

MISSION ACTION PLAN

**The Parishes of St.Margaret's Topsham
and St.Luke's Countess Wear**



**A MISSION COMMUNITY
THE LOCAL CHURCH
IN ITS FULLNESS**

1. OUR PURPOSE & VISION

To witness to the Gospel, through worship and fellowship, prayer and teaching, pastoral care and services to the community.

In our Mission Community we will aim to:

- **Build a community vision and common sense of calling** – we will foster a vision of community that is growing and developing in faith, in fellowship, in worship, in pastoral care and outreach.
- **Support the work of the clergy and include more people in God's work in the parish** – understanding that all Christians are called to be Christ's hands and feet here on earth and enabling the ordained clergy to focus their attention and energies where they are most needed.
- **Make use of gifts** – we will make more use of existing gifts within our community and help people to discover new gifts and develop new skills
- **Address unmet needs** – we will look to recognize and acknowledge areas of ministry where there is an unmet need and work to fulfill those needs

The process of setting up a mission community involves an extensive process of discussion, consultation and discernment, as to the approach to be adopted, our vision and purpose and the people God is calling to help put it into practice.

This is a wonderful opportunity to engage with the congregations at St Margaret's and St Luke's. It also affords an opportunity to recognise and acknowledge areas of strength and weakness in the current ministry in each parish, to plan and work together in areas of our Christian life and build a strong and enduring community of faith, witness and service

2. WORSHIP

We will aim to provide the following general pattern of worship:

- A principal act of worship at 10.00am in each parish every Sunday.
- 3 / 4 of these 10.00am services will be Eucharistic services
- A weekly Sunday 8 am Holy Communion (BCP) service, alternating between each church
- A weekly Sunday evening service in Topsham and occasional Sunday evening services at Countess Wear
- A weekly mid-week Holy Communion service in each parish
- Occasional united services for the two parishes and churches of other denominations (in particular Topsham Methodist & Roman Catholic churches).

3. OUTREACH & WIDER COMMUNITY

We will aim to make people welcome by paying particular attention to special occasions (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals) and the main festivals in the churches year (eg. Christmas, Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday).

We will develop an effective system of pastoral care

We will foster links with schools, community groups and caring organizations

We will have a particular concern for visitors

We will aim to use social events, concerts, festivals and other events in church as an opportunity to reach out to people who would not normally come into church.

We will plan together to meet the challenge of welcoming and reaching out to the residents of the new housing development at the former Royal Navy stores depot

4. YOUTH

We will encourage young people to play a full part in the life of the church by:

- Giving a high priority to supporting Childrens Church & the Seekers Group
- Inviting the young people to lead part of the Sunday morning worship on a regular basis
- Exploring opportunities to work with the Countess Wear Action Group
- Fostering links with local schools
- Investigating the scope for organizing a “holiday club” and/or weekday activities after school

5. GROWING IN FAITH

We will provide opportunities for people to explore their faith and grow in personal discipleship.

In particular, we will:

- Meet on a regular basis for corporate prayer as a united mission community
- Promote bible study, personal & corporate prayer, home groups, Lent groups and “quiet” days
- Organise discipleship courses on a regular basis
- Support those preparing for Baptism, Marriage or Confirmation

6. MINISTRY

We will aim to make effective use of our clergy by supporting them in their ministry and freeing them from unnecessary administrative tasks, insofar as is possible.

We will welcome the ministry of retired clergy, Readers and other lay people authorized to exercise a ministry within the church.

We will encourage members of the church to develop ministries within the church, in particular:

- (a) taking part in leading worship;
- (b) work with children & young people;
- (c) parish administration; and
- (d) pastoral care.

We will seek to foster and encourage new vocations to ministry.

7. ADMINISTRATION

The Mission Community will be built upon the following principles:

- Two Parishes and PCCs to remain distinct and separate, but with a strong commitment to joint working
- Regular joint meetings of Clergy & parish representatives to share in plans, resources, problems.
- No changes to financial arrangements
- No changes to arrangements for music, choir and organists
- A strong focus on good communication between the two parishes, looking to develop a joint magazine / newsheet / website
- An emphasis on delegation, empowerment & personal responsibility
- Careful consideration of whether some form of paid administrator would be an appropriate use of church funds.

8. CONCLUSION

We believe that the Mission Community will offer a powerful and visual affirmation of the unity of purpose to which God is calling both parishes. It will also recognise the movement in the wider church towards every member ministry, as the mismatch between clergy numbers, church finances and ever-increasing need continues to grow. There are many challenges, but we believe that it is a journey of faith that we are called to make together.

"The creation of Mission Communities is the cornerstone of our working out of God's purpose for us in this Diocese. They embody the vision of a Church which is both universal and local and in which we are all called to grow in our discipleship, to develop a pattern of shared ministry, and to explore our vocation to the Mission and Ministry of the Church of God."

+ Michael Exon.



If you have any questions about this document, or would like to comment on its content, please contact:

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