St. James,
Hampton Hill

Mission Action Plan
2007-2010

"*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 12.12-13

Introduction

"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 2004-7 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

Themes of the 2004-7 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?

Open for all

- Aim of the church being open Monday to Friday 9-12 partially realised and being open to the community is a form of outreach and an opportunity for nurture for that community
- Extra services – Commuter Communion and first Thursday of the month at 2pm: meeting people where they are 'at' to nurture them as Christians
- Open Doors project
- Our image has become more up-to-date than it was (new magazine format, new pew sheet format, Church logo), but there is more work to do
- Connection with schools continued along with wider community links but no material written for schools relating to St. James' Church
- Revamped website – easier to navigate; more information; many visitors; good feedback

- Concerts have been very active and successful including children's concerts; involve children and young people as well as adults
- Theatre Club very successful
- Book Club is functioning with a small group

Engaging with the world

- Emphasis on the wider world and engagement with it part of the ethos of St. James; in worship an encouragement to people to think altruistically; 10% of income given to charity
- Prayer for God's justice a regular part of public prayer; Intercessions at the Parish Communion rooted in the real world
- Ongoing action - visiting speakers and information about the organisations being supported (including Christian Aid, Fair Trade etc.)
- Morning Prayer continues
- Focussed teaching and nurture for people already part of the church community has happened; focussed study - there were a couple of Lent groups
- Effort made to identify and welcome newcomers; but more support for them needed – eg no recent newcomers' occasions or provision of Christian 'basics' course
- Work of the Visiting Team
- Revamping of 'The Spire'

Growing in faith

- Work with children and young people ongoing and their involvement in worship, but there is a gap in provision for young people - an idea for a youth worker floated, but not acted upon
- Some courses during the 3 year period (eg autumn 2004 and 2005); Quiet Days have provided opportunities for teaching and nurture; Tsunami trip
- Plenty of occasional offices and special services
- Not as much diversity in worship as there could be
- The Church's year used as a teaching aid for people of all ages on a Sunday morning but more use can be made of this in worship

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?

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

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

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

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

- Worship
- Outreach
- Children and young people
- Communication
- Learning and development
- Environment

Our broad objectives for each them 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 re-sources 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

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

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 newcomers

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

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

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

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

A Prayer for St. James's Church

God, you are everything to us,
giving us life,
filling us with love,
and setting us free from sin
that we might live in you.
Accept the work of our hands,
take our lives,
give us your peace
and renew us in the service of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Collect for St. James

Merciful God,
whose holy apostle Saint James,
leaving his father and all that he had,
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ
and followed him even to death:
help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,
to be ready at all times to answer
your call without delay;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.