

Parish of Langley Marish

*Districts of
St Mary, St Francis, Christ the Worker*

Our Mission Action Plan 2015



CONTEXT

Over the past several months, the Clergy and PCC of the Langley Team Ministry, in full consultation with the congregations, have been engaged in developing a Mission Action Plan (MAP) for the Parish. We have had a morning of open meeting for the whole congregation, as well as several discussions in our PCC and DCCs, to discern how God is calling the Parish to join his mission for our church, our community and the wider world.

Out of that process has emerged this MAP document which is available on the website and a copy is available in each of our churches for consultation. However, we have been clear throughout the process that the MAP has to belong to the whole church. A short version listing the priorities that have been identified, at the Parish level and at individual District level, has been made available to all members of the congregation so that they may own it, and sign up to doing their part in achieving the priorities. This rather longer version expands certain of the themes and is meant as a reference document.

This Mission Action Plan is organised according to Oxford Diocese's Living Faith priorities: Sustaining the Sacred Centre (that is, being rooted in God through worship and prayer); Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership (that is, including lay leadership and shared ecumenical responsibilities); Creating Vibrant Christian Communities (that is, communities that are full of life and vigour); Making Disciples (that is, bringing people to Christ and nurturing them); and Making a Difference in the World.

The following pages list our priorities, first for the Parish as a whole, and then for each District. An important element is to recognise and affirm those areas where good work is already happening, and which we wish to CONTINUE to make a priority. We have also identified some NEW areas to develop and these are marked in red when listing our priorities.

We recognise both that our new initiatives are likely to take a year or two to develop, and that our Plan may change during that time as we continue to pray and listen to where God is leading us.

The Langley Team Ministry

The Langley Team Ministry comprises the three Districts of St Mary, Christ the Worker and St Francis. The three churches have their own District Wardens and District Councils, but these are accountable to the PCC and Parish Wardens, and there is a common financial structure for the Parish. The Langley Team Ministry is part of the Southern Group Ministry, within the Deanery of Burnham & Slough, the Archdeaconry of Buckingham and Diocese of Oxford.

There are a number of areas of Parish life where the clergy and people work in collaboration and share responsibilities; the first section of our MAP outlines those areas of ministry, as well as those that are common across all Districts. Meanwhile each District has its own MAP that addresses the areas that are its particular focus.

We will review these priorities on a regular basis in PCC and DCC meetings and review the plan as a whole in 18 months' time. In the text below CONTINUING priorities are shown in black print and **NEW** priorities to be explored over the next three years are in red.

PRIORITIES FOR THE PARISH AS A WHOLE

Sustaining the Sacred Centre

The Team Clergy are responsible for ensuring that the service pattern agreed by the PCC is covered by clergy, LLM and other lay leaders, as appropriate.

The Sunday 8am Communion at St Mary's and the Wednesday 10am Communion at St Francis are shared between the team clergy. Other Sunday services in each church are generally the responsibility of their vicar, but cover for holidays is shared across the team, and there are regular 'pulpit exchanges' where clergy preach in each other's churches. Bill Birmingham (LLM) also preaches regularly across the team, and other lay members preach on occasion. Evening prayer is said at in St Mary's at 6.30 each Sunday, led by Joan Bastick. The clergy also take services in some of the old peoples' homes in the town.

There are three joint Sunday services each year, one in each church, and services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension are held in each

church in rotation. The annual All Souls Service, to which those recently bereaved are invited, is held at St Mary's.

Clergy and laity are encouraged to establish good patterns of regular prayer and study, and time for rest and reflection. The prayer life of the Parish is vital, and we should seek to make opportunities for corporate as well as individual prayer. A number of groups for bible study and prayer are established across the Parish, and members of the congregation are encouraged to participate in them. A quarterly Parish Prayer Diary enables us to pray for common themes across the Parish.

Our Priorities are to:

CONTINUE to nurture discipleship through study and prayer ENCOURAGE more church members to participate in small groups CONTINUE to develop our corporate prayer life

Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership

Regular weekly Staff Meetings (often including Parish Wardens) in the Parish, as well as collaboration with Clergy in the Deanery, offer mutual support, and opportunities for joint activities, and shared training and mission opportunities. However, development of lay leaders is an important priority for the Parish.

Within the Southern Group Ministry and the wider Deanery the Team Clergy play their part in encouraging and enabling joint activity, including cover for absences and shared training and mission opportunities. This is an area for development under the leadership of the Area Dean and Deanery Synod. There are also opportunities to work in conjunction with the other churches in Langley.

Our Priorities are to:

CONTINUE to develop lay leadership through training courses PROVIDE better publicity for courses and help with transport CONTINUE to provide opportunities and encouragement for individuals to exercise leadership in new ways and to encourage members to explore vocation to lay or ordained ministry in a variety of forms

Creating Vibrant Christian Communities

Pastoral Care within the congregations is generally the responsibility of each vicar, but particular needs are shared at staff meetings, and visits and support may be offered by other clergy or lay leaders, as appropriate. Relationships within Districts and across the Parish have been good and supportive, and this is a key strength of the Parish.

The Parish holds an annual Stewardship Campaign, under the guidance of the Stewardship Committee, with members drawn from all three Districts. The emphasis is on pledged, regular giving, enhanced by Gift Aid Declaration, where appropriate. The Parish is fortunate in having additional resources, in particular the Seymour Bequest, which helps to pay for repairs for St Mary's Church.

The Parish has been able to pay its Parish Share to the Diocese every year in full; in addition 10% of income is given to charities and mission organisations outside the Parish. However with increases expected in Parish Share over the coming years, it is crucial that we extend our giving base and encourage committed and generous stewardship giving. Enhanced mission activities will need an increase in financial resources.

Our Priorities are to:

CONTINUE cementing relationships within the congregations and across the Parish, through joint services, social events, pastoral care and shared activities

CONTINUE to pay the Parish Share in full

CONTINUE to give at least 10% of our income to mission agencies

PROVIDE teaching, preaching, and study course on stewardship

INCREASE overall stewardship giving by 5% each year

INCREASE the number of pledged givers

ENCOURAGE all givers to move towards giving 5% of net income

Making Disciples

The Clergy, LLM, Wardens, PCC and other laity, are responsible for overseeing and developing the mission and outreach of the Parish, both at the District level, and across the whole Parish. Members are encouraged to witness to their faith in word, action and lifestyle, at work, in families and neighbourhoods, and by serving the community in a wide variety of ways.

Making of disciples and growth in faith is facilitated by courses such as Alpha, Emmaus and Christianity Explored, and through Confirmation Classes for young people and for adults. All clergy and laity are encouraged to play their part.

The clergy team share the responsibility for carrying out Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, and for providing appropriate preparation and follow-up for each of these. Numbers of these 'occasional offices' have decreased over recent years. We may need to consider how to make the opportunities we do have more fruitful.

There are a number of schools in or very near to Langley (up to 4 secondary and 8 primary) which provide an opportunity for mission and outreach, through taking assemblies and lessons, and through visits to our church buildings. There are no Church of England schools in the Parish, but good relationships have been established with many of the schools, by the clergy and by laity who work in them. There are now also a number of new schools being established in the area, with whom also we hope to develop good relations. East Berkshire College is another possible area for new contacts to be made. A strong theme that has come up in our priorities is working with school children during the summer holidays.

There are two major new housing developments under construction in Langley and others on the way; we must consider how, in cooperation with other churches, we can reach out to these new residents with the Good News of Jesus, and to let them know about the Christian community in Langley.

The demography of Langley is very mixed, with a large proportion of people of other faiths. These have had no worship centres in Langley, but with the opening of an Islamic Centre in Langley there will be opportunities for engagement with other faith leaders and communities.

In order to reach out to people in new housing developments, in a multi-faith environment, we need to meet the desire among members for a better understanding of other faiths.

A Parish Giving Committee oversees the distribution of 10% of Parish income that is given to charities and mission organisations outside the Parish. In addition there are a number of more personal connections that are supported through prayer and finance. These links are developed through a quarterly prayer newsletter for the organisations we support, and a programme of visiting speakers.

Our Priorities are to:

CONTINUE to provide opportunities to explore the Christian faith

CONTINUE to support mission beyond the parish through the Giving Committee, partnerships, prayer etc.

CONTINUE relationships with our primary and secondary schools

DEVELOP relationships with new schools

PROVIDE and distribute Welcome/Greeting Leaflets for new housing developments

CONTINUE to develop the use of our website for communication

PROVIDE training in evangelism and teaching on other faiths to enable us to be confident and effective in communicating our faith

PROVIDE a children's Holiday Club with a focus on musical activities

Making a Difference in the World

Members of the Parish are involved in community service in a wide variety of ways; at a recent Away Day over 60 different opportunities were identified, both in church activities and through volunteering for other organisations. For example, the Langley Community Coffee Shop is run by a team drawn from the churches and the community, as a means of welcoming and supporting the vulnerable and lonely of Langley. Langley Neighbourhood Forum is also strongly supported by church members and provides a vehicle for building community involvement.

Each District has opportunities to minister to specific groups – children, the elderly and so on. In addition we seek, by our presence in the community and proclamation of the Gospel, in appropriate ways, to grow the Kingdom of God across the Parish and beyond.

There are good relationships with the Baptist and Roman Catholic churches in Langley, and growing connections with the Asian and African congregations who use our premises for worship. As ‘Christian Churches in Langley’ we share a service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and a Good Friday Walk of Witness. The Community Magazine, ‘Around Langley’, an initiative of the Anglican Team, is being increasingly supported by the other churches. The annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service are organised by the Anglican church and well-supported by the community and by uniformed groups. Each year about 3,000 Christmas Cards with service times for all the churches are distributed around the town by church members. Volunteers from all the churches have assisted at collections for Slough Foodbank at shops in Langley.

Church members are encouraged to engage with issues of social justice, such as Fair Trade and Climate Change; for example, St. Mary's Church has recently lobbied our MP on climate issues. Our support for mission organisations outside the Parish is another channel for such engagement. Also, through the Giving Committee we help agencies that alleviate suffering and aid development in many parts of the world.

The Parish is rich in buildings, and these provide an opportunity for us to engage with the groups that use them; we may also want to offer them as a resource to organisations whose aims we support and in need of meeting space.

Our Priorities are to:

RECOGNISE AND CELEBRATE the many ways people are already ‘making a difference’; and ENCOURAGE all to play their part
CONTINUE involvement with Langley Community Coffee Shop and Slough Foodbank, encouraging volunteers and donations
CONTINUE to be a Christian ‘voice’ in the community, in partnership with the other churches in Langley, through *Around Langley Magazine*

CONTINUE involvement in the community with Langley Neighbourhood Forum, Neighbourhood Action Group and other means

CONTINUE to engage with issues of social justice

DEVELOP our engagement with those groups that already use our buildings

EXPLORE new partnerships, in particular with SHOC and Homeless Shelter, or Christians Against Poverty; offer the use of our many buildings, and engage by volunteering

HOLD an open air Harvest Celebration in Langley Memorial Park, in September 2015, as an opportunity to be a Christian presence and voice our common concerns, with a programme that involves various charities and the wider community, including local schools

Mission Action Plan 2015: *St. Mary's District*

As the historic Parish Church St. Mary's has particular opportunities and challenges. A key priority is to welcome newcomers and integrate them into the life of the church. In addition, the pastoral care of members is crucial and the spiritual life and vocation of each member of the church must be nurtured. We also have thriving activities for children and young people that need to be developed and sustained.

In 2011 we formulated our Vision for St. Mary's under four headings: Nurture, Serve, Engage and Welcome. These headings are mapped broadly on to the District's priorities below. Our Living Faith priorities, in addition to those for the whole Parish, are as follows:

Sustaining the Sacred Centre – NURTURE

ENCOURAGE more members to use Daily Study Notes
PROVIDE teaching on individual and corporate prayer

Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership – SERVE

DEVELOP and resource leadership for work with children and young people
ENCOURAGE our young people to take on roles within the church

Creating Vibrant Christian Communities – WELCOME

CONTINUE to focus on the welcome we offer by noticing newcomers, inviting them to social events and encouraging them to play a full part in the life of the congregation
CONTINUE to respond flexibly to the changing nature of the congregation
CONSIDER setting up a support group for those bereaved and grieving
EXPLORE ways to engage with men in and around the congregation

Making Disciples – ENGAGE

CONTINUE to make full use of opportunities to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to those attending occasional services and special celebrations
EXPLORE ways of following up on these opportunities

Making a Difference in the World – ENGAGE

CONTINUE to connect with the community through the use of St. Mary's Church and Centre, and St. Mary's Churchyard
CONSIDER ways to extend this, e.g. through concerts or organ recitals

Mission Action Plan 2015: *Christ the Worker District*

The location of Christ the Worker in one of the most socially and ethnically diverse areas within the Parish gives it special opportunities and challenges for mission. Several events are organised throughout the year to introduce the church and its members to the local community and encourage participation in church activities. We also have an Urdu language church who use the building for regular Sunday worship. The Living Faith priorities for our District, additional to the Parish priorities, are as follows.

Sustaining the Sacred Centre

CONTINUE to nurture personal discipleship through bible study and prayer, both individually and in groups, for all ages
CONTINUE to develop corporate prayer life e.g. by Prayer meetings
PROVIDE a room for prayer ministry by converting existing kitchen

Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership

CONTINUE to develop lay leadership through training and practical support
CONTINUE to encourage individuals to exercise leadership in new ways and identify others who might be called to leadership roles

Creating Vibrant Christian Communities

SEEK OUT a music leader to help provide vibrant Christian praise and worship, with a view to establishing a Gospel Choir
CONTINUE to engage with Christians of other denominations and especially the independent church group that uses CtW for services
CONTINUE to engage with Parish-based teaching, preaching, and study courses, including on stewardship

Making Disciples

CONTINUE to develop outreach through various social events and activities.
CONTINUE to support mission beyond the parish through prayer, raising money and supporting parish-wide initiatives
EXPLORE setting up a music club for Christian witness and outreach
PROVIDE welcome packs for those interested in worshipping at CtW

Making a Difference in the World

PROVIDE support and help organise the Harvest Celebration in Langley Memorial Park, Sept 2015.

Mission Action Plan 2015: *St Francis District*

St Francis is a small congregation of mainly older people meeting in a multi-purpose building, which limits the amount of outreach the congregation can do. Nevertheless, social activities involving the wider community have been established and are sustained. Good relationships have also been built with the range of organisations and groups that hire the building, and the Asian Baptist church that worships at St Francis every week. The congregation value their social times together e.g. at post-service coffee, shared lunches, work days, and social events. The parish LLM worships regularly at St Francis and participates in leading worship and preaching. Members of the congregation, where able, take part in the leadership of the community. Our priorities in addition to those for the Parish are as follows:

Sustaining the Sacred Centre

CONTINUE to develop our corporate prayer life by attendance at Monday prayer meetings and Tuesday to Saturday morning prayer times

Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership

CONTINUE to support those on Deanery training courses from St Francis
SEEK to identify others who might be called to leadership roles

Creating Vibrant Christian Communities

CONTINUE building relationships within the congregation, through social events and activities, such as annual Christian Aid and Harvest lunches

EXTEND social activities to annual Songs of Praise lunches

CONTINUE to encourage Parish-wide participation in our monthly walks

ENGAGE with other Christians, especially groups that meet in St Francis

REDEVELOP the area of the men's toilets to include new toilets and a storage area in 2015

PLAN redevelopment and refurbishment of the building and grounds

Making Disciples

CONTINUE to develop outreach through Refresh, Mums and Tots, Not Home Alone lunches and occasional events

PROVIDE workshops on topics (e.g. safeguarding) for the wider church

Making a Difference in the World

EXPLORE new partnerships, e.g. using the building as a homeless shelter, Credit Union Office and Post-Natal and Stroke Support Groups

CONTINUE to provide a meeting place for local groups