

THE DIOCESE OF ELY

The Anglican Communion acknowledges the following "Five marks of mission":

- 1 To proclaim the good news of the kingdom
- 2 To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- 3 To respond to human need by loving service
- 4 To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- 5 To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Clearly **MISSION MATTERS**, and it is important that every parish/team/mission community takes time to decide what is the appropriate next step in its outreach into the community.

To help you in this process, the following document is offered as a possible way forward:

MISSION

ACTION

PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Mission Action Planning is a tried and tested way of putting flesh on what we say of ourselves as a “church”. It enables us to explore our strengths and the challenges we face, and to put together a realistic plan for the way we believe God is leading us.

There is no one “correct” way of producing a Mission Action Plan (MAP), but there are a number of important factors to bear in mind if the MAP is to be of genuine use, and not just a set of dreams.

Mission Action Planning is seen as vital to the delivery of effective mission and ministry in the Diocese of Ely, and we warmly encourage every “parish” to produce and maintain an up-to-date MAP.

Many parishes are already involved in Mission Action Planning (or equivalent), and we want to encourage and support you in this work.

It is the expectation of our bishop that every parish will move in the direction of producing a MAP, and resources will be made available to assist in this process.

What is a Mission Action Plan (MAP)?

It should be seen as an organic document which expresses the very DNA of your church. As a working tool it should also grow and change as your mission priorities change in your particular situation.

MAP’s will vary greatly depending on whether such an exercise is new to you; the size of your church(es); your location and church traditions. Experience has shown that MAP’s are most effective when their production has the widest possible involvement across your congregations.

Where do we start?

- **PRAY.** This must be at the heart of all that we seek to do – what is God’s plan for us? Discover this and the rest is simple!

- **Parish Profile.** You will already have one of these, but is it up-to-date? It needs to describe all that you do – styles of worship; resources; activities; a profile of the people who come – and of those who don't!
- **Community Audit.** What happens in your community? Collect information about local organisations and amenities. Are church members actively involved in the life of the community?
- **What of the future?** Come up with as many new ideas and ventures as possible. Be bold and don't worry about practicalities – at least, not at this early stage.
- **SWOT Analysis.** Consider carefully the STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS that you are facing. This needs to include financial and building considerations, and will start to bring some realism to your "dreaming" activity (as above).
- **Resources.** At the end of the day, resources matter. Consider what people and skills will be needed to accomplish your objectives. Will anyone else need to be involved (other churches; Diocesan support)? Are there people in the community who might be able to help? And yes, buildings and finance have to be considered too.
- **Setting Priorities.** Divide your ideas into three groups – "Quick Wins" (things that can make an early impact). "Medium Range" (things that will take require preparation – and time and energy). "Long Range" (things which will need a significant investment of time and resources).
- **SMART checklist.** make sure your objectives are SPECIFIC and STRETCHING; MEASURABLE; ACHIEVABLE; RELEVANT and REALISTIC, as well as TIME BOUND.

- **Draft.** Prepare a MAP which sets out your “parish” priorities and how you intend to achieve them. Try to ensure that the MAP is “owned” by as many people as possible.
- **Launch.** Celebrate your plans with the wider community as well as regular church members.
- **Celebrate.** When an objective has been achieved (however modest) take time to celebrate and offer thanks to God.

One final comment – this is not a “tablets of stone” exercise, nor is it a box-ticking exercise. It is a practical document, constantly in use and developing organically as things move and change within your community.

This activity is for the life and vitality of your “parish” – not a document to be filed in some Diocesan cupboard – but the bishop will be very interested in what you are planning for the future.

More Help

At the time of writing we are not certain as to how support will be made available, but it will be there!

For further help and support at this stage, please contact:

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