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**GETTING GOING AGAIN**

**TOOL FOR LEADERS**

**Getting going again** is an initiative to encourage and support congregations in restoring an edge to local witness that may have been lost or inhibited during the pandemic. In considering how to refresh and renew a genuine connection with the community, a series of short articles on the PCI website expand on the five different aspects of re-establishing your congregation’s witness in the local community in the following framework for discussion. They can be found here [www.presbyterianireland.org/getting-going-again](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/getting-going-again)

You may want to read them before coming to the discussion, or in follow up to it to add greater detail to possible next steps.

This tool is intended for use with a group of leaders in a congregation including a minister, staff team, kirk session and other key leaders.

**Use a different sheet of flipchart to record the ideas from the five areas below. You may wish to get different groups working on individual areas before opening their thoughts to the whole group to gather wider feedback.**

**#1 PROFILE**

Effective communication is key to growing your congregation’s profile. Some ways to do this both inside and outside the church include digital media, social media, printed media, signage and noticeboards.

Using the questions below, reflect upon the ways to improve the content of your communication, and ultimately your witness in the community.

1. **LOOK FORWARD**: What is coming up in the life of your church that people need to know about? How will we communicate this effectively to those in the community?
2. **LOOK BACKWARD**: What events, groups or activities have have happened recently or taken place regularly? In what ways can these be better profiled to the wider community?
3. **LOOK OUTWARD**: What other community groups exist locally such as schools or sports clubs? How might you show an interest in the wider community by profiling their activities or acheivements?

**#2 PROVISION**

Groups and activities in church facilities are a great means of connecting and building relationships with unreached people in the community. It is most effective when groups like this are meeting genuine needs in the community.

Using the questions below, review your congregation’s provision to the local community and consider ways this area of local witness could be improved.

1. **EXISTING:** Are the current groups or organisations still meeting needs that are connecting with people who don’t attend church? Could this be improved with some tweaking or should you consider directing resources elsewhere for some groups?
2. **POSSIBILITIES:** Are there other needs in the local community that are not being met? Can the congregation respond in any way to these?
3. **PATHWAYS:** How can the congregation ensure that each group or organisation is creating opportunities for people to move towards exploring the Christian faith?

**#3 PRESENT**

Taking opportunities to grow your congregation’s presence in the community outside of your buildings will be welcomed and could help to change perceptions of the church, build goodwill and hopefully provoke some curiosity towards the gospel.

Using the questions below, consider some ways to help grow your presence in the local community in this next season.

1. **MOVING TOWARDS:** In what ways can we be present and supportive of the initiatives of other groups in the community in ways that will be appreciated? How can we be an encouragement in the community?
2. **MOVING IN PARTNERSHIP:** What is happening in the community that we can signpost people to? What is happening locally that we can join in with and add value to. How might we partner with others to respond to a local need that is not currently being met?-

**#4 PRELUDES**

Churches often have lots of people from the community attending organisations but don’t appreciate that it is a huge step for them to attend a Sunday service. The idea of a prelude has come to be used more generally as a soft or gradual warm up to the main thing, and so it is important to think creatively about a few one-off events or activities dotted into the church programme that can be another stepping stone that draws people towards an experience of worship.

Using the questions below, suggest ideas for activities or events that could be a natural next step for someone to further experience Christian community and move towards considering faith.

1. **GROUPS**: Think of three groups of people that are engaging with your ‘provision’ but are not engaging in a Bible study or attending Sunday worship.
2. **NEXT STEPS**: For each group you have identified, suggest an idea for a one-off activity or event that you would feel comfortable inviting your friend to. How might you gently include a Christian message in a way that is natural and not off-putting?

**#5 PREPARING**

There is a growing need for congregations to consider how they might encourage and equip church members for sharing the Christian faith in simple ways amongst their friends, neighbours and colleagues.

Using the questions below, consider how you can prepare church members for talking about their faith in different ways.

1. **MY STORY**: What opportunities are there within church services or weekly rhythms for church members to share their own story of faith with eachother? How can we nurture these opportunities. Might we need to train people for doing this? See article five for a PCI resource to help with this.
2. **GOSPEL STORY**: In what ways are we equipping church members to be able to explain the gospel succinctly and clearly to someone else in their everyday? Might we need to train people for doing this? See article five for a PCI resource to help with this.
3. **GOD’S WORD**: How confident are our church members to introduce unreached people to the Bible? How can we model that in ways that grows confidence in exploring the Bible with others and the difference that faith makes in our lives? What resource can we give to church members for doing this? See article five for some resource suggestions.

**GETTING GOING AGAIN // RESPONDING TOGETHER**

With the five pieces of flipchart displayed and the ideas clearly listed, give each participant a pen and ask them to respond in the following way:

1. **PRAYER**: Spend a few minutes prayerfully reflecting on all the ideas that have been listed, asking God to reveal any ways he would like the congregation to respond. Be attentive to any ideas that you feel particularly drawn to or enthused about.
2. **PEN**: Inform people you want them to vote by drawing ‘stars’ beside the ideas they feel particularly drawn to. Explain this is a weighted vote with the following rules:
   1. Each person is only allowed to draw five stars.
   2. You can only place stars against a maximum of three different ideas.
   3. You can use all of your stars against one idea or weight them differently across several ideas depending on how strongly you feel about a particular idea.

At the end of this process, it should be clear to see the ideas that have most energy and enthusiasm from the leaders. This should give a clearer idea of where to start as you seek to Get Going Again in your congregation’s local witness.

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