

United Reformed Church ~ Synod of Scotland

Intentional church ~ bulletin #5

“Stirring the porridge”

This is a phrase used by someone who was wondering how to get the conversations started in a congregation! Getting started is always going to be the most challenging part of any process. Remember, in this first stage of the *intentional church process* all that is being looked for is a range of deepening conversations within each congregation touching as many people as possible both within and outwith the church.

But in many places we are not very practiced in talking deeply with each other - “stirring the porridge”! By now congregations should have at least begun to plan how to begin the conversations around exciting questions: What lies at the centre of our congregation’s life, what drives it forward? What do we intend for our congregation and community over the next 10 years?

How do we chat to each other about faith and doubt?

What are the confessions we need to make as church?

How do others see us?

Do we hide in the church? Do we obscure truth? (Two of the questions used at the intentional church evenings.)

“Voices from the North”

Instead of asking *them in Glasgow* to answer the “porridge stirring question”, Northern Area Council is coming to the rescue! At the end of this month the Area Council is dedicating time to talk “stirring”. This will be shared in bulletin #6. Please send me any stories of successful “stirring” already achieved!

“Planning the process”

Now is the time for congregations to plan how this conversation will be carried forward, planning the autumn conversations. **Now** is the time to ask your children, young people, fellowships, women’s, men’s, indeed all groups to talk intentionality—*What are we for? How are we called to be? Being freed from maintenance to be disciples of Jesus!* **Now** is the time to plan inviting people on the edge of church to participate (people who use your buildings, people who have drifted away, people in your community).

“Naming the beast”

What's in a name?

Intentional church isn’t a catchy title for the steps towards tomorrow’s church. So any ideas on a catch phrase would be welcome. Please send them to me.

John Humphreys 9th April 2006