

## Questionnaire for families and younger members

### Introduction

The survey was issued from June to September 2018. The purpose was to find out what Murrayfield Parish Church (MPC) does well and what could be improved. The plan initially was to survey families but the scope was widened to include all younger members of the congregation. The survey was distributed to 130 members in hard copy or electronically and was completed by 66 people – a **51% return rate**.

The survey comprised 5 sets of closed questions (tick a box) and two open questions (write in comments). The questions are at Annex A.

This report is now available for all members and will be discussed by the Kirk Session In March 2019. **If you have any comments on the report** please pass them to the Minister or email [office@murrayfieldparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@murrayfieldparishchurch.org.uk)

Minister Keith Graham and Families Worker Fay Forsythe will talk to everyone who said they were interested in getting more involved in particular activities.

*MPC Communications Committee  
November 2018*

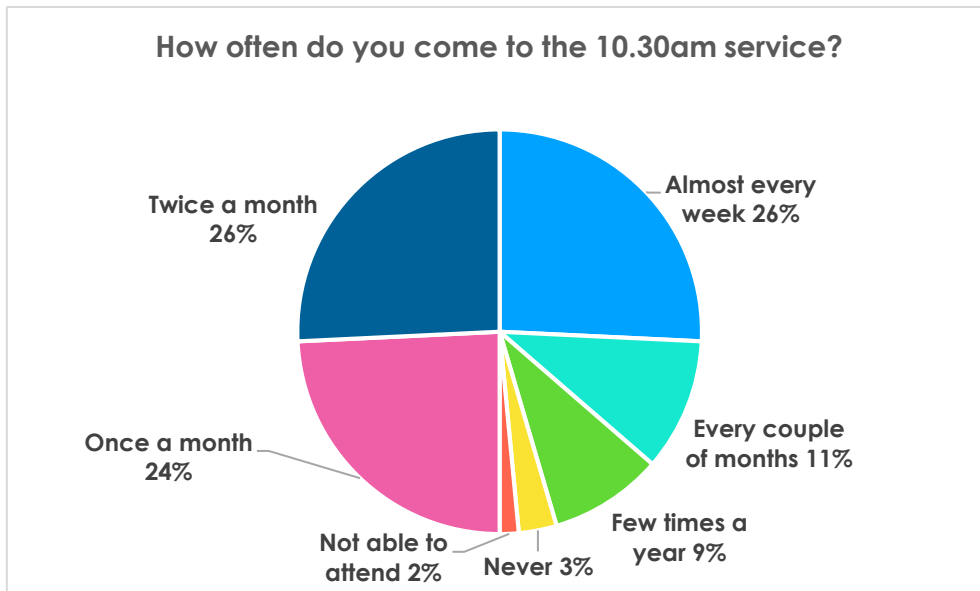
### Headlines

- Overall the findings are extremely positive.
- People strongly value the sense of inclusive community at MPC and are very positive about families work.
- We are broadly getting it right for children - but not for teenagers so the findings endorse the decision to employ a youth worker, while also recognising that competing demands mean this is a challenge.
- The findings give useful pointers about what we could do even better. Some people would like deeper spiritual opportunities; some would like more modern hymns.
- Some question areas provoked different views so getting the balance right is key.

## Findings

### 1. Attendance

Three quarters of people who filled in the survey attend the 10.30am service at least once a month and half more often than that.



**54%** of regular attenders also attend **Messy Church** but **67%** of non-regular attenders go to Messy Church. Six people (9%) who rarely or never attend the 10.30am **do** attend Messy Church. This suggests Messy Church provides a **meaningful alternative to the 10.30am** for some people, while also being attractive for many regular attenders.

### 2. Singing on a Sunday morning

58 (88%) people **like the hymns** / songs we sing (agree or strongly agreed). Of the five people who don't like the singing, comments suggest that they would like more modern or upbeat hymns. Also a few people who said they liked the singing nevertheless wrote comments asking for more upbeat hymns. Here are some example comments:

*"Introduce some modern hymns in additional to the traditional ones."*

*"more piano hymns"*

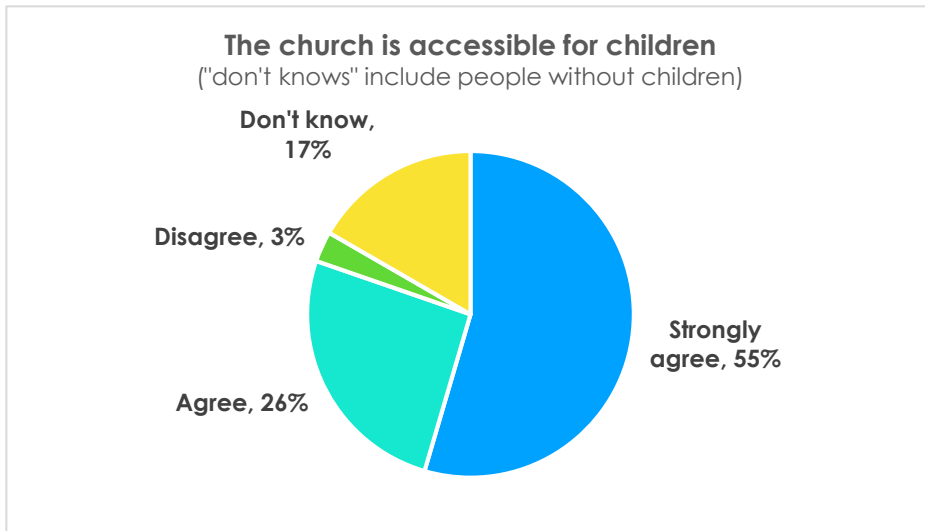
*"more modern hymns with upbeat rhythms during first half with kids"*

One person suggested taking requests which we've done but perhaps not fed back.

One person mentioned the need to recruit more people to the choir

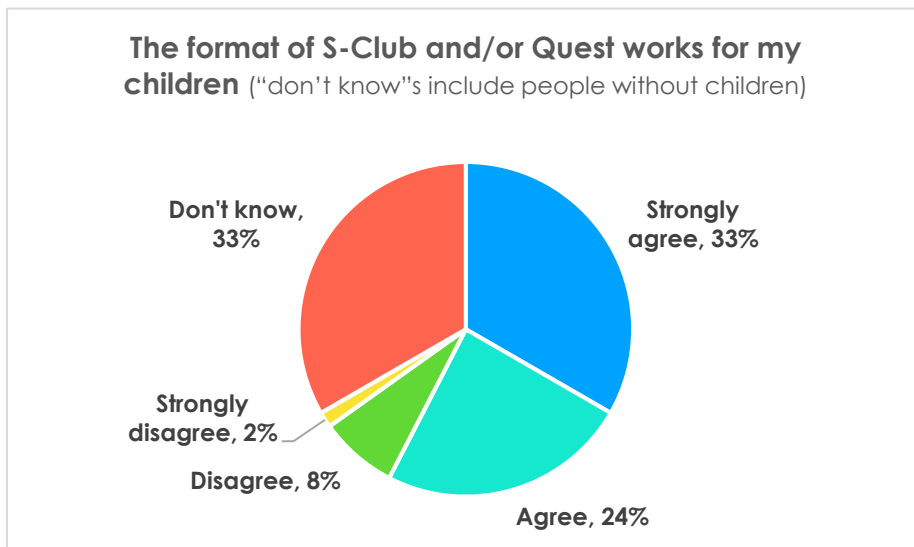
### 3. Provision for children

People were extremely positive about **how accessible the church is for children**. Excluding "don't knows" the figure is **96%**. This was reflected in the comments:



*"child friendly"*  
*"Good inclusive family friendly church"*  
*"The Minister addressing the children [is] very friendly / inclusive."*  
*"Great family feel. People work hard to get it right. Very welcoming"*

People are **almost as positive about S-Club provision - 86%** excluding "don't knows". (But the number of "don't knows" doubled).



*"[I value] the welcome given to young children. The energy and commitment of the leaders, especially those in S-Club Juniors, S-Club, Quest and Fay!"*

From the comments, it's clear that the **main challenge is in relation to older children:**

*"Possibly look at how to bridge the gap for teenagers in a different way"*

*"Put something in place to engage teenagers - difficult I know!"*

*"Perhaps more to encourage the older children to stay engaged with church (Quest is brilliant!)"*

A couple of people suggested involving older children more in the service:

*"Involve the older children more in services eg taking collection, joining the door duty teams, readings"*

But there may be little we can do, at least on a Sunday, in the face of **competing Sunday morning demands**:

*"It's a bit trickier for me to attend now as all 3 children have Sunday am sport"*

*"We attend less as a family now due to competing demands on a Sunday morning. It is nothing to do with the format or content of the Sunday service although in truth we would struggle to get our teenage children to attend Quest"*

A few people would feel there is still **room for improvement** more generally for families:

*"Some aspects of family focus are good eg messy church. But there is more that could be done on the core service that would make it more accessible. Currently think the kids' area is tucked away. I think some research into this would be useful. There is a real opportunity to lead in this area and attract more people."*

*"[I'd like] More engaging family elements during main service"*

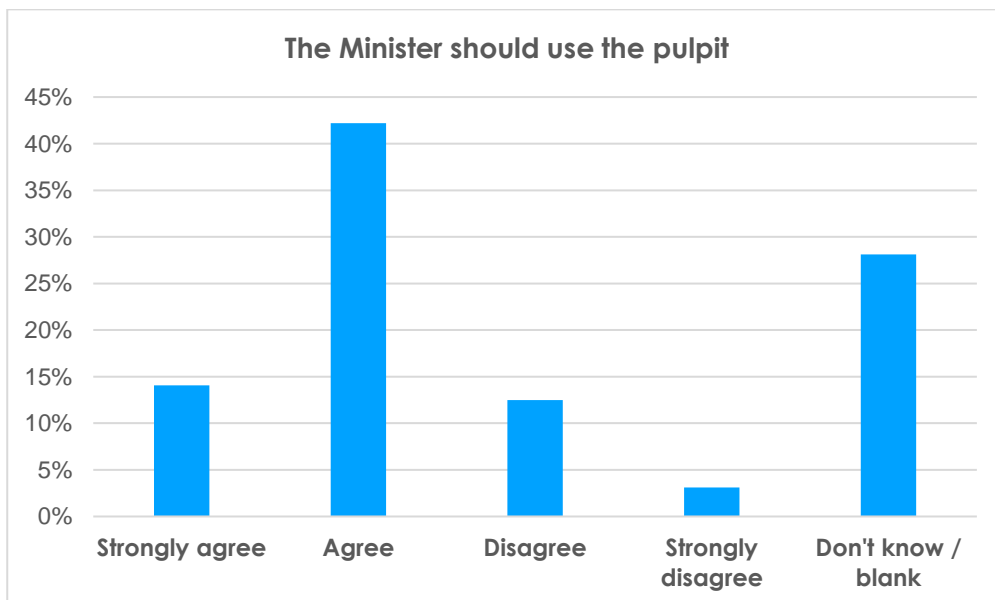
However a few other people made comments highlighting the risk of putting **too much emphasis** on families:

*"Try to include other demographic groups eg singles, widowed, couples without children. There is at present a lot of emphasis on families."*

*"More cross-generation work so those not 'families' or 'older' feel included occasionally."*

#### 4. Other aspects of Sunday worship

The only specific question we asked about Sunday worship was whether the Minister should **use the pulpit**. Most people said yes.



For those who don't like the pulpit there were no comments to explain their views but one person said *"[we are looking for] ... less of the old traditional (and somewhat staid) features of the church"* so it might be about what the pulpit signifies.

A few people made comments about **other aspects of Sunday worship**:

*"I am learning a lot about the Bible through the sermons."*

*"Keith's sermons really challenged and made me think."*

Three people made positive comment about the use of **slides**.

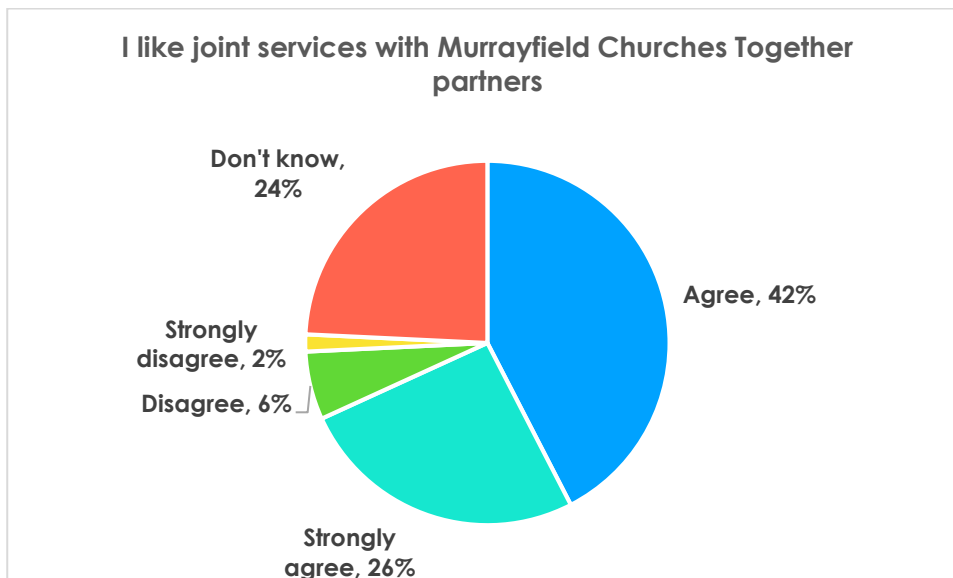
A few suggested there was scope for a few more contemporary elements to worship:

*"Perhaps [there could be] more secular sermons but have a linkage to the values of Christianity"*

*"Have less of a traditional approach eg some services without choir robes, more casual - I prefer one or two singers leading the singing."*

## 5. Joint services with Murrayfield Churches Together

Two thirds like Murrayfield Churches Together (MCT) services but a quarter didn't know.

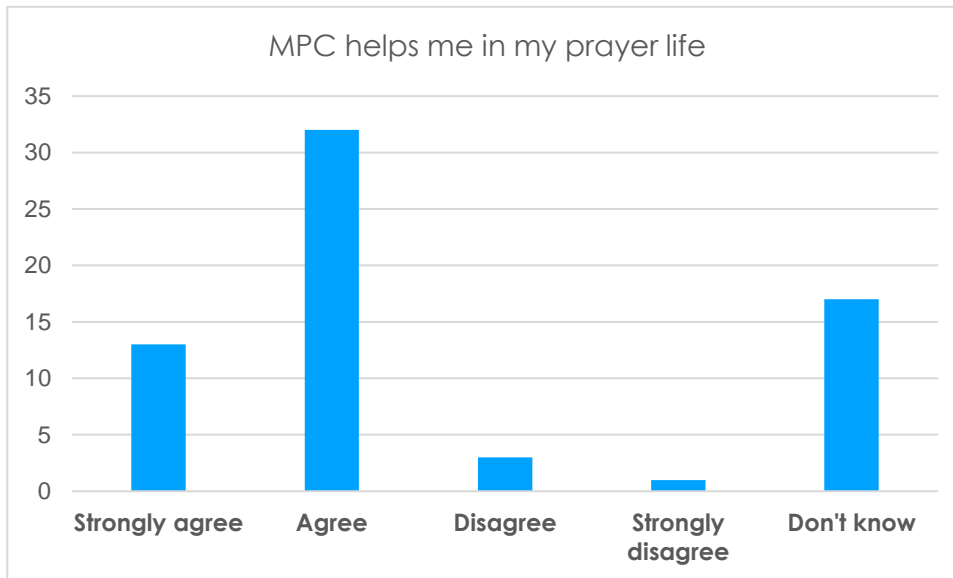


Two people made favourable mention of the Earth Hour service.

One person who did like MCT services qualified their answer saying *"I don't like scripted service (eg World Day of Prayer) which doesn't feel v relevant."*

## 6. Spiritual support

Most people felt that MPC helps them in their prayer life.



However a small number of people made comments that suggested they are looking for **more support or challenge** in this area:

*"We really want to be inspired and challenged at Church. Looking for a more spiritual, emotional connection. This means more challenging teaching"*

*"We need to 'be' more, pray more (eg did we organise prayer meeting for large financial projects or do we just rush to fundraising?)"*

*"Help in my prayer life would be welcome"*

Two other comments on this theme also link to the next point in the next section about **opportunities to meet outside a Sunday**:

*"Become a more spiritual congregation - more prayer & studying of scriptures outwith Sunday worship maybe? On the assumption this would lead to growth in other matters."*

*"I wonder if a mid-week quiet, meditative time say Wednesday 8pm might be of value to younger people who are busy with work & family. I include myself in this."*

## 7. Other things going on at MPC

We asked about involvement in five other areas of MPC life. 53 people (80%) are involved in **at least one of those five things**. Here is the breakdown by activity:

	<b>I already take part</b>	<b>I don't take part but would like to</b>	<b>Maybe – if I knew more</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>This is not for me</b>
Family events	56%	9%	3%	6%	26%
Messy Church	52%	8%	2%	11%	29%
Small group to explore faith	21%	6%	9%	18%	45%
Kirk Sessions groups that look after specific areas of work	30%	3%	9%	23%	35%
MPC partner projects or charities	14%	6%	18%	27%	35%

**Over half** take part in **Family events** and **Messy Church**.

**Small groups to explore faith** are less popular and almost half say “this is not for me”. However, several of those who do take part in small groups referenced small groups as something they really value in the comments section. For example “[I value] Opportunities for fellowship, small groups for Bible study.”

Fewer are involved in Kirk Session or MCT groups but around a quarter “didn't know” so it might be worth doing more to explain what is involved.

There is **appetite for greater involvement** from some: **15** different people **would like to** take part in at least one of these activities so it will be important to give them the opportunity to do so if we can. 13 people said they weren't involved in any of the five activities but **eight** of those **expressed interest** in getting involved in at least one activity.

On a related point, while **two thirds** (43) agreed or strongly agreed that MPC **made use of their talents**, three disagreed and 20 didn't know suggesting that there may be untapped talent MPC could be making more use of. Indeed one person referred to this in their comments:

*“I'm going to get involved so I can share more [talents]! ... We were so warmly welcomed when we first came along and if we can do that for all that would be wonderful!”*

48 people (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that there were **enough opportunities to meet** outside a Sunday morning. But some disagreed (6) or didn't know (12).

A few people felt that MPC could do **more to reach out the wider community** and some were keen to help:

*“I would like to engage more with people in the local community that need our help and would be happy to get involved in this*

*“Try and encourage more people from the community to attend and become involved in the church.”*

## 8. Communications

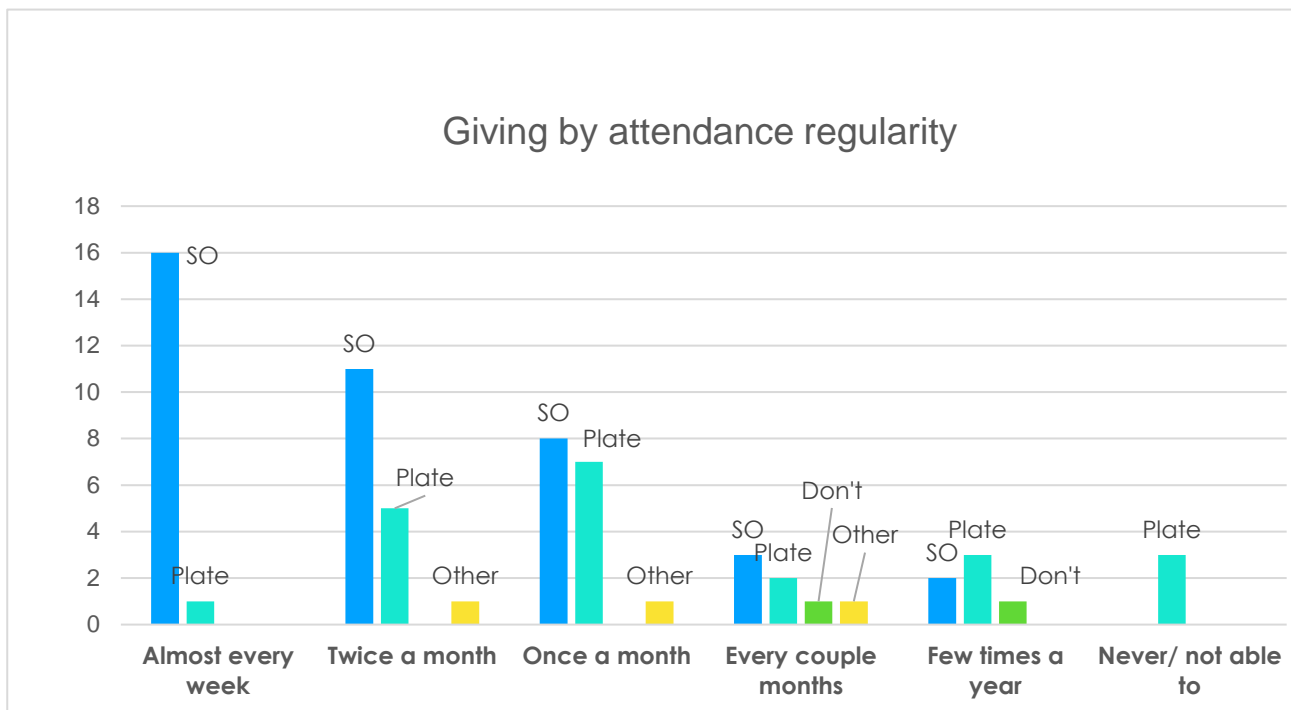
53% agreed and 44% strongly agreed that they got **good communication** about what's going on in MPC. No one disagreed and only two didn't know.

One person who felt communication was good nevertheless suggested we could "Give information about what's going on to new or returning parishioners at church or by leaflet drops"

## 9. Money

58% give by standing order<sup>1</sup>. **A third** put money in the plate.

In general the more regularly people attend the more likely they are to give by direct debit as the graph below shows. Nevertheless there are a few regular attenders who have not felt able to commit to standing order.



"Other" included "parents give"

<sup>1</sup> The answers of people who wrote "freewill offering" and "payroll giving" in the "other" box have been added to the standing order total.





*"The church is involved in the community and makes the Church relevant to the modern day"*

*"Supporting charities, providing a place for people suffering from dementia, pastoral care for all ages, stimulating worship & helping people to grow in their faith, friendship and fellowship for everyone"*

## 11. What could we do better or differently?

Over a third (26) left this box blank, or wrote "nothing" or "don't know". Everyone else made various suggestions – some people made more than one. The table below is a broad summary of the main themes and the number of people who said something related to that theme. Relevant quotes are in the sections above.

More provision for older children / teenagers	9
More engagement with the wider community	9
More contemporary music	8
More general engagement of children and families	7
Improving prayerfulness or spiritual challenge	5
Involving demographic groups in MPC other than children and families	3
More contemporary elements to the service	3
We could be friendlier to each other (example quote: "Make a point of saying good morning and get a good morning back.")	3

There were a few other individual comments that don't fit into the above list but they have been noted.

## Thoughts raised by the survey findings

1. Is there anything more that could be done to increase **attendance** at the 10.30am service or is it as regular as it can be, given people have other commitments?
2. The results back up the Kirk Session's decision to employ a **youth worker**.
3. Some people are looking for deeper opportunities for **spiritual support** and we should explore different ways of meeting this need.
4. The inclusion of more **modern hymns** at the 10.30 service is strongly welcomed. The Minister could sometimes include a song that small children can sing.
5. People are happy with communication but the findings nevertheless suggest we could do more to **tell people** about the range of things going on and how to get involved.
6. The survey suggests there is even more we can do to make use of the talents and enthusiasm in MPC. We could consider a **talent survey** in future.
7. Some people are looking for MPC to do more to reach out to the **local community**. We might start by explaining the community activities we already are involved in (such as the Murrayfield Club and TOTs) but we could explore other opportunities, including continuing engagement of many non-members through TOTs and Messy Church?
8. Can we do more to encourage people to set up **standing orders** (which give more certainty about likely income and are less affected by ups and downs in attendance)?

## Annex A: Questionnaire for families and younger members

### 1. Roughly how often do you come to the 10.30am Sunday service – please tick one

Almost every week		Once every couple of months	
Twice a month		A few times a year	
Once a month		Never	

### 2. Please tell us how you feel about some of things we do on a Sunday morning (tick)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I like the hymns / songs we sing					
The church is accessible for children					
The format of S-Club and/or Quest works for my children (tick "don't know" if you don't have children)					
The minister should use the pulpit					
I like joint services with Murrayfield Churches Together partners					

### 3. Please tell us about other things going on at Murrayfield Parish Church (MPC) (tick)

	I already take part	I don't take part but would like to	Maybe – if I knew more	This is not for me	Don't know
Small group to explore faith					
Messy Church					
Family events					
Kirk Sessions groups that look after specific areas of work					
MPC partner projects or charities					

### 4. Is Murrayfield Parish Church (MPC) doing enough for you?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I get good communication about what's going on in MPC					
MPC helps me in my prayer life					
MPC makes use of my talents					
There are enough opportunities to meet outside of Sunday mornings					

**5. Do you give money to Murrayfield Parish Church? (tick one)**

I give by direct debit/standing order	
I put money in the plate when I'm in church	
I don't give money	
Other (please write in)	

**6. What do you value about Murrayfield Parish Church that we should keep doing?**

**7. What could we do better or differently?**

If you would be happy for Keith or Fay to contact you to ask you more about your answers please write your name below.

Thank you for your time!