

# St Mary's Church, Hitcham - Mission Action Plan 2016

St. Mary's Hitcham is a lively community of believers who meet together in Hitcham on the outskirts of Burnham, Bucks. We are New Wine influenced church and a member of the Jubilee River Group of churches within the Deanery of Burnham and Slough, the Archdeaconry of Buckingham and Diocese of Oxford. We have just under 100 members of all ages and we meet together to worship in a diversity of styles. Our styles range from traditional to the contemporary and all styles are Biblically grounded and rooted in prayer.

We seek to be a loving, authentic, joyful community, growing together in Christ and supporting one another. We have a passion to serve God in our local community of Hitcham and Burnham and are growing into this calling. We support Lighthouse Burnham, a summer holiday week for children aged 4-11 as well as a number of smaller local initiatives including "The Well @ Lent Rise, a charity serving the community in the local community of Burnham. We are committed to an annual Alpha course open to all.

Our church building is in a semi-rural area on the edge of Burnham. The church is 800 years old and has been refurbished to be a flexible space to meet today's needs.

## Context

Over the last year, the PCC and Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) have met many times to pray and develop our Mission Action Plan. The first 3 meetings involved the then incumbent Rev Nicky Pledger. The last 3 have been held in her absence due to ill health and early retirement. This Mission Action Plan (MAP) has been developed out of all the meetings. A new Mission Statement evolved out of the early meetings and it was established that the church was keen to continue to develop its missional activities whilst being mindful of limited resources as the desire to develop new ways of reaching people is always greater than the resources available.

The mission statement that evolved is:

***"Growing in the love of Christ & sharing His love with others"***

It was also agreed that St Mary's would follow four seasons each year:

- ✦ Spring Season – Lent through to Easter, a time for growth within the church
- ✦ Summer Season – Lighthouse preparation and prayer
- ✦ Autumn Season – Alpha prayer, preparation and delivery
- ✦ Winter Season – Christmas preparation and celebrations



The MAP is organised according to Oxford Diocese's Living Faith priorities:

- **Sustaining the Sacred Centre** – *Being rooted in God through worship and prayer*
- **Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership** – *Including lay leadership*
- **Creating Vibrant Christian Communities** – *Communities that are full of life and spirit filled*
- **Making Disciples** – *Bringing people to Christ and nurturing them*
- **Making a difference in the world** – *In our local community and beyond*

In order to shape our thoughts, we considered 2 questions for each area:

- A. **What happens at St. Mary's already? Of these, which do we believe we should continue and which to discard**
- B. **What do we aspire to be doing to glorify God at St Mary's?**

The resultant plan has been presented to the congregation and has been displayed on our notice board for comment.

It is important we recognise and affirm areas where good work is already happening and where we see God's blessings. We have therefore considered areas that we wish to continue making a priority as well as new areas to which we aspire. We recognise that these priorities may take time to develop further and may change particularly during an Interregnum and with the appointment of a new Incumbent. We are however committed to continuing to pray into these and to continue to listen to God for His direction and calling. We will review the plan as a whole with our new Incumbent at the earliest opportunity.



## Sustaining the Sacred Centre

St Mary's has an established pattern of services as detailed below. This pattern attempts to provide a variety of services and worship styles to serve the needs of the varied congregations. Keeping Jesus at the centre of all we do is a core value for St Mary's.

### Our Services

FREQUENCY	TIME	STYLE	DETAILS
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sundays	09:00am	Informal worship service	Live Worship & word, often lay-led, with children's work and prayer ministry. This service is 'New Wine' influenced.
	11:00am	Holy Communion	Common Worship Order One with traditional hymns and organ.
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	10:00am	Family Holy Communion	A liturgy based on Common Worship structure & prayers, but more informal, with worship led by the Worship Group. The aim of this service is to bring the two morning congregations together in worship.
4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	08:00am	Holy Communion	Book of Common Prayer
	09:00am	Informal worship service	Live Worship & word, often lay-led, with children's work and prayer ministry. This service is 'New Wine' influenced.
	11:00am	Morning Prayer	Lay led service with traditional hymns and organ.
Wednesdays	10:30am	Holy Communion	A quiet and meditative service, common worship with booklets.

In addition to the services above we also have:

### Monthly Prayer Evenings 8:00pm

We have a **monthly prayer evening** held on the **first Tuesday** of each month which is lay led.

### Small Groups

A range of diverse Small Groups who meet regularly in homes and other venues.

### **Our priorities are to continue to:**

- ❖ Keep Jesus at the centre of all we do through life-relevant Bible based teachings
- ❖ Ensure that every decision and action is prayerfully considered
- ❖ Keep the current pattern of services during the Interregnum, including the monthly prayer evenings
- ❖ Encourage Lay leaders to preach and lead services
- ❖ Provide Prayer Ministry after the 9:00 am and 10:00am services
- ❖ Encourage topical services and sermons as appropriate
- ❖ Ensure that the Welcome into the church is friendly and no “stranger” feels like a stranger for long
- ❖ Offer appropriate services and support for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
- ❖ Encourage a season of growth and sustenance for leaders within the church
- ❖ Attend events that continue to nurture members e.g. Christian conferences, New Wine events and local initiatives

### **We aspire to:**

- Survey the congregation to seek their preferences and views to increase attendance at the joint services
- Provide prayer ministry after all the services
- Develop different ways of encouraging attendance at Small Groups and look at different types of small groups
- Ensure the Sacred Centre is at the heart of Small Groups
- Further develop our communications through use of a variety of media
- Develop more Leaders and Preachers from amongst the lay membership
- Develop prayer partners and triplets
- Develop an Annual Bereavement Church service
- Increase collaborative work with local churches possibly doing joint preparation for Baptisms, confirmation and weddings
- Support daily prayer and bible reading
- Further develop an established maintenance team

## Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership

St Mary's is blessed by a number of leaders who have answered God's call to serve and the Leaders offer mutual support to each other. There is a small Ministry Leadership team who meet in between PCC meetings to pray and to explore God's plans. The PCC meet 5 times a year for business meetings and during the interregnum have agreed to meet more frequently. Development of Lay Leaders is essential to St Mary's.

### Our priorities are to continue to:

- ❖ Encourage all the Lay leaders to keep Jesus at the centre of all they do
- ❖ Encourage the small, established and committed lay leaders to continue to lead services
- ❖ Encourage lay leaders to lead particular ministries
- ❖ Encourage the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) to prayerfully consider gifting of members and enable more people to develop their gifts to lead ministries, encouraging members to come alongside current leaders
- ❖ Support the MLT who are unelected but invited by the Incumbent based on gifts identified
- ❖ Use the annual Alpha course as a tool to develop more leaders from the helpers

### We aspire to:

- Resume support for the new Incumbent when appointed
- Find ways to ensure all the Leaders are supported, spiritually, emotionally and practically, particularly during the interregnum period.
- Take advantage of Diocesan training opportunities as well as other Christian training opportunities
- Develop every person ministry within the church
- Develop enough Leaders to release people to lead in their primary gifting
- Encourage Leaders to visit other churches to "feed them" and to learn by example
- Follow the Deanery's lead in collaborative leadership amongst local churches
- Provide role guidance to those serving
- Set a term of office for roles to encourage new leaders
- Support leaders involved in collaborative work such as Lighthouse

## Creating Christian Communities

Pastoral Care within the congregations has generally been the responsibility on the Incumbent although it has long been a desire to develop a small pastoral team for St Mary's. Particular needs are shared at MLT meetings and support may be offered by appropriate Lay Leaders, the Area Dean or visiting Clergy in the case of the Interregnum.

Through collaborative work within Burnham Lighthouse and TheWell@LentRise charities, there are good relationships with Lay Leaders in some local churches where mutual support can be offered.

St Mary's has paid its Parish Share to the Diocese every year in full despite a particularly difficult period where we had to delay our payments. The PCC is also committed to giving away 10% of income to charities and mission organisations outside of the church. The church has had ad hoc stewardship campaigns but the PCC has resolved to have one stewardship campaign per year. The emphasis for many years has been on pledged regular giving enhanced by Gift Aid. However, with increases in Parish share being expected, it is crucial to St Mary's that Parish share is re-evaluated as our congregation has sadly diminished though we wish to share God's blessings and encourage committed and generous regular giving from the congregations.

### Our priorities are to continue to:

- ❖ Encourage Small Groups for fellowship as well as biblical teaching
- ❖ Give away 10% mission giving
- ❖ Eat and Play in fellowship together as a whole Church
- ❖ Encourage the Hospitality team to continue to serve the whole Church community
- ❖ Ensure that we have spirit led teaching for each service style
- ❖ Develop our Mums & Toddlers group – Roots and Shoots
- ❖ Develop our children's and youth work
- ❖ Sustain a Prayer Ministry team
- ❖ Pay Parish Share in full

### We aspire to:

- Improve our communications both within the church and in the local community
- Be an encouraging community
- Develop contacts with Baptism families and invite to Roots & Shoots and children's church i.e. Big Friendly God club (BFG)
- Develop links with Pre-schools and Scouts in the Parish
- Increase our electoral role
- Share the work load amongst the congregation
- Provide Live streamed teaching from New Wine in the Church during the Conference for those who can't attend
- Increase the number of committed givers

## Making Disciples

We are passionate about sharing God's love as highlighted in our mission statement. We have run Alpha courses for many years and are committed to running one every Autumn season. The last course was entirely lay led due to the ill health of the Incumbent. We work to ensure our welcome is warm and friendly and encourage re-attendance. There is no school in our Parish but we have a pre-school and a new housing development being built within the Parish which offers new opportunities to reach out to the new residents and parents.

### Our priorities are to continue to:

- ❖ Run an annual Alpha course each Autumn
- ❖ Leaflet our Parish about our events
- ❖ Offer a variety of small groups
- ❖ Offer regular teaching and events for preschoolers, school age children and youth within the Church
- ❖ Use fellowship time e.g. Harvest lunch, small group meals to share God's love
- ❖ Encourage attendance at events such as New Wine conferences, Lee Abbey weekends, Christian Vision for Men plus other Christian events
- ❖ Show God's love in the "little things" such as driving people to church and events
- ❖ Use people's gifting and desire to learn new skills to show God's love e.g. flower arranging

### We aspire to:

- Provide a Youth Alpha following Lighthouse
- Establish a connection with the new communities in the new Housing being built
- Mentor and support disciples at all levels of discipleship
- Develop an active pastoral team
- Invite all Alpha attendees to an annual reunion
- Develop post Alpha groups to continue growth
- Develop more fellowship opportunities for non church members or those on the fringes
- Provide a variety of ways for people to become a part of a Christian community.
- Develop ways of maintaining a continuous relationship with families

## Making a difference in the world

Members of the church are involved in community service in a variety of ways including support for ministries overseas. Many individuals also support children through Compassion and as a church this is encouraged. The BFG also support a World Vision child through their weekly giving and prayers. We also endeavour to be a Fair Trade church.

### Our priorities are to continue to:

- ❖ Support and encourage all helpers at Lighthouse
- ❖ Use Fair Trade products wherever possible
- ❖ Promote individual sponsorship of children through organised routes eg Compassion & World Vision
- ❖ Provide a monthly service and support to the local Resource centre and Burnham Lodge
- ❖ Nurture links with St Mary Magdalene, Ritchie, South Africa and encourage visits
- ❖ Support charitable organisations through prayer and financial and practical donations
- ❖ Host the local Mothers Union group

### We aspire to:

- Further develop the support to the Resource centre and Burnham Lodge Home
- Be more involved with Churches Together in Burnham
- Inform and involve our congregation regarding Ritchie
- Develop prayer support for Lighthouse throughout the year
- Improve collaboration with other Churches regarding Lighthouse
- Encourage every member ministry

## OUR PRAYER

*Lord, the PCC lifts this Mission Action Plan in which we have endeavoured to keep You at the Centre of our thoughts, discussions and actions, both those currently being undertaken and those to which we aspire. We ask for your blessing on the contents of this document, along with strength, stamina and commitment to carry it out.*

*However, we are aware that You are currently preparing a new Incumbent to come to St. Mary's Church and would very much like them to know that the PCC will be there to support them in whichever direction You have chosen for them to lead 'us', safe in the knowledge that this has come from You.*

*Amen*