited finances. We appreciate that ministry, outreach, and the practicalities of running a church cost money and we need to have a practical and realistic starting point for what we can do, and how we can best support our ministries and missional vision.

Current Finances

The table below is a summary of givings (but not including Gift Aid payments received from HMRC) and remittances made to the Central Office. The years up to 2017 include amounts sent from Bettyhill as “North Coast Sustentation fund, typically in the region of £6,000-£7,000 . In 2015 this amounted to £4,500 and in 2016 it was £5,900 but in 2017 only £1,000 was remitted and nothing was sent in 2018. In 2019 the North Coast’s remaining bank balance of £2,887 was added to Thurso.

Year	Givings	Remittances
2020	£15,077	£11,500
2019	£17,429	£20,300
2018	£19,176	£21,540
2017	£19,264	£19,500
2016	£28,053	£31,500
2015	£26,610	£26,330
2014	£26,012	£32,000
2013	£34,194	£26,330

2012	£31,035	£30,800
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As a congregation we have seen a large increase in our shortfall with 2020 seeing a shortfall of £19,250 (See Appendix 3). Although the congregational givings have been declining each year the congregation has additional financial assets and possible income that can be taken into account.

The church and plot of land at Skerray is vacant and holds the possibility of being sold in the future. Before the estimated income from this sale can be considered the Deacons Court would need further information and advice on the output that would be necessary to provide access to a memorial on the Skerray plot.

The Thurso Church hall pre-covid was being rented by some local groups, however this was often on an informal basis and there is very little documentation to show the income this provided. The Deacons Court have discussed this as part of the strategy to organise the admin of the Church and have agreed a set price at an hourly rate for the rental of the hall. Again, due to COVID, the amount of income this would accumulate annually is unknown but provides the congregation an opportunity for further financial income that can be pursued.

Thurso and North Coast Free Church also presently has £200,000 Held in Trust which the leadership team would intend to use to support the funding of a minister and any building works.

Minister

A minister is central to this development plan and would provide an essential resource to the growth of Thurso and North Coast Free Church. In our current financial state the congregation would need support in order to provide the minister's salary.

In the first 2 years the congregation would be looking for £20,000 annually from the funds Held in Trust to support the payment of a minister. The congregation then intends to reduce this amount from the money Held in Trust by £5,000 per year with the anticipation of growth and possible increase in congregation givings as well as additional income outlined above.

Building Updates

The church building in Thurso is well situated in a central location within the town and gives the congregation a lot of opportunity to use the building as a resource to help further the work of the gospel. The building is currently in need of refurbishment to make it fit for purpose and accessible for all.

The Deacons Court, under the leadership of the former minister, were pursuing the removal of the pews in the sanctuary and replacing these with soft seating for a more welcoming feel in addition to making the building more accessible to those with any mobility issues. An estimate was sought at the end of 2020 and the update to the seating was predicted to cost around £14,000-15,000. Seats were selected but due to COVID-19 these alterations were unable to be completed. The Deacons Court intends to resume the replacement of the pews in order to make the church building an adaptable resource that will fit with the ministry work outlined.

In order to make the outside of the church more welcoming and open to all, the Deacons Court also intends to change the inner door of the church. This would involve removing the thick wooden door in place currently and replacing it with a door that had glass paneling to allow those in the foyer to see into the main building. This choice was made to further remove any barriers to the church making the entrance of the building less threatening and more 'known'.

We intend to have a second phase of building renovations with updates made to the Church kitchen and to the hall in order to make them more user friendly; useful for both the congregation's needs, and our ability to rent out the building to the community. We aim to switch the location of the toilets and kitchen so that the kitchen is attached to the hall and include a hatch for direct access. This will improve the safety as hot water etc. will not need to

be carried through the corridor and hall entrance, as well as provide greater accessibility. With hospitality being a focus of the ethos we wish to create, having facilities that aid us in doing this well are important to our long term vision.

The leadership team has made an inquiry into the cost of updating the A.V. system as the current set-up is outdated and cumbersome. The estimate for the updated system was £14,500. This upgrade would allow for recording of events and services in addition to simplifying the process of live streaming. This would give the Church the opportunity to share services online and give options of involvement for those who may be housebound or unable to attend for various reasons.

Building Updates Action Points	Cost	Responsibility
Remove pulpit and pews	-	Stuart MacDonald
Replace pews with soft seating	£14,000-15,000	Stuart MacDonald
Replace front sanctuary door of Church	£1,000-2,000	Leadership Team
New church website and rebrand	£3,000-4,000	Leadership Team
Upgrade A.V. System	£14,500	David Mackay
Estimated Total:	£35,500	

Outline of Timeline

Immediate Future

- Update Facebook page
- Start running the Monday night group
- Begin hosting the Prayer Meeting in homes
- Re-establish Sunday School
- Seek opportunities for hall rental income
- Purchase CCLI license

In the next 1+ years

- Digital rebrand
- Start Cafe Church on Sunday evenings
- Begin first training for the leadership team
- Update AV system
- Replace pews
- Replace inner church door
- Instate monthly outreach services

In the next 2+ years

- Reinstate services in Bettyhill
- Establish links with Schools and care homes
- Renovate the Church kitchen and hall
- Seek to sell Skerray plot

Appendix 1: Attendance and breakdown by age

Date	Morning Service Attendance		Total
	In Person	Online	
09/05/2021	16	1	17
16/05/2021	19	1	20
23/05/2021	12	1	13
30/05/2021	16	5	21
06/06/2021	14	2	16
13/06/2021	18	3	21
20/06/2021	22	2	24
27/06/2021	13	1	14
04/07/2021	16	2	18
11/07/2021	24	2	26
Avg. Attendance	17.0	2.0	
Total Avg.:			19.0

Appendix 1: Attendance and breakdown by age

Date	Age Range Breakdown				
	Pre-School	School	Student	Working	Retired
09/05/2021	0	0	1	10	6
16/05/2021	0	0	1	14	5
23/05/2021	0	0	0	7	6
30/05/2021	0	0	1	11	9
06/06/2021	0	0	0	9	7
13/06/2021	0	0	1	14	6
20/06/2021	0	0	3	14	7
27/06/2021	0	0	1	10	7
04/07/2021	0	0	0	6	8
11/07/2021	0	1	3	14	8

Appendix 2: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faithful core - Resilient - Good leadership team • Capable • Invested in congregation • Visionary • Involved – preaching etc - Musically – good singing Mix of adult ages - Fellowship – after church am & pm - Variety of skill set/gifts • Practical • IT • Comms Welcoming - Good building location - Good reputation for community involvement - Keen to learn from bible/discipleship - History of children’s work - Monday night – young adults Eat together - Christianity Explored - Willingness to adapt – out of FC norm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance - Small number base - Isolation from wider church fellowship - FC situation in county – others are vacant - Distance – 30 miles each way - Bettyhill - Different ethos – urban rural - Few children - Building a bit dated – needs refresh - Need for help in cleaning etc - Few conversions from community - Spiritually hard town/area - Transient population - High turnover Perception of remote community - Not many musicians - Could engage better with other churches - Present vacancy
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9000 population - Youth work eg P7 girls – connections - Buildings let out to community - Post Covid needs – 3rd sector opportunities, gov can’t do everything - Care of each other post Covid - Plans for building development – community use - Online bible study etc, virtual coffee - Diversity, Ephesians – roots in community – non sectarian God has given ALL gifts, ALL are included - Bettyhill – monthly – ecumenical - Care home – Melvich Halladale - communion – nice model - Unchurched community - Close knit community, high connectivity - Gift packages – helps to engage Tourist destination - Saturday Course – opportunities for online learning - Online presence, website, sermons USA connection through web or others - Connection with the wider Free Church – Zoom preachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long vacancy - Small congregation/vulnerable - Peripheral people during covid - Lack of unity – presence of division - Resistance to change - Finance - Isolationism Defeatist mindset - Balance difficult in 2 sections of congregation - Consumed by practical at expense of the spiritual - Presence of other lively churches (ecumenical, doctrinal, ‘sheep stealing’, parochial) - Forgetting that Jesus is Head of the Church ... it’s all about HIM - Prayer – lack of.

Appendix 3: Givings, Remittance, Levy, and Shortfall 2018-2020

Year	2018	2019	2020
Congregational Giving	21,250	18,660	15,076
Remitted	21,500	20,300	11,500
Ministry Levy	28,100	28,750	29,400
Administration Levy	1,290	1,320	1,350
Total Required	29,390	30,070	30,750
Shortfall	7,890	9,770	19,250

References

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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen.

Ephesians, 3 v 20-21