

Mission Accompaniers in the diocese of St Albans

Introduction

Mission Action Planning is a central element in the new diocesan initiative *Living God's Love*. This initiative is an invitation to the people, parishes and deaneries, schools and chaplaincies to explore what it means to *Live God's Love* today by seeking to

- *Go Deeper into God,*
- *Transform Communities* and to
- *Make New Disciples.*

It is an invitation to journey, to see things from new perspectives, to discover new ways of doing things and to learn from each other as we travel together.

Each parish, school and chaplaincy is invited to ask how its own mission and ministry can be developed and shaped to *Live God's Love* more effectively, more faithfully and more joyfully in the light of the three themes. The journey needs to be discerned prayerfully and imaginatively.



Mission Action Planning and Mission Accompaniers

For parishes, in particular, two resources are offered to help in that task of discernment:

Mission Action Planning.

This is a tool which has proved effective and fruitful in many other dioceses in recent years. It is a prayerful process of looking, listening and reflection leading into planning and prioritising; seeking, with the Spirit's guidance, to discern both a vision and also a course of action. Typically that course of action might have a five year dimension and yearly priorities.

A separate guide introduces Mission Action Planning. You can download this from http://www.livinggodslove.org/living_gods_love/mission_action_plans/

Mission Accompaniers.

As part of our shared commitment to this journey we are seeking to identify Mission Accompaniers to help parishes in this process. Their role will be, 'as it says on the tin', to accompany parishes as they, in their different ways, seek to discern and walk the journey. The Mission Accompaniers will, between them, offer a range of skills and experience and will be able to spend creative time with PCCs and others from parishes.

The Role of Mission Accompaniers

Key Tasks and Skills

- Listen to clergy and people to help parishes.
- Suggest ways of making the looking and listening exercise fruitful; opening new possibilities and offering fresh perspectives.
- Help parish clarify the vision that emerges; acting as a sounding board and a sharpening stone.
- Offer reflection in the planning and setting of goals; offering both realism and imagination.
- Accompany the parish on the journey, providing the helpful perspective of a 'critical friend'.
- Introduce the parish to possible resources that may be available.
- Liaising with Diocesan Officers
- Participating in Reviews

Range of Skills

There will be a diversity of approach and needs across the parishes. We will therefore be looking for a good pool of Mission Accompaniers who will between them have a wide range of skills. Parishes and Mission Accompaniers will be matched carefully.

Commitment

- It is the intention that Mission Accompaniers will work in pairs. It could be expected that there might be two or three visits to a parish during the process of developing a Mission Action Plan. There will also be some phone calls.
- It is hoped that Mission Accompaniers might be willing to work with about three or four parishes over the course of a year.
- It is the intention that Mission Accompaniers will be matched with parishes which are fairly local. Travel expenses will be offered.

Training

Training will be offered. Mission Accompaniers will also be expected to share together their experiences and to help us all learn together as we take this forward.

Getting Started

Pilot Projects

Mission Action Planning will be rolled out in the diocese with a series of pilot projects early in the New Year. These will take place in a wide variety of parishes in different situations and of different sizes. This will enable us to learn how best to make Mission Action Planning work across the diocese.

Finding Mission Accompaniers

Please get in touch if you have suggestions for people who could act as Mission Accompaniers. We need to find quite a large number of people, clergy and lay, who will between them have a wide range of skills.

In the first instance, please contact John Kiddle by email john.kiddle@stalbans.anglican.org