Introduction

- The journey so far
- What is the purpose of a parish church?
- The Mission Statement
- The priorities for 2006/7
- The specifics of the plan
- Timeline
Journey so far

Church of England asked all local churches to create action plans to focus vision and purpose.

St John’s PCC reviewed the task and decide to seek opinions and thoughts from the congregation on the issues that are most important to them. This inspired a questionnaire, and a consultation exercise.

Congregational review meeting was attended by more than 50% of regular church-goers and delivered a list of dreams and goals.

A Steering Group formed to analyse the congregation response and place it within the context of a question: “What is the purpose of a parish church?”
What is the purpose of a parish church?

- **QUESTION:** What is the purpose of a parish church?
- **ANSWER:** To proclaim the gospel (the Good News)

- **QUESTION:** What is the essential message of the gospel?
- **ANSWER:** “God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son to the end that all who believe in him should not die but have everlasting life.”

- **QUESTION:** Is that all we need to know?
- **ANSWER:** No. We are invited to respond by loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength; and by loving our neighbour as ourselves (Jesus’ Two Great Commandments)
From Jesus’ Two Great Commandments
the Steering Group created

THE ST JOHN’S MISSION
STATEMENT
St John’s Mission Statement

Drawn together by Christ’s love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.
We learn to love God and each other fully by...

- Encouraging understanding of God’s word (Bible study)
- Encouraging a personal relationship with God (prayer)
- Encouraging communal love of God (worship)
- Encouraging love and service of others (service)
PCC receive, review and endorse the Steering Group’s draft plan

Plan presented to APCM

Plan is implemented…
The Specifics of the Plan

- The Circles of Commitment
- How we deepen and grow our love of God:
  - Spirituality (Bible and prayer)
- How we deepen and grow our love of each other:
  - Youth
  - Welcome and Service
  - Worship
Mission Statement

Drawn together by Christ’s love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

To put this into practice, we need a strategy to help all of us in the congregation and community of St John’s to progress on their journey towards a fuller relationship with God.
We see the parish of St John’s as a series of concentric circles:

Everyone in the congregation at St John’s and the community as a whole can find themselves somewhere in these circles; the priorities of our Mission Action Plan are to help people at every stage of their journey to God progress to the next circle.
To that end, for 2006, we propose five key areas of activity:

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Welcome & Service
- Youth
- Worship (specifically, at this time, Music)

All this against a background of encouraging Financial Stability
Bible study

- To help all of us deepen our love for God, and nurture and love each other, we need to provide opportunities for nourishment and support at every stage of our journeys.

  - We will do this by creating small groups to study the Bible and connected themes, to be organised either on the House Group model or the Cell Group model.

  - Continuing with the Emmaus nurture course for enquirers.

  - Create on-going groups for post-enquirers and post-confirmation – perhaps to be fed into the Cell Group model of small groups.
Bible Study Groups: timeline and resources

- Decision
  - Home group or Cell group model (May 2006)

- Chose Home/Cell Group Coordinator

- Train 6 leaders
  - Decide Curriculum
    - Summer ‘06

- Autumn 2006
  - Congregation Invited to join a group

- Hopefully groups “Take off”
Prayer

- Continuing the development of prayer and spirituality meetings (Julian Prayer, Prayer Triplets, Prayer Breakfasts), perhaps linked to Bible study groups.
- Provide guidance leaflets on different types of prayer, and how to pray. To be linked in to occasional sermons, and to personal testimony on the pitfalls and rewards.
- Continue with Cursillo (8 people have already attended and 8 more are due to go).
Timeline and resources for a Week of Guided Prayer

Always and only done ecumenically, so

a) Talk with other local churches (Summer 06)

b) Hopefully positive decision leads to planning; local organiser contacted in September 06

c) Suggest Week should be in Pentecost season 2007

d) Resources; Prayer Guides come from the outside. Cost (not expensive) is borne by recipients as has been done in the Open Door retreat. Some hospitality for guides who have to stay might be needed. Church halls are used.
Welcome and service

- Serious consideration of the accessibility audit, and possible follow-up; to include assessment of the sound and lighting systems in church: Steering Group needed.
- Seek volunteers as ‘chaperones/liaison’ for newcomers to the congregation (team of 8 people, under church warden, rotating monthly)
- Open church more (take PCC Vote on church opening hours).
- Review 9.30 key service with a view to making it more attractive to newcomers.
Welcome and service (2)

- Continue Bereavement service and visiting team.
- Baptism Preparation Team (create 2 person team to assist clergy in Baptism preparation and befriending).
- Marriage Preparation Course (2 lay people to assist clergy).
- Select a justice issue so we can work at making the connections between life and faith; this year, to consider an Eco-audit.
Welcome: timeline and resources

Rector to find and work with Welcome coordinator April May 06

Welcome Team
Devise curriculum May 06
Chose team May 06
Train team Summer 2006
(8 people)

Marriage Preparation team
Chose summer 06
Train Autumn 06
First course Spring 07
(2 people)

Baptism Preparation team
Chose and train summer 06
Start as soon as Trained
(2 people)

Accessibility Audit Follow-up
Appoint steering grp (5 people)
Summer 06
Report to PCC By Christmas 06
Youth

We need to meet the needs of our teenagers and young people, to help them fulfil the commandment to love the Lord their God with the whole of their being; and also to ensure by loving them as we love ourselves that they have fulfilling and nurturing worship available to them within our community. This could be by:

- developing a teenage church;
- growing the talents of people already in the congregation, or
- generating a sustainable income to employ a youth worker.
Youth: risks

- that because we don’t know our young people well enough, we treat them as a homogenous mass – their needs and wants, and their progress through the circles on their journeys towards God, are as diverse as any other group within our congregation.

- that in developing special provision for them, particularly if we employ a youth worker, we are able as a whole to close our minds to their needs, wants and special talents, developing a church within a church that is too separate from the congregation as a whole.
Youth: Questions we should ask before we go any further

- Are we adults afraid?
- Running away?
- Not engaging?

OR WE COULD
- Hire a Youth Worker?
- Cost implications?
- Salving consciences?
- Getting rid of the problem?

EITHER WE COULD
- Listen as a whole church to our young people.
- Have a Youth Conference?

WHOLE CHURCH

How do we develop teenage church? (Do it ourselves OR generate sustainable income to pay youth worker - see Finance theme?)
Worship (Music)

- We want to help people come to love God more through a range of activities, and some feel more comfortable approaching God in music as well as with words. We will do this by:

  - Making continued efforts to recruit someone who can provide a musical lead across a range of traditions, leading to a greater sense of direction and enthusiasm

  - Encouraging greater involvement of existing musical talent within the church from all ages
Music: timeline and resources

- Choir & Musical director sought:
  - Advertisement in “Classical Music” magazine rather than repeated “Church Times” - May 06
- Consideration of whether we should use accommodation as “bait”
- New musicians already found to lead Praise@5
Financial Stability

- As a congregation, we have to understand what we can afford and agree targets for raising money to pay for those things we want to do.
High Priorities for Financial Stability

- Teaching Stewardship. Advertise and communicate the principles, including financial targets and what we need to achieve.

- To develop a financial plan to meet our responsibilities and aspirations in the mission statement. This requires us to determine levels of sustainable income, plans for contingencies and allow us to see those of our priorities that we can afford.
Financial Stability

Financial Stewardship to be taught in the following ways:

- “Naturally” through better use of lectionary material. Sundays with appropriate readings to be earmarked.
- Through new study groups.
Financial stability: making best use of our existing resources

Stewardship of time and gifts to be explored by:

- Encouraging exploration of individual talents and gifts and use in church. Send people on vocational exploration days; practice gifts.
- Audit of work in daily life.
Financial Stability: timeline and resources

- Financial plan including options for varied incomes
  - May 06
  - Finance Committee

- Communicate principals, targets and purposes
  - Summer 06

- Follow up with sermons on a stewardship theme

- Follow up with stewardship themes in study groups
  - November 06

- Exploration of individual talents; consideration of how best to use them in church
## Overall timelines

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<th>May-06</th>
<th>Jul-06</th>
<th>Sep-06</th>
<th>Nov-06</th>
<th>Jan-07</th>
<th>Mar-07</th>
<th>May-07</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible Study</strong></td>
<td>Decision on home group or cell model</td>
<td>Choose home group or cell coordinator</td>
<td>Congregation invited to join a group - does everyone have a Bible?</td>
<td>Groups take off</td>
<td>Train 6 leaders</td>
<td>Decide curriculum</td>
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<td><strong>Prayer</strong></td>
<td>Talk to other churches about a week of guided prayer</td>
<td>Contact local organiser</td>
<td>Consider production of prayer leaflets</td>
<td>Establish prayer groups, building on success of Bible study groups</td>
<td>Week of guided prayer, Pentecost 07</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome</strong></td>
<td>Rector to appoint Welcome coordinator</td>
<td>Separate Welcome, Marriage and Baptism Preparation Teams appointed and trained</td>
<td>Accessibility audit follow-up team appointed</td>
<td>Accessibility team report to PCC</td>
<td>Review Eco plan and Audit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
<td>Consideration of next steps on youth policy</td>
<td>Possible youth conference</td>
<td>Decision on youth policy</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>New musical team to lead Praise@5</td>
<td>Consideration of whether to use accommodation</td>
<td>Review 9:30 service</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finance</strong></td>
<td>Develop Financial Plan</td>
<td>Communication Strategy</td>
<td>Stewardship sermons</td>
<td>Stewardship themes adopted in study groups</td>
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We could have included more

- We wanted to do a few things well – as it is, this agenda will be enormously challenging.
- But that doesn’t mean these are the only things we think are important.
- The priorities identified here stem in large part from the congregational meeting.
Next year

- To give a flavour, next year we hope to move on to major issues including:
  - Communication with the congregation and the community
  - Establishing an outreach group for cooperation with other churches, faith groups and ecumenical organisations
  - How to provide a quiet place in church and ensure that our buildings meet the needs of the wider community

- And many more…
Thank you

- For your participation in the planning process
- In advance for your continued involvement – this can’t be just the PCC, it must be a whole-congregation commitment to work. Don’t wait to be asked – volunteer!
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16