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Minutes of the East of Eden Mission Community Steering Group Meeting 5.9.17

Present : Revd Stephen Pye, Revd Les Wallace Bryan Gray (Chair) Helen Armstrong, Kathleen Doidge - Harrison, Ray Wager

Apologies: Jim Butterworth

1. Arrangements following the retirement of Rev David Fowler

The interregnum is to be under the ownership of the Mission Community. SP to meet with the Church Wardens - proposed date 10.10.17 co ordained by Peter Pickthall, Great Salkeld. Under Canon Law, legalities re baptisms, funerals etc are signed off by the Rural Dean. SP Suggests that Bishop gives permission for SP to carry out this role. A Deanery Plan is required for future process e.g. to combine Benefices for the progress of the Mission Community. This needs approval by the Church Commissioners. It could be seen as a re- alignment rather than combination. A meeting of all PCCs in the Deanery is planned before the Deanery Synod on 8th November. The meeting will be for information and clarification using the outline of the 2015 MC presentation. It is hoped that wardens will take the information back to congregations.

2. Q and A document and draft process

This has been written by BG and offered for consultation Richard Teal and Ray Wager They flagged up the need to use the language of ecumenism and this has been addressed. The recruitment of a Mission Community leader to live at Kirkoswald Vicarage will begin after November 17th with the hope is that an appointment can be made by Easter 2018. Whilst the process is Anglican, the work is ecumenical in operation and the Archdeacon can act ecumenically. SP stressed the importance of continuing with co leadership for time being. BG stressed the need to have the best leader appointment possible for the future.

3. Worship

From January 2018 a whole Mission Community worship plan will be in operation. Patterns of worship during an Anglican interregnum normally stay the same. This will be discussed by the Church Wardens and at staff meetings.

4. Appointment of Pastor at Kirkoswald

Keith Speck has been appointed as a part time pastor living in the Methodist Manse at Kirkoswald. Keith, originally from the Midlands was ordained in the Pentecostal Church but has worshipped at Penrith Methodist Church for eighteen years before moving to live in Carlisle two years ago. Keith and his wife Elizabeth will move into the Manse on 8th September. Keith is interested in church growth – why do some churches grow more than others and is excited about working within the Mission Community. Keith and Elizabeth have four grown up children and five grandchildren. To find out more visit www.eastofedenmc.org.uk

5. Lay Leadership

CCL are running a six week course on Mission in 2018. This idea is to run it within Mission Communities with lay leaders being supported by clergy. A course of run by Nicki Penington and Richard Passmore 'training the trainers' will be held in at Church House. LW and SP to attend.

A questionnaire has now been sent to the nineteen churches and chapels in the Mission Community requesting details of church stewards/ wardens and those equipped to lead services etc.

Judith Moore will collate the information which will form a database. Stewards and wardens will meet the Lay Leadership group on 21.9.17. This information could lead well into the Mission course planned for 2018.

Action: LW to remind some churches to respond so that information is complete

6. Shaping Strategies for Mission Growth

Thanks to Kathleen for writing a précis for this useful document which can provide a checklist for the steering group over time. (see below).

7. Buildings

On hold for the time being. A long term issue.

Action: SP to contact John Slee re working on a buildings database

8. Website

Continue to promote the use of the website of communication. Note that the website 'A Church near you' is frequently used for families to arrange baptisms etc.

Action LW to speak to JDH

9. Finance

General fund £1056.73

Messy Church £1138.00

Godly Play £999.04

Christmas and Easter Journeys £62.50

-there are a few small changes from these figures presented in the last set of minutes (25.7.17)

10. Moving Mountains 8-11th March 2018

Would like to have a celebratory service with speaker as part of the events.

Action: agreed that BG should write to Mike Talbot enquiring about the possibility of inviting Archbishop of York, John Sentamu to speak. Positive aspects of this proposal – 19 congregations working together, 4 church schools represented.

Other ideas included showing the film 'The Shack' in several venues across the MC.

Explore the idea of MC Harvest Festival for 2018.

Forthcoming event

Isabel Burch and Rev Sarah Lunn to speak about their visit to Zululand on 16.10.17 at Great Salkeld Village Hall.

AOB

Discussion about logo, headed notepaper, notice board information for MC

Action: HA and BG to work on downloadable resources for the website

LW to circulate letterhead

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th November 2017 4-6pm at Langwathby Methodist Church.

SHAPING STRATEGIES FOR MISSION AND GROWTH IN RURAL AND MULTI-CHURCH GROUPS

This is a summary of a summary! The summary was written by James Bell, former Bishop of Ripon, and Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer, for The Church of England. Their summary is dated 2017.

The rural church makes up two-thirds of CofE parishes and forty per cent of worshippers. The distinctive vocation of the CofE is to be there for everyone within the geographical parish. Within a multi-church group, a single minister cannot operate a traditional approach. Forty per cent of stipendiary clergy are due to retire in the next ten years.

Rural churches need to claim the model of the body of Christ in their worshipping life and practice; to take time and prayer to discover and act on the communal calling to be the body of Christ; welcoming everyone to take part; to discern and offer their gifts and skills. The mission of God's church in rural communities is a corporate undertaking requiring the whole congregation to be involved.

Archbishop Justin Welby said that, "*Any church that leaves things to the professionals is committing missionary suicide*" and "*What draws people in is community ... They are loved by others; they are accepted; they are welcomed.*"

The characteristics of being the Body of Christ developed for the rural church

- Incarnational - visible and active in the community
- Relational - stressing the importance of personal relationships and expressing love of neighbour, especially people "not like us"
- Contextual - responding to and engaged with the realities of the local community
- Participatory - creating space for all to offer their gifts and skills; working creatively between multi-church groups
- Spiritual - showing in word and deed the love of God, praying regularly for the needs of the community

Multi-church Groups and Growth

Growth is possible where the right conditions are in place. These are –

- An intentional focus, beyond only Sunday worship
- Personal and corporate discipleship within congregations
- A committed group of lay people leading a range of activities and events, plus training and support
- A redirection of energy, particularly by clergy, from administration and building maintenance to outreach, service and evangelism
- An approach to ordained ministry which places high priority on equipping laity for service
- Co-operation within the multi-church group

Church growth is about allowing a diverse 'reproduction' of different types of churches. *"The church must dare to have church children who are related to us but not the same as their parent body."*

George Lings, A CASE FOR MULTIPLYING THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF CHURCHES. He cites the Network Youth Church in Carlisle as an example.

Lessons for rural multi-church groups from Ling's work

- Encouraging growth should not just be about strategies which aim to increase the size of the existing congregation
- Reproduction of churches could be a useful concept to develop thinking further and ensure that mission and evangelism are contextual.
- The development of the ministries of all lay people is key

Implementation

- Collaborative working of clergy
- Provision of high-quality, specific and locally accessible training for laity
- Creating space for the new to grow alongside existing congregations
- Importance of partnership – with schools and other organisations
- Having a Mission Action Plan – parish/benefice/deanery
- Formation of teams – lay and ordained
- Simplify structures and governance
- Have effective systems for administration, finance and managing and developing the church building
- Have mission-enabler posts – pioneer ministers; lay, youth and schools workers
- Build on existing relationships in the congregation and community

KDH 31/08/17