

Dear friends,

Leading your Church into Growth, “Growing Church the Jesus Way”

I attended the Leading your Church into Growth conference in October 2024 as a fact-finding visit and was there with over 100 people, mostly from the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. I was the only Church of Scotland representative and was made very welcome with an expressed hope that more of us from Scotland would follow.

Representatives from congregations (rather than individuals) are encouraged to attend, usually in groups of three or four (including the minister/Church leader). This team approach helps explore the learning in the context of your own local situation and then provides support in numbers to return to your local congregation to move on with revitalisation and mission. The course then provides participants with follow-on materials that help to share the course content with our own Kirk Session and congregation.

The emphasis throughout was on the practical and being locally relevant. Each session took simple steps leading us through the material and then considering what this would look like in our own local situation. The training culminated in participants putting together a plan, simple steps to help move from maintenance mode to mission, identifying strengths and weaknesses to work on, and recognising seasons in the church/community year to focus on different aspects of putting the course into practice.

I found the times spent talking to others was particularly inspiring. There was a positive atmosphere and listening to other's stories of being in the same situation as many of our Church of Scotland congregations (large parishes, low numbers, little or no children, aging congregations) but hearing a sense of hope that through putting the LyCiG steps into practice, God will grow their congregation. I sensed this particularly from two Church leaders who I spoke with who had recently moved parish and one of the first things they had done was bring members of their new congregations on a LyCiG course because they knew the positive difference that it had made in their previous parish.

Overall, I found the course to be really accessible, simple, local, and empowering. The LyCiG prayer is

God of Mission:
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

I share this prayer for you and your congregation and encourage you to apply to Seeds for Growth for funding to attend the conference from 2nd - 4th February 2026.

Every blessing,

Jamie Milliken
Convener of the Seeds for Growth Committee