

WHAT IS A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL?

Bishop Noel Treanor launched 'Living Church' in 2011, from this it was suggested that every parish should have a Parish Pastoral council.

A Parish Pastoral Council is a group of committed people of God (priests, religious and lay people) called upon to review pastoral matters, reflect on them thoroughly and recommend practical conclusions.

METHOD OF SELECTING PARISH PASTORAL MEMBERS

After a series of meetings in 2015, held under the auspices of the 'Living Church' Office, anyone who was interested in becoming a member of the Parish Pastoral Council was invited to put forward his/her name. Thirteen people remain from the group of people who initially volunteered and they together with the parish priest and clergy team form the Parish Pastoral Council in Downpatrick Parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council was commissioned by Bishop Noel Treanor on Sunday 4th October 2015 at Midday Mass.

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

We began our work shortly before we were commissioned in October 2015. We adopted a constitution which is used by most pastoral councils in the diocese of Down and Connor. We meet eight times each year on a Wednesday night in the Parochial House. We follow an agenda and minutes are taken and agreed.



Each meeting begins with a scripture reflection and prayer

IMPORTANT EVENTS 2016-2018

- ◆ In September 2016 the Ceili Community led the Parish Mission during which most families in the parish were visited. Along with the schools retreats and preached mission week this made for a very special time in the life of our parish.
- ◆ A Bethany Bereavement Support Team was trained and to date has visited over one hundred and fifty families affected by bereavement.
- ◆ A Joy of the Gospel Team was trained and began to do door to door work, sharing the Good News of Jesus in our locality.
- ◆ Parish readers did a 10 week training course and were the first group in the diocese to be commissioned by Bishop Trainor as Lectors for the Lord.
- ◆ The space, formerly know as the crypt, has been refurbished, and is now called 'Patrick's Place'.
- ◆ A Welcoming Team has been established and has begun offering hospitality in our parish.
- ◆ The parish prepared for the World Meeting of Families with a parish based programme celebrating popular moments and supporting family life.
- ◆ The Council has established a subgroup to draw up a Baptism Preparation Programme which will be implemented from January 2109.
- ◆ Another group was formed to deliver the 'Discovering Christ' Course as of October 2108 twenty six people are taking this weekly course in Patrick's Place.
- ◆ The Parish, in partnership with Youth Initiatives, has employed two faith development workers who both will have a specific focus on spiritual development of young people.

DRAWING UP A PASTORAL PLAN

The Pastoral Council recognised that we could build on the work and service of many generous and faithful people in our parish by drawing up a Three Year Pastoral Plan. In this we were helped greatly by Jim Deeds from the Living Church Office.

FEBRUARY 2017

- Training for Pastoral Leadership in Drumalis and Crossgar (2 full days and six follow-up sessions)
- Council subgroup meets with Jim Deeds and plans training for the Pastoral Council

MARCH

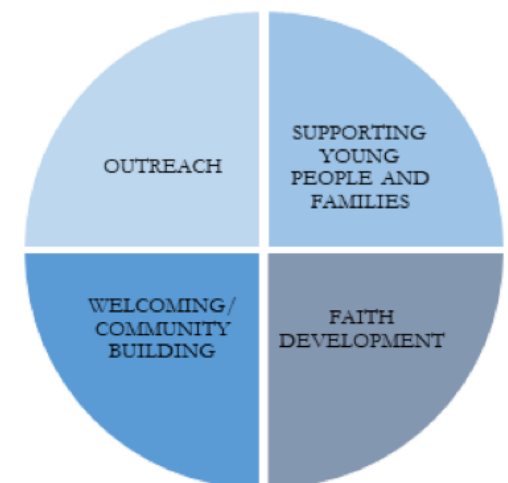
- Day of Reflection and Training in Tobar Mhuire, led by Jim Deeds

APRIL-DECEMBER

- Pastoral Council, facilitated by Jim Deeds draws up a Mission Statement and identifies the main themes and vision that will shape its future work.

JANUARY 2018

- The Parish Pastoral Plan is finalised and subgroups are established to implement it.



MISSION STATEMENT

We, the PPC, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit and inspired by our faith in Christ and the example of St. Patrick, will encourage all parishioners to participate fully in the life of the Parish through the creation of a welcoming Christian community, where all can come to know Christ and reach out to share God's love with all they meet.

DOWNPATRICK PARISH THREE YEAR PASTORAL PLAN

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>
Welcoming & Building Community	We will refurbish the Crypt and offer hospitality after one Sunday Mass	We will establish a group to co-ordinate and enhance digital and print communication in the parish	We will endeavour to establish a new Parish centre
Outreach	We will renew the Joy of the Gospel programme	We will use Liturgical events as a means to reach out to those who at present do not attend	We will seek to promote the involvement of a broader range of parishioners in parish ministries
Faith Development	We will establish a Baptism Preparation Programme	We will re-establish the Children's Liturgy Group	We will look to employ a youth worker for the Pastoral Community
Supporting Young People & Families	We will seek opportunities to include younger people in all parish ministries	We will seek to establish a seasonal youth programme in cooperation with the post primary schools	We seek to engage younger parishioners and families through working with sports clubs, musical societies and youth organisations

The Parish Pastoral Council can be contacted using the address and phone number for the Parish Office



DOWNPATRICK PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

2018-2021



“Without a Vision, the people perish”
(Book of Proverbs)