

St James's Mission Action Plan: 1993-1996



The Parochial Church Council has made a commitment to try to implement the following improvements in the life of our parish and in the spirit of the Bishop of London's Agenda for Action.

Framework for Mission Action Plan for St James's, Hampton Hill

In each mentioned below it should be stressed that co-operation with other local churches in the Hampton Council of Churches is assumed.

Proclamation

Short Term:

- 1 Service Card for Holy Communion
- 2 Improving Preparation for Reading and Prayers of Intercession

Long Term:

- 1 Monitor use of new hall and Church
- 2 Space for quiet and meditation within the existing building -use of North Aisle?
- 3 Presence of Church in "Poets Estate"

Teaching and Nurture

Short Term:

- 1 Encouragement of House Groups
 - a) people to attend
 - b) supplying with resource material
 - c) keeping PCC informed
- 2 Sunday Evenings - thematic teaching Autumn/Lent

Long Term:

- 1 Nurture Groups
 - a) Beginners
 - b) Down our Street
 - c) Moving on from informal service attenders
- 2 Re-instate Deanery Training Days
- 3 Youth Worker - shared over 4 Hampton Parishes

Pastoral Ministry

Short Term:

- 1 Open Church on Friday Morning for Drop In/Open House
- 2 Equipping people for pastoral care - pastoral skills
- 3 Follow up Baptism, illness, funerals

Long Term:

- 1 Newcomers (street) parties
- 2 Long Term links with Justice and Peace issues UN, Christian Aid, Missionary Societies, Liaising with Community Care Group - Encourage mutual support.

St James's Mission Action Plan: 2004-2007



The parish has had a mission action plan since 1993. The current three year mission action plan was agreed by the PCC for Advent 2004. The key points of the plan are that we aim to be a community committed to living in God's love; by being open to all, engaging with the world, and growing in faith. In order to achieve this, we commit to help people to grow closer to God, to attract people to church, and to nurture spiritual growth. All other aspects of the plan, our mission and our worship grow out of these, informing our actions and activities. As a reflection of our mission the PCC committed St James's to Inclusive Church in 2004 - *'All people who respect one another and our church are welcome here, regardless of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities or economic circumstances.'* The plan is kept under regular review by the clergy and churchwardens, and by the PCC. Progress against the plan is reviewed by the PCC.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, male and female, Jews and Greeks, Slaves and Free" 1 Corinthians 12

For more than 140 years St James's Church has lived for, prayed for and served our community in Hampton Hill and far beyond. Our Mission is God's Mission. We are sent out to live God's love in every part of our lives and so to bring healing, justice and compassion to all. Our resources of people, buildings, money, time, intellect, imagination and energy help us in responding to God's love. Our new building, designed to be completed during the lifespan of this Mission Action Plan will be crucial in furthering our work. This page describes our focus for the next three years. Some work is new, some builds on our current activities.

We aim to be a community committed to living in God's love:

- Open for all
- Engaging with the world
- Growing in faith.

In order to do this we will:

- Help people grow closer to God
- Attract people to church
- Nurture spiritual growth

Open for All

- 9.00-12.00 daily Monday to Friday - come in, rest and pray
- Services at other times, e.g. early commuter communion
- Book club - a chance to talk about what you have read and why it matters to you
- Weekly 'Lectionary' study Group - exploring the bible readings further
- Concert series - visiting players, children and from our own resources
- Drop in for coffee
- Schools - we cherish their visits and need to provide appropriate material
- A quiet focus for your spirit

Engaging with the World

- Morning prayer - daily prayer for individual needs
- Supporting newcomers and those in particular need
- Ongoing prayer and action for God's justice in the world (Christian Aid, Third World Debt Release, Fair Trade, Voluntary Care Group, The Upper Room for the vulnerable, CARA for those with HIV/AIDS)
- Focussed Study (e.g. Lent and Advent)
- Pastoral care in our community through our clergy and our trained visiting team

Growing in Faith

- Support for work with children and Young People
- Adult nurture – short term courses open to all
- Occasional offices – building on and following up the many baptisms, weddings and funerals which occur here
- Using Church's Year – teaching through the cycle of the year
- Art/visual input – using the church's space to display challenging art
- Other forms of worship – learning to participate in diverse styles of worship
- Spiritual development – encouraging Quiet Days, Retreats and Spiritual Direction
- Renewal through our social actions – integrating prayer, witness and action"

St James's Mission Action Plan: 2007-2010



"The parish has grown and developed over the years. It has gone through many changes, as has both the larger Church and the community generally. The vision for the future is one of continuing development and growth; a journey of exploration and of new understanding. That vision is also to be increasingly inclusive, involving a wider group of people across the parish and welcoming others to join us". *Parish Profile September 2006*. The Parish Profile prepared for the process of appointing a new incumbent identified priorities for the future which built on the past, but also an openness to developing further. A Mission Action Plan is an expression of this - a Plan which seeks to move a church community forward and not simply maintain its current activities, however good they may be.

Some key words from the Parish Profile are:

- Development • Growth • Exploration • New understanding • Inclusive • Involving • Welcoming

St James's Church is described as: • Liberal • Catholic • Eucharistic

I understand these as meaning:

- *Liberal* Open to new ideas and possibilities with a critical eye to the past and present, and generous in our attitudes
- *Catholic* This literally means 'universal' and so we recognise our setting in the wider world and Church, and value the past as well as being concerned for the future
- *Eucharistic* Our principal act of worship is the eucharist and we explicitly acknowledge Christ present in the world with all this entails for Christian living

Behind this is a vision of God. God is understood in the Christian tradition to be the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is seen as a community of love—one, but with distinctions. This is a dynamic understanding of God. God, who is changeless, yet also relates to changeable beings. Our life as a church is rooted in God - God's nature should be our nature. Our Mission Action Plan should reflect this understanding of God. God does not ask us to remain the same, but to step out on a journey with him that involves new discoveries and endless possibilities. With this in mind, the Parochial Church Council offers its thoughts for the future and its priorities for 2007-10.

- First, we look at the 2004-07 plan, review it, and identify what has been done as a result of it.
- Second, we identify our objectives for the next three years.
- Third, we offer some initial ideas and plans which will be our starting point as we work together over the next three years.

Peter Vannozzi - November 2007

Themes of the 2004-07 MAP

The MAP identified three guiding themes:

- Open for all • Engaging with the world • Growing in faith

How did these three themes enhance in practical ways the life of St James's Church?

Preparing for the 2007-10 MAP

Using four broad categories the PCC considered the life of St James's Church as we looked to the future:

- Worship and Prayer • Care and Service • Teaching and Nurture • Mission and Evangelism
- What place do the four broad categories have in our vision of St James's Church?*

1. Worship & Prayer

- Central to it
- It is what makes the Church distinctive eg. one can listen to music in a concert hall and not just in church, but worship and prayer makes listening to it a distinctive experience
- Worship and prayer build up a sense of community, of 'communion', more than just belonging to a club

2. Care & Service

- Central to it – part of the essence of a church
- Care and service have love at their root
- They are vital if we are to have a real, integrated community at St James
- Individuals are involved in care and service in the wider community as our mission is not just to ourselves, but wider

3. Teaching & Nurture

- Teaching and nurture are essential so individuals and the church community can grow and develop
- Importance of learning continually so that faith does not become stagnant
- Vital nature of teaching and nurture for people new to the Church who may have little knowledge of Christianity

4. Mission & Evangelism

- 'Mission and outreach' preferred to 'evangelism'
- Mission and outreach central as about being outward looking
- Church's mission is to reflect God's love for us by showing love to other people.
- Importance of welcome as a sign of this

Themes as a focus for action in 2007-10

The PCC identified an overarching aim for the next three years:

How do we see St James's Church in 2010?

A church community and local community brought closer to God

We then identified six themes following on from our discussions using the four categories above and our broad objectives for each theme are:

Worship - We aim to develop our forms of worship in order to make them more appropriate and helpful

Outreach - We aim to develop further contacts with the wider community, at home and abroad

Children and young people - We aim to give children and young people every opportunity to become involved in the Christian life by making it more attractive and accessible

Communication - We aim to develop channels of communication that support clear and consistent information and encourage dialogue

Learning and development - We aim to provide appropriate opportunities and resources for learning and developing within the Christian life

Environment - We aim to share our commitment to God's creation by adopting measures to enhance and protect the environment

Initial ideas and plans for 2007-2010

The following are initial ideas and plans as to how we move forward to fulfil our objectives:

1. Worship

- Consider diversity in worship
- Explicit use of silence in worship
- Consider the place of posture in worship
- Use psalms on occasions in 9.30 service
- Use the Christian Year more fully eg. more seasonal variation in services
- First Sunday of the month 9.30 service: expand range of material used in the as part of a

concern for building bridges for people from this service to others; look at themes to reflect both the Christian Year and key events for the uniformed organisations; consider printing the words of the hymns/songs on a separate sheet to help the children

- Consider the place of evening worship eg. occasional Evensongs, Advent Sunday special service, etc.
- Consider the experience of the interior of the church in general; examine re-ordering the top end of the north aisle to make it a more explicit 'prayer area' or quiet place in the church
- Sermon series: a series of sermons based on a specific title

2. Outreach

- Work to bring more people to the first Thursday at 2pm Holy Communion
- Visitors – identify more people to visit including bereaved people
- Build contacts further with Laurel Dene
- Procedure for following up newcomer

3. Children & Young People

- Affirmation of the place of children and young people in worship by asking them what they think of it, how they understand it
- Specific need to recruit a teacher for the 'young church' group meeting
- Material for both children and adults about the church building
- Maintain rapport with uniformed organisations
- Brighten up ('freshen') the children's/family area at the rear of the north aisle and identify someone to be responsible for it
- Tap into the young mums who bring their children to the nursery

4. Communication

- Establish a group to look at our different means of communication and to propose a strategy to the PCC
- Need for a communication strategy; decide who we are addressing and provide different formats for different people
- Consider how we communicate with the media
- Look again at our pew sheet, service sheets, website etc.
- Welcome board and leaflets in west porch
- Welcome leaflet and card to be in each pew
- Poster strategy
- Consistency in publicity for events
- Material for both children and adults about the church building
- Article in 'The Spire' identifying involvement of church members in wider community activity and charities

5. Learning and development

- Provide courses for adults during the year eg. Advent, Lent
- Provide a Christian basics course (for newcomers) if needed
- Continue baptismal and Visitors' tea parties
- Look at one-off events or short courses which bring people together
- Look at occasional coach trips/pilgrimages
- Reconstitute the Social Committee and plan a year of events: social events to be seen as part of care for the church community in all its diversity

6. Environment

Undertake an audit to assess our carbon footprint

- Take actions as a result of the audit to reduce our carbon foot print
- Keep environmental issues at the forefront of the minds of church members

St James's Mission Action Plan: 2010-2013



"In 1863 the parish and church of St James, Hampton Hill, were founded. The first vicar, Fitzroy John Fitzwygram, combined word and deed in proclaiming good news to the people in his care. He both spoke about Jesus Christ, and then through acts of practical caring demonstrated the love of Jesus Christ.

In 2013 St James's will be 150 years old. This Mission Action Plan offers a series of actions to be taken that focus on growth — towards God, towards each other, and towards the world. These are in the tradition of Fitzwygram, whose pioneering ministry will be celebrated in 2013.

The Parochial Church Council offers this Plan as we seek to continue to be a church which is liberal, catholic and Eucharistic:

- Liberal — seeking to be generous, and open to the new
- Catholic — seeing ourselves as part of a wider Church and

tradition

- Eucharistic — focussing our worship around the celebration of the Eucharist and, as a result, becoming a people marked by thanksgiving to God

Though our actions in this Plan may not be dramatic, they are evidence of our continuing to think, pray, worship, and act. The things to celebrate from 2007-10 are further indicators of this. In the footsteps of Fitzwygram, and the apostle James, we are sent out today." *Peter Vannozzi - November 2010*

What we have achieved

Worship

- Seasonal booklets introduced
- A wide range of current liturgical material used
- Occasional evening services held during the year
- Sermon series - happened in Lent 2008, Lent 2009, and autumn 2009
- New prayer space put in place

Environment

- Eco Group has been formed and has met regularly
- Green electricity under active consideration (contract renewal in 2011)
- Harvest Festival has reflected our concern for the environment and the beauty of creation
- Fairtrade - regular stall once a month
- Tools with a Mission supported
- Ark used recyclable materials
- Church light bulbs progressively being replaced with energy saving bulbs

Children and young people

- New teachers recruited for Sunday School
- Establishment of The Ark
- Material at the back of church for both children and adults about the building, and regular Young Spire pages
- Rapport maintained with uniformed organisations
- Children's area re-arranged, new toys, etc.
- New all-age Communion booklet and guide to the service

Worship

- Occasional sermon series
- Opportunities for study in Advent and Lent
- Use of the Start! course in Lent 2010 leading to monthly evening study group
- Tea parties for older church members continued
- Baptismal tea party continued - though not in 2010

- Theatre group continues
- Social Committee - a few events organised each year, including pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey in 2009 and to St Paul's Cathedral in 2010; introduction of Harvest Festival lunch; introduction of Shrove Tuesday meal out
- 2010 pilgrimage to Holy Land
- 2010 Lent Quiet Day at Alton Abbey

Communication

- Welcome cards in pews
- Welcome leaflets at back of church
- Information cards about the church building at back of church
- Changing format of The Spire
- Expansion of the website

Outreach

- Vibrant links continued with charities, both at home and abroad
- The Ark established
- Active links maintained with local schools
- Clergy being visible and interacting in the local community

MAP 2010-2013 contains ideas for the future, but crucially also celebrates what we have done, as a church, as a result of our previous MAP. Word and action have combined to try and take forward the Church's mission in new ways, and build on what is already being done, by God's grace. Our Mission Action Plan has three broad categories, each of which has a word in common - Growing.

Growing towards God

Growing through worship

- Congregation to be invited to share in the planning of non-Eucharistic services in 2011 — specifically

Mothering Sunday, Christingle, and possibly Harvest Festival

Growing through learning

- Sermon series in Lent 2011 on Faith and Work and in autumn 2011 on the Psalms

Growing through giving

- Planning group to be set up in January 2011 to plan for a Stewardship campaign in June 2011

Growing towards each other

Growing through baptism

- Parish Visitors to plan for service to celebrate baptism in September 2011

Growing through use of Start! course

- Run course in autumn 2011 for those exploring Christianity — establish planning group summer 2011

Growing through social events

- In autumn 2011 set up planning group for the church and parish's 150th anniversary in 2013

Growing towards the world

Growing through care for creation

- Change church and hall electricity supply to green supplier in spring 2011
- Plan to replace church and hall boilers with energy efficient ones by 2013

Growing through outreach

- Establish Facebook group in spring 2011
- Identify person in spring 2011 to be vigilant about new parishioners and to prompt the administrator to send a welcome letter
- Recruit more volunteers to support The Ark and continue an act of worship at least each term

The first category is 'Growing towards God'. Rightly, this comes first. Why? Because God comes first. If a local church, let alone the wider Church in which it is set, fails to pay first and primary attention to God, then it is not a church at all. It is simply another well-meaning organisation in a particular community. If a church is rooted in its faith and belief, then it is motivated by what it believes about God. As Christians, we are to take our inspiration from the story we have to

tell - of God who made us; of God who rescued us; of God who sustains us. We have set out some ways in which we may seek to grow towards God as a community of faith.

Our second category is 'Growing towards each other'. Within any church community, people will understand belonging in different ways. Yet however we may view a church community, growing towards each other is not an optional extra. Why not? St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ in which each part of the body finds a place. No part of the body can say to another 'You're not needed.' The Church is a communion or fellowship. '

Then thirdly - 'Growing towards the world'. It is still the case that Christians punch above their numerical weight when it comes to involvement in charities and voluntary activity. Part of this church's approach from its very foundation has been to look outwards. Why? Well, God sent his Son because he so loved the world' and not because he so loved the Church! Through care for creation, through use of new means of communication, through welcoming people in who would not otherwise step through our doors, through being visible in the community - we can grow towards the world.

So these are three categories or themes through which we can view our activities over the next three years with the common concern for growth. Specifically towards God, each other and the world. I hope that we can each play a part in this, and when we come to our 150th birthday in 2013, be surprised at what God has done.

The above is taken from Revd Vannozi's sermon that introduced the Mission Action Plan 2010-2013 on 12th December 2010.

St James's Mission Action Plan: 2013-2016



*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom...
...a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way...*

So goes part of our reading today from the Book of Isaiah – some of which, at least, will go back to the prophet Isaiah himself, some eight centuries before Christ. Writing against a background of constant threat from other nations and peoples, the prophet gives us a riot of images – dry land rejoicing, flowers blossoming, the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, burning sand becoming a pool of water – and in the midst of this a holy way, God's path for his people through the wilderness. It's inspiring – and an apt choice for Advent as we look for Christ to come: both remembering his first coming, but also looking ahead to what is still to come. That

emphasis is there in the second reading from the Letter of James; and also in the Gospel reading from Matthew. There we have John the Baptist in prison and he is wondering, hoping, that Jesus is the longed for servant of God who will restore the fortunes of God's people in the Holy Land. Jesus speaks in a way reminiscent of Isaiah:

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them."

This is good, hopeful Advent stuff.

It was in Advent that 150 years ago on Wednesday just gone, this church was consecrated – set apart with prayer – and it was a joy last Sunday to welcome the Bishop of London, 'Richard our bishop' whom we pray for each Sunday, to be with us. In his sermon, Bishop Richard spoke of what had happened in 1863 – amongst other things, the first section of the Tube was opened, and the Red Cross and Football Association were founded. He said that the Church needs to recover the right sort of confidence, practise compassion, and be open to creativity. So close to Christmas, the bishop reminded us of God's generosity seen in Jesus, and the way

in which he embodies God's plan for humanity. He calls people into self-giving love. The bishop concluded:

"The two thousand years since the birth of Christ can be viewed as a dreary round of greed and violence, deaf to the love-song of the angels. But there is an energy in the world which flows from the generosity of God who, when he communicated, came in person to draw us into his way of compassion. He is the hope of the world. He is the hope which you determined should be visible on Hampton Hill."

So with hope paramount as we move through this season and to Christmas, you are being given a copy of the new Mission Action Plan for St James's, worked on by the Parochial Church Council, and offered now, indicating our priorities for the next three years. What is a Mission Action Plan? Very simply, it is a tool – a means to an end. For a very long time churches simply did what they did, because that is what they did, and sometimes seemed to have little awareness of a changing world around them. Some twenty years ago, though, the then Bishop of London urged the churches of London not simply to react to events, but to plan for the future. Reacting to what happens to crop up is the way to despair, but planning for the future shows hope. So this church has done this for at least the last twenty years, and no doubt did so before that, too, but it embraced Mission Action Plans and has had one ever since.

So what does the Parochial Church Council, the PCC, offer in hope today? Do please take the MAP away and read it for yourself. You will see what we have done since the last MAP was drawn up. So I want to refer to what will come next. Following the broad shape of the vision that Bishop Richard has drawn up for the whole diocese, our MAP has three sections: Confident, Compassionate and Creative.

Confident. Why? Our fundamental confidence is in what God has done in Jesus. As a church we shouldn't be reticent about this. We have the best possible news to share. To that end, our Exploring Christianity course will be an annual event – it was great that around 40 people attended one or more of the sessions this autumn. In the spring, we'll take a look at how we can follow up the contacts we make for baptisms – why? Because there's something good here, and it's not just a once only event. We'll also look at how we can tell some good news stories in our services – confident that they exist, and confident that they will inspire people. Confidence is an expression of hope.

Compassionate. Do I need to explain why, as a church, we should be compassionate? Food banks have sadly become necessary, and are growing. The MAP says that we would explore supporting one in the spring – well, we've started now for Christmas. Also, compassion is shown through our continued support of a variety of charities. Compassion is also an expression of hope.

Creative. We want to do something for children moving on from 'The Ark' and we will set up a group to look at our all-age worship. There are examples around of considerable creativity both within our church community, but also further afield. And we'll hold additional services where there is a particular need, and building on our experience of this anniversary year – not least by continuing with a service on New Year's Eve. Creativity, too, is an expression of hope.

There'll doubtless be more than you have in the Mission Action Plan. Yet looking forward with confidence, compassion and creativity gives a sense of the direction of travel at St James's. It takes seriously, and is thankful for, the past, but does not have us living in the past or ruled by it. That is not the spirit of Advent or the spirit of those who, a century and a half ago, formed a church here. Our local actions are carried out within the context of the wider Church in London, and throughout the world. The whole Church has the same hope – a vision of what God yearns to do for the world in Jesus, opening up a highway in the wilderness. That wilderness may be the life of an individual, a community, a nation – whatever it is, there the hope is that from the thirsty ground will come springs of water. Can you or I imagine that, see that in our own life, in the lives of others around, in the local community, in our families, in this city and nation, and even in the most awful and terrible conflicts on this planet? Let me be personal about this. I am, by temperament and good fortune, an essentially positive and happy person. I know I'm fortunate in that. Yet I felt severely shaken as I sat back in February by the Sea of Galilee watching the sun rise at dawn. I thought I should be thinking 'This is where Jesus walked and taught.' I was actually looking across the lake to the hills on the other side, and recalling that

until 1967 they were part of Syria. And just some 12 miles away was the current Syrian border. Twelve miles from this oasis of peace all hell had broken loose. I felt almost overwhelmed by this, and a sense of my own impotence. Yet something, somewhere – I think God – said to me that this wouldn't do. If I meant anything of what I had been saying in sermons for over twenty years, and expressing in the Church's liturgy, I couldn't lose hope. I had to find ways to make a difference in the hope that, indeed, the wilderness could rejoice. Now this is the spirit with which I try to exercise my ministry as a priest. It's based on hope, not optimism, and I think, too, that it's the spirit of the new Mission Action Plan. This is not naïve hope, but it is firm hope, patient hope, yearning hope. I commend it to you.

I finish with the prayer that accompanies the vision for the diocese:

"Generous God,

you have called us to be salt and light in this great city;

Guide us by your Holy Spirit to discern your will for your Church

as we seek to follow your Son Jesus Christ in loving and serving our neighbours.

Give us the wisdom and strength to fulfil the vision you put before us

and help us to play our part in transforming our earthly city into a sign of the Heavenly Jerusalem

where you live and reign, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God now and for ever.

Amen"

The above is Revd Vannozi's sermon that introduced the Mission Action Plan 2013-2016 on 15 December 2013.