

24<sup>th</sup> November 2009

## **The Next Step of the Journey**

Dear Member of Christ Church,

It is a great privilege to be leading Christ Church at this moment in our 151 year history of Christian witness as we continue to respond to Jesus' command '*to make disciples of all peoples.*' (Mt. 28 v18-20. God's vision for us has evolved over time, changing and adapting to the different needs of each new generation. In this generation the **Vision** is challenging us to enrich our personal relationship with Jesus; to build community at Christ Church and to create and use the opportunities to share Christ's love with the people we live and work with. Along with the Vision, the PCC have identified **Core Values** which we desire to see in every member and all our ministries. Our Core values are:-

**' A Changing Church; A Relational Church; An Intergenerational Church; A Worshipping Church; A Witnessing Church; An Accessible Church; A Celebrating Church and A Caring Church'**

The PCC are engaged in seeking the best way of releasing and resourcing the gifts and abilities that God has blessed this church with so that as a church community we might fulfil God's vision and make a difference in Ware and beyond. To accomplish this we want to help every person in Christ Church recognise their uniqueness in Christ and their part in this mission to the world. Individuals and groups in the church will be encouraged to discern the needs of the community and whether God is calling us to meet those needs. We want to be a church community where every member is able to use their gifts to the service of God. '*The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others*' (1 Cor. 12.7). Our vision is to see the development of **Missional Groups**. A Missional Group is a response to God's calling, to bring God's love to the lost in diverse and creative ways, by small committed groups from within the congregation with a clear vision in the community for mission.

If we are to be more mission shaped in our expression of church, then we need a more flexible model of church life than the hierarchical one which has served us for generations. We require a structure which encourages grass root initiatives, resources the various ministries and allows greater flexibility of ministry without losing our strong sense of identity as one church. We have researched other models of church operating in the UK and have designed a model we believe is best suited to our context. The PCC believe that it is essential for effective management of the church mission that we create a new paid post of **Operations Manager**, whose role will be to manage the resources and people needed for the ministries and secondly to manage the change to a mission shaped church. He or she will play a vital role in releasing the Incumbent and leadership team to focus on strategy, vision and training. The ministry is like that of Stephen in Acts 6.1-7 where the Apostles were released from church administration in order to concentrate on prayer and preaching

At the heart of the proposed model is the **Vision Team**, comprising Incumbent, Churchwardens, Operations Manager and six PCC members elected by the congregation, who share a legal role and are responsible for holding us to the Vision. Surrounding the Vision Team will be various key ministry hubs including Mission and Outreach; Worship and Teaching; Children and Young people,;

and Pastoral . A Resource Hub will support the other ministries with practical resources such as finance and equipment. Each of the main ministry hubs will oversee their particular part of the church body, encouraging fresh initiatives, advising and supporting established ones.

When I arrived here at Ware twelve and a half years ago, a ministerial colleague called Christ Church 'a sleeping giant', a church that did not realise how blessed it was with spiritual gifts, a church that had yet to achieve its full potential in God. Over these past years I have sensed a waking up of the giant and a release of the many gifts in mission and service. In 1997, God spoke to me clearly that He wanted Christ Church to be better known by the local people than by the wider Anglican Church. That has always been my vision for Christ Church and I can now see that coming to fruition. I see it in the huge numbers of Mums and Toddlers who see Christ Church as their church; the Christ Church school community who look to us for so much; Love Ware Live Ware where with other churches, we are appreciated for grass roots involvement in our community; the work that so many of our members do with local organisations including Scouts and Guides, Street Pastors; Future Hope; Homestart and many other groups too numerous to list.

On behalf of the PCC, may I encourage you to prayerfully consider what we are seeking to develop at Christ Church. Please study the notes attached to this letter that give more flesh to the proposals. Feel free to speak or write to any member of the PCC if you have any comments on what we are seeking to accomplish. There will be an opportunity on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> January for the whole church to come together and discuss and contribute the wisdom and insight God has given us as his body here at Christ Church and to further shape these developments.

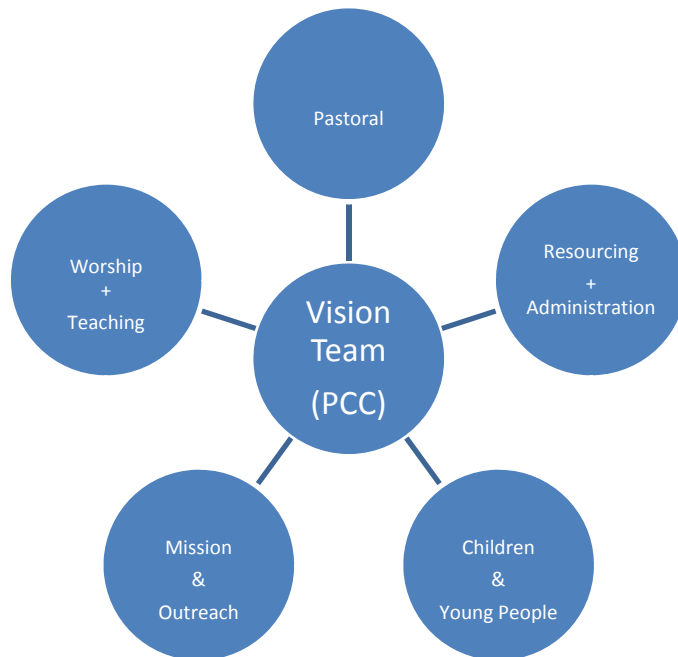
Every blessing In God

David

## Notes to accompany the letter:

### The Current Situation:

We have inherited a hierarchical structure with the Incumbent at the top, other staff, the wardens and PCC as the next layer and the rest of the church below. Whilst effective in ministering to a, predominantly, Christian society, it is not flexible enough to cope with the post-Christian society we find ourselves in now. We have researched other models of church operating now and have opted and adapted one we believe is best fitted for our future context.



### Goals of The Model

To:

- Encourage every member to explore their Spiritual gifts and discover how God has gifted them to minister to and to serve those around them, in the Church family, in the community or in the wider world.
- Equip the Church family with the tools to deepen personal faith and witness to our contemporaries..
- Establish a clear structure for accountability that releases all members to fulfil the Vision.
- Enable resources for ministry to be centrally provided and managed.
- Enable the incumbent to focus on strategy, vision and training.
- Emphasize grass roots initiatives rather than top down directives
- Evolve “Missional Groups”

## **THE VISION TEAM**

Incumbent, Wardens, Treasurer, Operations Manager, and a PCC of 6

*“Holders of the vision” and legal body. Meeting quarterly.*

*To co-ordinate the strategic overview, planning, management and accountability in line with the Church vision*

PCC members in the Vision Team will be expected to serve in a hub relating to their gifts/interests/passions.

## **HUB - Resourcing**

New “resourcing” hub, headed by an Operations Manager to be established. (Example: Aaron / Moses)

The entire purpose is to serve all other ministries, internal and external, in practical ways, with a view to all ministries being able to have a mission focus without being held-back by practical problems.

## **HUB – Mission & Outreach**

New outreach/mission initiatives to be birthed by the people that have a passion for them, rather than trying to fill “vacancies”.

Ministries to become self-managed, as indicated earlier, but accountable to the “Vision Team”.

## **HUB – Worship & Teaching**

This team will resource and minister at services and events at any time and in any location.

What about communion and baptisms? Communion will be provided both at Sunday services, and also by clergy who visit Missional Groups, as appropriate. Baptisms will be encouraged to take place within Missional Groups as members of those groups come to Faith.

## **HUB – Children & Young People**

Children: Children’s ministry ultimately will be centrally resourced across the Mission Groups wherever it is desired.

Young People: the Cells will continue to develop and be resourced/supported by the Church as they evolve.

## **HUB – Pastoral Support**

K groups will continue to be one of the vehicles for teaching; fellowship and pastoral care. K groups may find a calling to support or become a Missional Group.

Missional groups will be a key component in pastoral care as they develop in the future

This Hub will oversee the whole pastoral care system to ensure that no one is left unsupported or uncared for.

**Question 1: *What is a Missional Group?***

- A Missional Group is a response to God's calling, to bring God's love to the lost in diverse and creative ways, by small committed groups from within the congregation with a clear vision in the community for mission.
- Led by members of the church
- Comprised of 10 - 50 members
- A strong sense of commitment and identification with the group
- Accountable to the Church leadership
- Flexible, low in structure , high on accountability, not bound by building or service times
- Not independent autonomous congregations, but missional communities that belong to, and are resources by the overall family of the Church

Examples of such groups might include:

- Monthly meeting of men in local pub for discussions;
- Messy Church for fringe families meeting on a Saturday afternoon.
- Sunday afternoon tea and praise for elderly members of the community.
- Ministry to the local nursing homes.
- Pastoral visiting team

**Question 2: *In practical terms how might the new missional model operate?***

- With the church in Mission mode, church members will be encouraged to explore ways of demonstrating the love of God in the community.
- An idea for a ministry may arise from an individual or a group.
- After prayer and some research on feasibility they would initially test their idea with their K group/leader.
- The individual or group commit themselves to seeing the ministry happen.
- They would meet with the Incumbent or another member of the Vision Hub who will advise and direct them to the relevant ministry hub.
- Articulate your vision by drawing up a proposal with a clear mission statement
- Finally brought as a proposal to the Vision team, the ministry will be supported, if it is in line with overall vision of the church.
- A Missional Group will be established

The process is designed to discern God's will and ensure each ministry is well thought out and properly resourced.

**Question 3:** *How many missional groups will I be expected to be a part of?*

One missional group would be an individual's primary focus. There may be opportunities to get involved in serving other groups, or Church services, but we don't want anyone to feel overstretched or burdened.

**Question 4:** *If my Missional Group is outward focused, where do I get my teaching?*

The Church members in a Missional Group will meet for prayer, bible-study and teaching, using the centrally-provided materials in a way which is relevant and useful to that group, as well as meeting to fulfil their specific mission calling.

**Question 5:** *"I don't feel called to go out... I feel that I want to stay in a "normal" Church. What's my place in this vision?"*

God has given us all different gifts, at different times in our lives. He has also given us all an instruction to bring the Father's love to the lost. Everyone has a place in the Church family and is at a different stage in their journey. As teaching in services will have a focus on building us up for mission you may be surprised by the role that God is calling you to (examples: Gideon, David).

**Question 6:** *What about Existing Groups?*

Many existing groups are doing excellent work, and may continue to run. The Vision team will work with the leader of an existing group to ensure that a clear articulated mission vision for who they are serving is in place.

If you are currently running an existing group, to which you feel no calling, then you will be encouraged to "retire" in order to recharge and find your calling in another group.

**Question 8:** *Does that mean everything is going to change?*

Sunday services will remain largely as they are now with the 9.15 being the classic style and the 11.00 having a more contemporary look. The above changes will have a limited effect on how Sundays look, with the missional groups developing a pattern of their own. Therefore this will mean that other acts of worship can take place at different times of the week, appropriate to the needs of the groups. However, the fourth Sunday morning each month will become the time when we all gather together as one body under the same roof, and celebrate the mission of the church, sharing stories and experiences of what God is doing.

**We welcome and encourage your feedback, prior to the meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Please write to:**

Any PCC member, or Helen Fordham c/o The Church Office

Email: [office@ccware.org](mailto:office@ccware.org)