

Our Mission Action Plan

Parish: St James', Thornham

Deanery: Oldham East

Period covered by this plan: 2018-2021

Please feel free to expand the boxes if you need more space.

Our Vision/Values

Our vision is to be a church which helps individuals to **grow** into who they truly are in Christ through our welcoming community; to walk alongside them and **nurture** their spiritual journey in a deepening relationship with God; and to encourage and enable them to share God's love in **serving** others, as a Christian presence in Thornham.

Stage 1 - Review

Where we are starting from - a realistic summary of our context and our present situation.

Our church sits within the modern Catholic tradition within the Church of England, set in this middling (in socio-economic terms) suburban parish with little in the way of an identifiable 'centre' or local community institutions. Our large congregation has – broadly reflecting the parish itself – a very diverse age profile, but is much less diverse in ethnic and social background. We have a very strong relationship with our (voluntary controlled) parish primary school, and also engage with (principally primary school aged) children through a large Sunday School. and a full complement of uniformed organisations. We also run various "drop-in" events aimed at serving our local community. We are also valued by many for the high quality of our (quite traditional) worship, with a full robed choir and organist. On the other hand, within the congregation as a whole a certain identifiable tension exists between long-term members of St James' and those young families whose attendance is at least in part influenced by a desire to earn attendance points for Church secondary school admission, which restricts a cohesive community spirit.

Where we are going - a description of where we would like to be in five years' time

Our consultation within the parish identified various areas where we could develop. In five years' time we would like a greater proportion of our regular congregation to take up opportunities to deepen and explore their faith; for the church community to feel more cohesive and inclusive; for all newcomers to be made to feel more welcome and for no-one (newcomers or otherwise) to feel that St James' is "not for people like me", with a particular focus on involving children and families in worship and the wider life of the church.

Stage 2 - Prioritise

How we will get there - a description of the priority actions if we are to 'get there'.

A: Empowering the people

Encouraging all regular worshippers to have a sense of ownership of the Church, and fostering an openness to new ideas and approaches, listening to suggestions and taking them seriously. As one part of this, considering the process and timescales we will use to review the Mission Action Plan as a church.

B: Christian education

Reviewing how we can best either provide or facilitate Christian learning (e.g. prayer and spirituality, Biblical knowledge and understanding, the traditions and teachings of the Church) for the people of St James', recognising that people have very busy lives and that attendance at specific learning events is often very low.

C: Communication and information

Reviewing how we communicate important information to regulars and outsiders, with a focus on both the *methods* which we use (verbal, printed, online, etc) and *what* we are actually communicating, including thinking about the levels of detail needed (not taking tacit knowledge for granted).

D: Encouraging volunteers

Finding ways to more effectively utilise the skills and talents of the people with the tasks that need doing within the church, recognising the anxiety that many (with already busy lives) have about potential levels of time and commitment required.

E: Intentional welcoming

Finding ways as a community (i.e. not overly onerous on individual 'regulars') to ensure that newcomers are not 'falling through the cracks' and left feeling as outsiders, particularly those with little or no church background.

F: Children and families in worship

Reviewing how we engage with children and their parents in worship itself, including any practical changes or provisions that might make it easier or less stressful for parents, our choice of hymns, involvement of children in e.g. prayers or readings where appropriate, the format of all-age Eucharists, etc.

G: Community belonging

Fostering a wider sense of 'community spirit', so that for a greater number of people St James' Church becomes more of a community to belong to than a 'thing to go to'. This may involve thinking about the range of social events and making sure they are appropriate for different groups.

Stage 3 – Current activity plan.

What do we need to do and by when? Precise, time-based and measurable actions that help us achieve our priorities. It is assumed that this page will be updated regularly as the outworking of the plan develops and progresses.

Priority	Task	Who is responsible?	Timescale
A: Empowering the people	1. To formally launch the MAP at a Sunday service (one which is likely to have large numbers – Pentecost might be appropriate), with clear messaging that we wish to 'open up' St James to make it more accessible to all.	Clergy	Spring 2018
	2. To assign one PCC member to be a 'link person' for each of the priorities B – G identified above, responsible for updating the PCC on progress; encouraging those responsible for specific tasks; and identifying new tasks or initiatives which are in line with their respective priority.	PCC	By Summer 2018
	3. To adjust the structure of PCC meetings so that the priorities identified in the MAP do indeed have priority in PCC discussions.	Standing Committee (especially chair and secretary)	By Summer 2018
	4. To formally review the MAP before each APCM, amending if necessary.	PCC	Early 2019; early 2020.
	5. To develop our next MAP, consulting again with the widest possible proportion of the church congregation.	Whoever is delegated by the Vicar!	Autumn 2020 – Spring 2021
B: Christian education	1. To undertake some research amongst the congregation as to why so few at St James' attend explicitly faith-based events (beyond regular worship).	TBD (liaising with PCC link person)	2018
	2. In agreement with the Vicar, to implement any practical changes which emerge out of the research above.	Vicar, plus others as appropriate (liaising with PCC link person)	2019-2020
	3. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of Christian education, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing

C: Communication and information	1. To have photos and contact details (subject to permission being granted) of key contacts within the church, published at the back of church and on the church website.	TBD (liaising with PCC link person)	By Summer 2018
	2. To appoint someone who will take on responsibility for updating the website on a regular basis, and train them if required	PCC (to appoint); Fr Daniel, liaising with PCC link person	Late 2018 – early 2019
	3. To better integrate our website with social media	New website maintainer, liaising with PCC link person	2019
	4. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of improving communication and information, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing
D: Encouraging volunteers	1. To develop, over time, a volunteering resource section of the website, providing an at-a-glance overview of opportunities for getting more involved in church, with an idea of the likely level of commitment involved.	Website editor, and/or someone else appointed by PCC (liaising with PCC link person)	2019
	2. To consider the possibility of an annual 'volunteering Sunday', with signposting to the above resource and / or printed alternatives.	TBD (liaising with PCC link person)	2019
	3. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of encouraging volunteers, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing
E: Intentional welcoming	1. To develop a team of "newcomer welcomers" (on a rota basis) to proactively find and talk to newcomers and make sure they get the welcome leaflet	PCC (to appoint a co-ordinator), liaising with PCC link person	2019
	2. To consider how we can make better use of the area around the main (south-west) church entrance to be attractive and welcoming.	PCC, liaising with PCC link person.	2019-2020

	3. To develop a "New to St James'?" section of the website, providing the basic information about St James' (and the CofE) which we take for granted but which is often bewildering to unchurched folk (overlapping with D 1 above).	Website editor, and/or someone else appointed by PCC (liaising with PCC link person)	Summer 2018
	4. To ensure that, as the website is further established, future revisions of the welcome leaflet point prominently to website information.	PCC	As appropriate
	5. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of intentional welcoming, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing
F: Children and families in worship	1. To work towards the Diocese's 'Child Friendly Church' award	TBD, but including Vicar / other clergy (liaising with PCC link person)	2018-2020
	2. To trial "commentated eucharists" for some Sunday services, particularly in September and/or October when there a large numbers of new families.	Vicar / other clergy (liaising with PCC link person)	Autumn 2018 (and onwards?)
	3. To develop a children's area of the church with toys, more freedom to move around etc., to allow very young children to become more used to church, and less stressful for parents	ALM, other clergy (liaising with PCC link person)	2018-19
	4. To establish a working group (representative of the church in terms of age, and including musical director, organist, and vicar) to review the range of hymns that we use on different occasions	PCC to establish (liaising with PCC link person and including Vicar, organist and musical director)	2018
	5. To proactively work and collaborate with the new Children and Families Missioner (for Shaw & Crompton and Thornham) to be appointed in 2018.	Vicar, PCC link person	From 2018

	6. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of children and families in worship, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing
G: Community belonging	1. To work towards 3-4 <i>affordable</i> social events per year (not events with a primarily fundraising focus), some with a family focus / child provision.	PCC (liaising with PCC link person)	2019
	2. Developing a parish hall committee to review current use of the hall, and with a long-term aim of co-ordinating and developing its use as a focal point for the local community.	PCC to establish (liaising with PCC link person)	2019
	3. To identify new tasks or initiatives which are in line with our priority of community belonging, as outlined above.	Everyone, but given a lead by PCC link person.	Ongoing

Our partners – what other people do we need to involve/consult – e.g Mission unit/deanery; local authority; other churches; other organisations?

As identified in the action points above:

- the new Children and Families Missioner (for Shaw & Crompton and Thornham);
- the Diocesan Children's Office (currently Karen Beal).

Parish and Deanery - How our plan connects with and enhances the mission of the deanery as expressed in the current Deanery Plan?

The deanery plan is not yet finalised, though it seems a given that we are going to be part of the Shaw & Crompton and Thornham cluster (with the parishes of Shaw, High Crompton and East Crompton), so our collaboration with the new Children and Families Missioner will likely be of increasing importance.

Our mission action plan shows how we will play our part as a local church in the Diocesan vision of

**A worshipping, growing, and transforming Christian presence
at the heart of every community.**

This mission action plan was approved by the PCC on (Date)

Signed : Post/office.....

Date :

Please send your plan, along with any supporting documentation to the MAP team –
map@manchester.anglican.org. The MAP team will then review it and send it to your Archdeacon