

Vision review day:
'Reaching Out and Bringing Hope'
Louth Methodist Church
4 March 2023



Notes, reflections and suggestions from the day

Nigel Pimlott

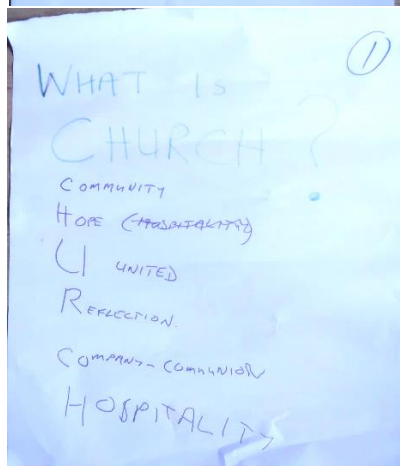
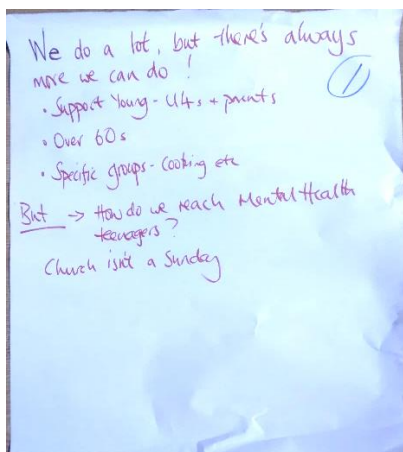
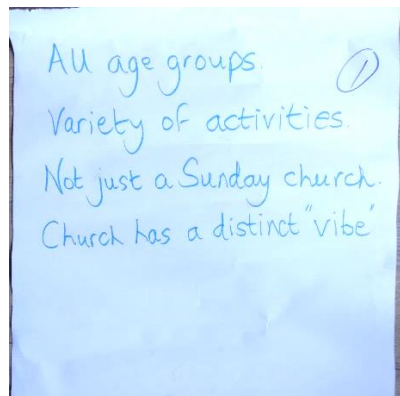
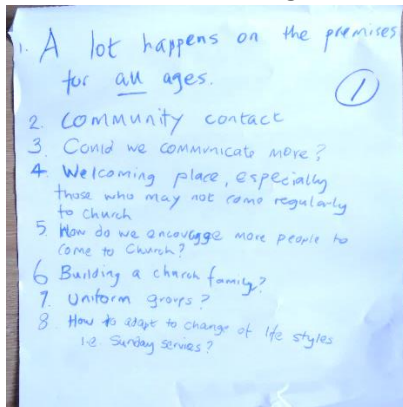
We met in the church building on 4 March 2023 to review how the vision of 'reaching out and bringing hope' was progressing. Approx. 24 people attended.

What we did

1. We spent some time 'Dwelling in the Word', exploring what was grabbing our attention from Acts 16: 6-10. Reflections included:

Hang on	Discernment	Listening
Dirty boots	Inputs	Responding
Where?	Trust	There was no steering committee
Holy Spirit?	They tried	What vision is like
Borders	Dedication	
God has it	'no' and 'yes'	
Follow your heart	Being close to God	

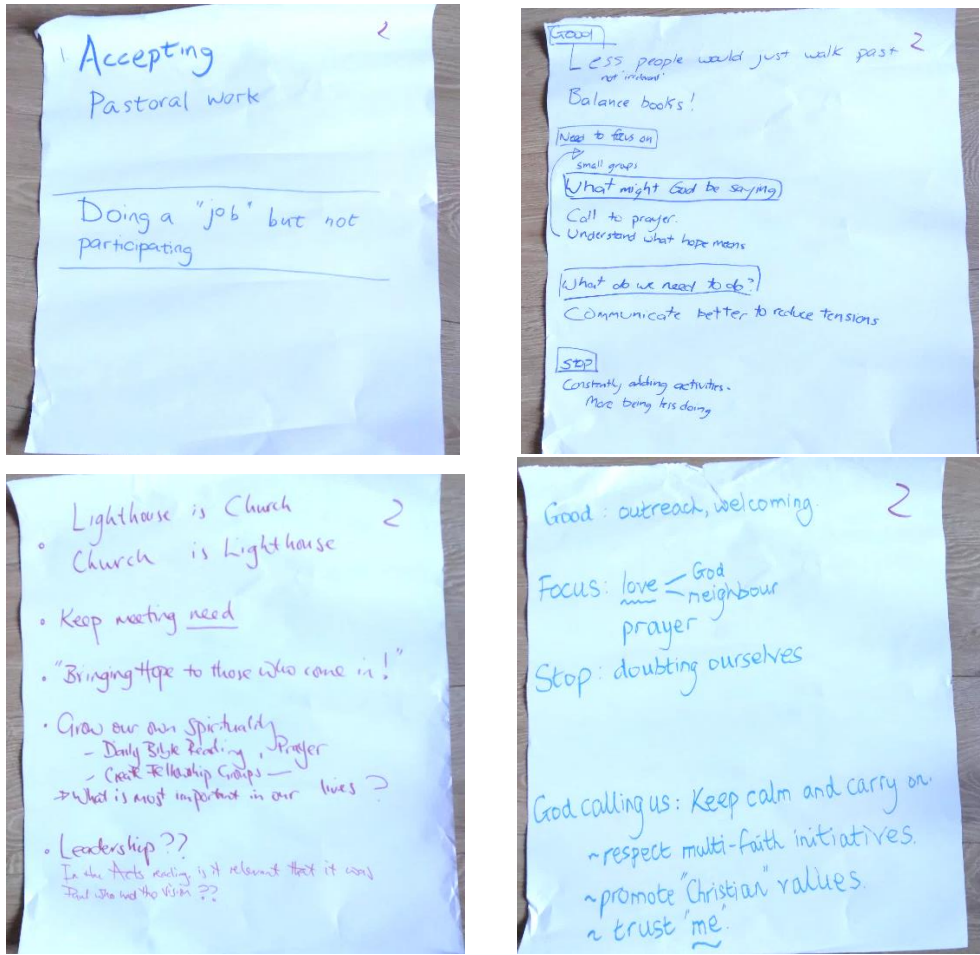
2. We watched a powerpoint presentation highlighting all the church is involved in and reflected what we thought about what had been presented. Views included:



3. We gave the progress made on the vision of 'reaching out, bringing hope' a mark out of 10.

The marks ranged from 5 to 10, the most common (mode) mark was 6, and the average mark was approx. 7.

- We reflected on the extent to which our default mindset had become, 'reaching out, bringing hope' and there was a sense that this had begun to have precedence. It was also noted that new people joining the church need to be introduced to these vision and purpose ideas.
- We considered what had gone well, what the focus should be, what we might stop doing, and what God might be calling us to. Reflections included:



- We briefly pondered what advice we might give to others engaging in a similar journey. Advice to other churches included: sell the building; don't try and do this type of church without at least 10 good leaders; revitalize Churches Together in the town and listen to what others are saying/doing. Stop feeling guilty; be more inclusive.

What I felt I heard, observed and felt prompted to reflect on:

- The church does a lot of things and does initiatives like Lighthouse really well.
- There is a wide range of activities for all ages and needs are being met.
- You are welcoming.

4. I felt you were doing better than you thought you were (regarding reaching out, bringing hope).
5. But ... there was a sense that unless people received the 'hope' of new life in Christ and came to faith (as well as all any other good things encompassed by the Good News), and there was evidence of spiritual growth, and increased of faith and discipleship, this wasn't enough. You wanted to make new disciples as well as meet needs, and progress on this was not as much as you desired.
6. You desired core discipleship practices and lifestyles to be more evident.
7. The same people often end up doing most of the work. There is a need for more people to get involved with things that are the focus; and/or there needs to be less undertaken to encourage greater focus.
8. There seems to be tension between the desire to get more people to attend church services on a Sunday, and a focus on other expressions of the church and reaching out into the community – the outside/in; inside/out dilemma. This tension is often seen as a big challenge, rather than an opportunity to realise transformation.
9. There is significant talk and activity about 'reaching out', but not so much directly about evangelism, and how to do evangelism.

We considered and discussed a number of things that might be considered going forward and my suggestions include:

1. Go where the energy, passion and enthusiasm is, working to strengths and capacities, rather than seek to bring life to things that are less readily realisable.
2. Be open to helping people grow, develop and practice their faith in a variety of ways, encouraging intentionality regarding prayer, sharing of faith, discipleship practices. Look to make disciples as a renewed priority (over, for example, getting people to come to church services).
3. Integrate the 'reaching out, bringing hope' statement more into how you set agendas, facilitate meetings, make plans, decide things, prioritise, run programmes, and deploy resources.
4. If you don't already perhaps offer something like a 'new to the church' type welcome meal or session so new people are introduced to the 'reaching out, bringing hope' vision.
5. Look at making 'evangelism' a key focus in the coming season. Especially: re what is sung about, prayed over, preached on, discussed and considered in Sunday services; in what training and support is offered; in communications via newsletter, social media and online; and in the ways people are encouraged and invited.
6. More information about what the connexion is offering re Evangelism can be found via: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/practise-evangelism/> If you wish me to link you up with my colleague and Evangelism specialist Holly Adams, do let me know.
7. You could think about what 'success' looks like across your areas of ministry (maybe focusing on less things) and calling, and consider having some more specific and more measurable fruitfulness markers in the 'fruit' section of your Action Plan. Page 12-14 of the Mission Planning Toolkit may help with this possibility: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18460/mission-planning-workbook.pdf> and Step 7 of the video featured here may also help: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our->

[work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/lead-churches-into-growth/write-a-great-mission-plan/mission-planning-toolkit/](#) You could set some more deliberate 'strategic intentions' to support your Action Plan. We could talk about this further if helpful.

In this brief set of notes, I have sought to capture the essence of our time together in a concise manner so that you can reflect further on the day and respond accordingly. I would like to thank the church for asking me to be involved in this process and again for their enthusiasm and warm welcome.

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