



**Edinburgh Greenbank
Parish Church of Scotland**

Strategic Plan

Greenbank Going Forward, 2019-2024

Introduction

This is the Strategic Plan for Greenbank Parish Church for the period 2019–2024. It will shape and focus our priorities as followers of Christ in this place. It takes account of:

1. Consultations with the congregation in 2017 and 2019
2. Discussions at an Elders' Conference in November 2018

There will also be a more detailed delivery plan showing the actions that are planned, their timing and how their progress will be reviewed and reported to the congregation.

The present system of committees will be reformed to fit in with the Strategy. There will be opportunities for members to serve on the new groups, including on short life working groups.

Our Mission

We are the local church for everyone. We aim to show how our Faith leads us to care for all people and for the world around us.

Our main themes and aims:

Discipleship Placing Christian faith and worship at the heart of congregational life

Outreach Reaching out to our community and being welcoming and open to all

Care Caring for people everywhere and for Creation by being a nurturing, loving, and prophetic community

Discipleship

We believe that we are called to be disciples of Christ and to deepen our relationship with God in worship and exploration of the mystery, fun, and challenge of faith and life.

Priorities

1. To consolidate and develop our culture of “blended” worship on Sundays at 10.30am, embracing contemporary, traditional, and ancient material.
2. To develop opportunities for individuals and groups of all ages within the congregation and the wider community to explore and deepen their faith.
3. To support and encourage people who are new to faith or at an early stage in their faith journey.

Actions

1. a) Drawing on the origins and traditions of the Church of Scotland and those of the worldwide church, we will continue to develop a variety of styles in worship. We will use signs, symbols, colour, spoken word and music to stimulate the emotions, senses, and intellect.
b) We will support and encourage people who have a talent to contribute to leading worship.
c) We will offer opportunities for those with an interest in reflective worship to explore it further as a way of reaching a deeper relationship with God.
2. a) We will listen and respond to our young people’s and families’ needs and desires. We will continue to undertake youth ministry, including age-appropriate Christian formation in a variety of settings and times.

- b) We will provide a range of Christian learning opportunities for everyone in a variety of settings and times, including home groups; and promote them energetically.

Outreach

We believe that we are called as disciples of Christ to spread the Gospel by connecting with our local community.

Priorities

1. To grow the congregation in faith and size, including finding new ways to communicate our faith message to people who are not yet part of the Greenbank community.
2. To keep under review our welcome to people of all age groups who cross our threshold – members, regular attenders who are exploring faith, visitors and others who use our buildings.
3. To be energetic in the development of our outreach to young people, involving them as much as possible in all aspects of the life of the congregation.
4. To build on our existing communications to maximise engagement with our members and those of other churches and our visibility in the local community and further away.
5. To encourage involvement of members and those who live in the area in the active life of Greenbank through a broad range of activities.
6. To have attractive and welcoming buildings fit for purpose and accessible to all, valuing the dignity of all our users.

Actions

1.
 - a) We will be active in discovering the needs and desires of people in our congregation and parish and do what we can to respond.
 - b) We will aim to maximise the benefits of streaming of worship, spreading information about it widely. We might appoint an elder with specific responsibility for this part of our mission.
 - c) We will stimulate interest in our mission by inviting high profile speakers and organising interesting public events to reach out to people living in our area and beyond.
2.
 - a) We will examine our relationships with hall users - some are firmly part of Greenbank's organisational structures, some related to us more loosely, some fully commercial; then see if we can improve our relationship with them so that they and we benefit.
 - b) We will keep looking at our arrangements to welcome and support new members; and how we identify visitors and help them to feel at home before, during and after worship. We will, always look out for individuals or groups with specific needs.
 - c) We will support and encourage people who are on the fringe of the congregation to explore their relationship with God.
3. We will provide an ongoing programme of intergenerational activities to encourage a feeling that we are "one church".
4.
 - a) We will review our ways of connecting and communicating with our members, wider church family and beyond. We aim to provide an effective package of communication to include streaming, social media, email, weekly newsletter, podcasts, website and external signage.
 - b) We will look for opportunities for, in, and with the community to show how our faith translates into practical action
5. We will explore the possibility of setting up a community youth choir, meeting to rehearse midweek after school, and which would contribute to Sunday worship on a regular basis.
6. We will gradually adapt our buildings, as our finances allow, to fit our purposes better and make them more attractive and accessible to all.

Care

for congregation, community and beyond

We believe that care for congregation and the world is a central part of our calling as disciples of Christ, and that we all have a part to play.

Priorities

1. To offer spiritual, emotional, and practical support to all in need.
2. To base our care of members on the well-established system of District elders and visitors but to examine whether it is sufficiently well understood and flexible enough to meet all needs.
3. To support our Ministerial and District teams with assistance if they need it to help them to manage particular aspects of care or heavy demands on their time.
4. To support our existing networks of volunteering and care such as the choir, Guild, Friendship Club, Babies and Toddlers, and recognise the role of families, friends and neighbours.
5. To develop initiatives that improve well-being among our members and wider community.
6. To continue to be inspired by the voices of Jesus and the Old Testament Prophets to nurture and develop Greenbank's tradition of addressing the needs of disadvantaged people and challenging injustice at home and overseas.
7. To contribute to caring for Creation by helping Greenbank (already a registered Eco-Congregation with Bronze status) to put its Christian concerns about the world into action on environmental issues.

Actions

1. We will find ways to identify who has the skills, experience and an interest in a more active role in the provision of spiritual and emotional care in support of our Ministerial and District teams.
2.
 - a) We will continue to review the make-up of our Districts, taking soundings from members, elders and visitors, and develop/update methods and arrangements for the District teams to keep in touch with members. We will try to match individual needs and skills.
 - b) We will ensure that our District Elders and Visitors feel confident in their roles, providing training from Church of Scotland resources or elsewhere where and when required.
3.
 - a) We will set up a trained and supported pastoral care team led by 2 joint coordinators to augment the care provided by the Ministerial team, District Elders and Visitors. The coordinators will help match needs and providers and ensure robust and discreet systems of communication with the Ministerial team, elders and District visitors.
 - b) We will develop links and partnerships with other care groups and charities for joint working or referral as appropriate.
4.
 - a) We will give people the chance to tell us about their current volunteering activities.
 - b) We will develop practical opportunities for people of all ages to be volunteers in the church community to strengthen their sense of belonging and sharing in our mission.
5. We will set up an initiative with other churches to provide a safe listening place for those experiencing domestic abuse.
6.
 - a) We will continue to support Church of Scotland and local initiatives that provide care for the disadvantaged.
 - b) We will stand ready to campaign, alongside Christian Aid, Christians against Poverty and other organisations, on climate change and social justice, and challenge the governmental, societal, and institutional barriers to progress.
7. We will explore and implement opportunities for practical action in the church and in members' homes to reduce our environmental impact, and bring these into the heart of our congregational life.