



Mission Audit for Christ Church, Hulland

A presentation by Steve Dunning
March 2022

What will we cover?

- What is mission?
- What is our missionary context?
- What are we currently doing?
- Where are the gaps?
- What could we do to fill those gaps?

BRIEFLY



What is Mission?

Missio Dei* = It is God's Mission, not the church's. God had a mission long before there was a church.

"It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a church in the world."

"Mission is finding out what God is doing and joining in."

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"
Matthew 28:18

** Source - Karl Hartenstein (1934), David Bosch (1991) and others*

Talk it through BRIEFLY.

The Great Commission

We're not talking about the old concept of sending missionaries to Africa. God is already at work all around us.



The 5 Marks of Mission (5Ts)

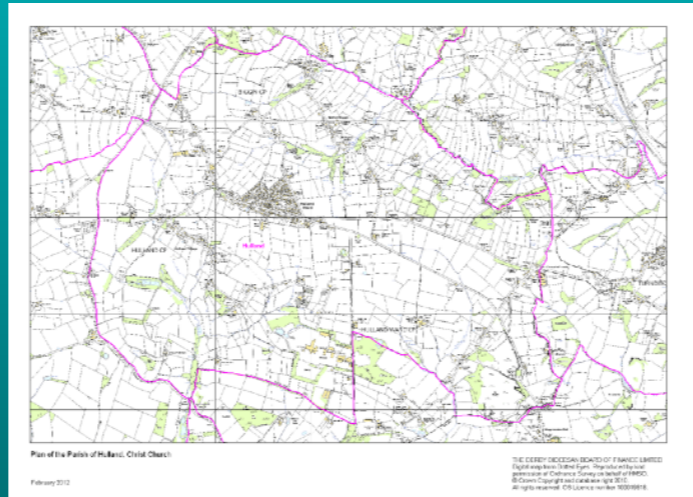
The 5 Marks of Mission

Mission Theology Advisory Group 2017

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom **TELL**
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers **TEACH**
- To respond to human need by loving service **TEND**
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation **TRANSFORM**
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth **TREASURE**

Latest version - original developed in 1984.

These came out after our Mission Action Plan but now form the core of C of E approach to mission.



What is our missionary context?

This is a map of our parish. Not just geographical

Our 21st Century World Is ...

- Focussed on individual needs and expectations, often to the detriment of involvement in community activity
- No longer centred around the church or religion; largely secular
- Dominated by 24 hour news, streaming services and social media
- Affected by an ageing population, increased demands on public services (especially health and social care) and climate change

Talk through. Not necessarily a comprehensive list. No good longing for the past. This is our new missionary context / ecology.

2011 Census Statistics for Christ Church, Hulland Ecclesiastical Parish

- Population (2018 estimate) - 1,229
- Number of occupied households - 529
- Area - 5.2 square miles
- Ethnicity - 99.3% white
- Religion - 76% Christian; 17.2% No religion; Not stated - 6%

2021 Census results
not yet published

Source - C of E Statistics Unit

Talk through BRIEFLY.

Last point - 76% = 934. Average attendance at Sunday worship = 30; Messy Church = 60.
76% expected to be nearer 50% nationally for 2021 census.

Poverty / Deprivation Data

- Deprivation rank - 10,333 (1 = most deprived, 12,307 = least deprived) "Parish is amongst the wealthiest in the country" = top 20%
- Child poverty - 4.7%
- Pensioner poverty - 5.8%
- Working age poverty - 3.6%
- Life expectancy - boys 80.5 years; girls 86.4 years

*Source - C of E Statistics Unit and Church Urban Fund Poverty Look-up Tool
Various dates between 2011 and 2019*

Talk through BRIEFLY. Highlight first point.

Demographics

- No qualifications - 21.5%
- Social housing - 4.3%
- Lone parenthood - 18.8%
- People living on their own - 22.2%
- Older population - 25%
- Ethnic diversity - 1.4%

*Source - C of E Statistics Unit and Church Urban Fund Poverty Look-up Tool
Various dates between 2011 and 2019*

Highlight points in yellow (pre pandemic) - pointers towards isolation and loneliness?

Other Factors

- The pandemic
- New housing developments
- Climate crisis
- Decline in clergy numbers / role of laity
- Increased use of smart devices and social media
- Other activities on Sundays

Talk through

Point 2 Hlland Ward has 3 new housing developments - some built, some planned - totally about 130 dwellings. MISSION OPPORTUNITY

Mission in Multi-Parish Benefices

“Building on these characteristics of being the Body of Christ, and recognising the strengths and weaknesses of rural parishes and multi-church groups, mission and growth become possible when the right conditions are created for that mission potential to be unlocked and sustained.”

*Shaping Strategies for Mission and Growth in Rural Multi-Church Groups
Church of England 2017*

BRIEFLY - Mention the report by James Bell, Bishop of Ripon and Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer.

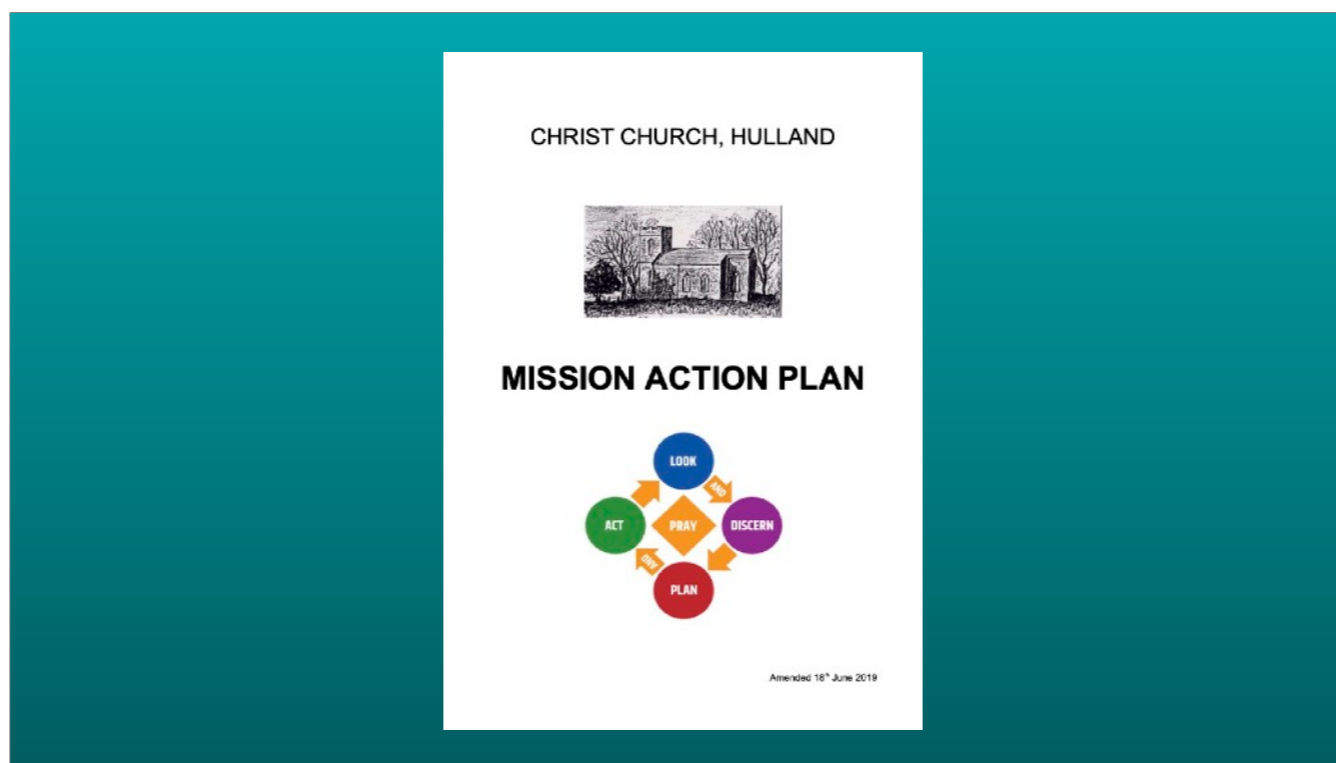
“Key contributing factors include:

- a culture of envisioning, enabling and equipping;
- the deep involvement of congregation members in the life of their community; and
- the experience of knowing and being known in rural communities.

Discerning and releasing lay leadership contributes to ministry, mission, evangelism and ultimately growth.”

*Shaping Strategies for Mission and Growth in Rural Multi-Church Groups
Church of England 2017*

These are key for Hlland Church - there are positives and negatives - points 2 and 3 positive and true; point 1 needs more work. Final sentence worth spending time on.



This document contained a number of actions under the headings:

- A. Reaching out to those people in our parish who would like to explore the Christian faith further e.g. Messy Church
- B. Giving for Life – being good stewards of our time, skills and money
- C. Exploring how we can make our church spaces more flexible, adaptable and versatile

Our Mission Values (2017)

- Maintaining a vibrant and visible Christian presence of worship, witness and service.
- Maintaining and developing links with the community.
- Engaging with all groups of people but particularly with younger people and families.

How do these measure up to the 5 Marks of Mission?

TELL TEACH TEND

TRANSFORM TREASURE

Just pose the question.

What are we currently doing?



We need to celebrate what we already do.

BUT if we want to do new things with existing resources, what could we stop doing?



Where are the gaps?

The 5 Marks of Mission

Mission Theology Advisory Group 2017

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom **TELL**
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers **TEACH**
- To respond to human need by loving service **TEND**
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation **TRANSFORM**
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth **TREASURE**

Let's go back to the 5Ts:

TELL - Messy Church, Hippos - at least an opportunity to TELL

TEACH - ???

TEND - Food banks, pastoral visiting, prayer chain, charitable giving

TRANSFORM - ??? could we do more e.g. changes to Universal Credit, modern slavery, Ukraine, Fair Trade, support charities like Amnesty International?

TREASURE - Eco Church

Reflections

- Talking about our faith to other people is scary and not something we're used to. Look around our church - how many leaflets, notices, banners etc are about mission, evangelism or exploring the Christian faith?
- We're a small church with good engagement in our communities. We should play to our strengths.
- Look for small gains - don't bite off more than we can chew. Remember the parable of the mustard seed.
- Is there anything we could stop doing in order to create capacity for mission?
- Try to target our mission where there is need.
- Seek ways to do mission informally by creating opportunities for conversations.

3 things you should never talk about at the dinner table - sex, religion and politics

Refer back to the key qualities for multi-parish, rural benefices:

- the deep involvement of congregation members in the life of their community; and
- the experience of knowing and being known in rural communities.

Are there opportunities to build mission into what we already do?



What could we do to fill those gaps?
Some mission ideas

TELL & TEACH

Help our church leaders and members to become more comfortable talking to others about the Christian faith:

- Front-line Sundays
- More notices and leaflets for people wanting to explore faith

Remember in my earlier reflections I said that we feel uncomfortable sharing our faith with others. Frontline Sundays is a suite of materials to plan and lead five services, and small group studies, that will inspire a congregation for their Monday to Saturday lives, and Sunday too. Maybe benefice-wide?

TEND

Provide activities to help combat loneliness and isolation, especially following the pandemic e.g:

- Develop Christ Church Coffee and Chat
- Accompanied walks - the 'loop'?
- Engagement with the farming community
- Anna Chaplaincy

Remember from the earlier slide on the 2011 census that our parish has ...

Lone parenthood - 18.8%

People living on their own - 22.2%

Older population - 25%

Anna Chaplaincy is offering spiritual support to older people who are living in care homes and sheltered housing complexes, their relatives and staff who look after them.

Promoting the spiritual welfare of older people in the wider community, particularly those facing challenges living independently.

TELL & TEACH

Explore using online or telephone services - e.g. for housebound - building on what we did in the lockdowns.

- Not necessarily involving the Rector
- Not necessarily on Sundays

Telephone services operated across the benefice and, at their peak, attracted 50+ people.

TELL & TEACH & TEND

Develop Messy Church, e.g. Messy Vintage

Messy Vintage is a missional offshoot of Messy Church, which began in a Methodist Church in Jersey. It is a movement that takes Messy Church values and good practice to older people.

Messy Church came out of our 2017 Mission Action Plan and has been very successful. Older people already help with our traditional Messy Church. Could we turn that round and add in something aimed at older people? Remember that 25% of our parish population are older people.

TELL & TEACH

Greater use of festivals for mission

There is generally a higher attendance at these services

We could investigate what other churches do around festivals and maybe try something different

This was an action point in our 2017 Mission Action Plan. Could we now explore it further?

Summary

1. Help our congregation to become more comfortable talking to others about the Christian faith, e.g. Front-line Sundays, more leaflets and notices
2. Provide activities to help combat loneliness and isolation, especially following the pandemic, e.g. develop Coffee and Chat, accompanied walks, engagement with the farming community, Anna Chaplaincy
3. Explore using online or telephone services - e.g for housebound - not necessarily involving the Rector. Building on what we did in the lockdowns.
4. Develop Messy Church, e.g. Messy Vintage
5. Greater use of festivals for mission - generally higher attendance at these services

Thank you for listening!

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you love all of your creation. May we not become so caught up in matters of the Church that we fail to act on matters of mission. May we always be seeking ways to reflect your love for the world as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen