

St. Pancras Church  
Pennycross, Plymouth

# Mission Action Plan

In Christ • In Church • In Community





## **St. Pancras Church, Pennycross Mission Action Plan**

This document is a work-in-progress, which aims to provide vision and direction for leaders and church members of St. Pancras Church as we all seek to be people who are:

- Growing in Prayer
- Making New Disciples
- Serving the People of Devon with Joy

The main section of the plan is the result of a year-long process of consultation, discussion and prayer. Appendix A is a full list of the actions arising from the plan and how they will be addressed. Other appendices contain important background and practical information about the church and its context.

The design and structure of the report mirrors the design of the Church of England resource 'From Evidence to Action'.

### **Contents**

Overview - No Single Factor  
(The eight factors in 'From Evidence to Action')

The Mission Action Plan  
(Expressed in terms of these eight factors)

Appendix A  
Actions, Responsibilities and Review Process

Appendix B  
The Church Centre and Resources

Appendix C  
Community and Parish Statistics

Appendix D  
Process and documents used to  
Prepare the Mission Action Plan

# Growing Churches

## "No single recipe" for growth

The findings of the Church Growth Research Programme didn't reveal a "single recipe" for growth but the researchers found that there are a number of common factors which appear to be associated with growing churches of any size, place or context.

### EIGHT COMMON FACTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

A growing church is likely to:



# GROWING CHURCHES



A CHURCH THAT HAS A CLEAR MISSION AND PURPOSE  
AND WHOSE CLERGY AND CONGREGATIONS ARE  
INTENTIONAL ABOUT GROWTH



Given that evangelism is simply the sharing of 'good news'...  
What is the role of St. Pancras Church as an organisation as  
we seek to see new people come to know Jesus?



Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with  
you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.



*1 Thessalonians 2:8*

**At the centre of our hope that we will be a growing church is the expectation that people will discover Jesus when they come into contact with Christians at St. Pancras. To enable and encourage this to happen, our role as an worshipping community is:**

**#1**

To create repeated opportunities to bring church members into meaningful conversations about faith with those who live and work in the area



Shown in our  
WELCOME

**#2**

AND

To provide resources, events and activities which help members share their faith with their friends, their family and those who they get to know through church activities.



Shown in our  
ENGAGEMENT  
(overleaf)

# Growing Churches



A church that understands its context, actively engages with it and with those who might not currently go to church



One of our aims at St. Pancras is to grow by...

...providing resources, events and activities which help members share their faith with their friends, their family and those who they get to know through church activities.

In recent years, we have used the season of Lent to think about our role in the life of the community, both as individual Christians and together as a church. We have used the following resources:

Becoming a Contagious Christian (Personal Evangelism)  
Everybody Welcome (Church Audit)  
Network (Spiritual Gifts)  
Pilgrim (Christian Basics)  
Fruitfulness on the Frontline

LENT  
COURSES

These courses have challenged us to think about our role in the community as being more than just sharing the gospel message. Active involvement in the life of the community will give us a better understanding of those to whom we minister, will build bridges over which the gospel can travel and will demonstrate the love of God to those around us in tangible ways.

ACTION PLAN

Encourage, resource and celebrate members who offer time and expertise in the governance and delivery of organisations and initiatives such as:

- All Saints Academy
- Honicknowle Partnership of Extended Services (HoPES)
- Pencycross Primary School
- Plymouth Plan (PCC)
- Plymouth Food Bank
- Plymouth Street Pastors
- Shakespeare Primary School
- Shekinah Mission
- Transforming Plymouth Together
- Y.M.C.A.



In 2014 we undertook an exercise to analyse some of the statistics which were gathered in the last census. The results of this can be seen in Appendix C of this Mission Action Plan.

Two factors which have particularly impacted our planning are that the average age of parishioners is 39 (far younger than we might think) and that the tenure of the housing which surrounds the church means that a significant number of people live alone within a five minute walk of the church.

With these particular needs in mind, we undertook three specific initiatives to begin meeting these needs. All three are intended, not just to serve the community, but to create community. We adopted the strapline 'Creating • Community • Space' to use around the Church Centre to reinforce this idea.

**#1** Refurbish our church hall and kitchen to create a light and comfortable café space with a well-equipped open-plan kitchen suitable for serving community meals.

ACTION

Continue to resource the 'First Friday Friends' community lunch so that it is sustainable and has potential to grow.

**#2** Convert a single-decker bus into a mobile meeting space which is used on the Chaucer Way area of the parish.

ACTION

Build a team who are able to use the bus for ministry and outreach, especially those who can take on the leadership of the work when the Pioneer Minister retires in 2017.

**#3** Invite Popin Children's Centre to move into the Church Centre and make it the base for their office staff and activities among the families of young children.

ACTION

Continue to make the church centre a convenient, attractive and financially viable place for Popin to base their operations and seek to build meaningful relationships with staff.

# GROWING CHURCHES



A church that is willing to change and adapt

“ NOTHING CHANGES ”

*Survey Response to the question:*

*“What are you worried might happen as a result of the new Mission Action Plan?”*

There is generally very little resistance to change among the Church Family at St. Pancras. On the contrary, the church member quoted above was not the only person to say that their biggest concern about writing a new Mission Action Plan was that nothing would be different as a result.

In this environment, leaders do not need to be afraid of taking risks, but do need to be able to set realistic goals and encourage patience while ideas are considered by the wider church family.

Support for change (or lack of it) should not be taken for granted. All church members need to feel able to express their ideas, needs, concerns and reservations freely and publicly.

## ACTION PLAN

Make Appendix A of this Mission Action Plan a public document, using collaborative editing software to allow church members able to contribute, edit and update the detailed plan.

Make reviewing and refocusing a central part the Annual Church Meeting and the Annual Report, minimising other business to allow space for vision.

To communicate the expectation that all critical feedback (positive and negative) will be appropriately shared among leadership teams.

Continue to review specific areas of Church life including: children and communion; services around festivals; joint services and activities.



One area of church life which needs to be kept under constant review is our pattern of services. This is especially true of the 10:30am Sunday morning service, which many people see as our 'main service'. It is also necessary to regularly review what we do at annual festivals, especially Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest.

“ Style of worship and where a church places itself in terms of its theological tradition appear to have no significant link with growth, so long as there is consistency and clarity and the chosen style and tradition are wholeheartedly adopted. ”

*From Anecdote to Evidence, Page 8*

St. Pancras Church has a well established tradition as a *Charismatic Evangelical Anglican Church*. Within this broad definition, we need to have the courage to experiment with different expressions of Christian worship, ensuring that any given act of worship has a clearly agreed 'flavour'. This is preferable to attempting to hold multiple styles and tastes in the one weekly service.

From June 2015, the pattern of Sunday Services has been:

| 1st Sunday             | 2nd Sunday                | 3rd Sunday             | 4th Sunday                | 5th Sunday                 | Sundays in August       | Festivals (Easter, Pentecost, Harvest, Christmas) |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
|                        | BCP Holy Communion 9:00am |                        | BCP Holy Communion 9:00am |                            |                         |   |
| Holy Communion 10:30am | Morning Praise 10:30am    | Holy Communion 10:30am | Morning Praise 10:30am    | Morning Praise 10:30am     | All Age Service 10:30am | All Age Celebration 10:30am                       |
|                        |                           | Messy Church 4:00pm    |                           | Church Lunch after service |                         |   |

Services are reviewed in a termly 'Service Planning and Review' meeting, attended by staff and volunteers with a range of different roles and responsibilities.





# Growing Churches



A church which is welcoming and builds on-going relationships with people



One of our aims at St. Pancras is to grow by...

...creating repeated opportunities to bring church members into meaningful conversations about faith with those who live and work in the area

“ You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. ”  
*Matthew 5:14-16*

Continue to run activities which allow relationships to be built between church members and people in the wider community where the friends and family of church members will feel welcome.

Bridging the Gap (Ladies)  
Faith and Football  
First Friday Friends  
Homework Club and Tuesday Kitchen  
Knit-a-square  
Men's Events  
The Bus on Chaucer Way  
Baby and Toddler Group  
Who Let the Dads Out?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Run regular courses and events which promote conversations and encourage people to ask questions about the Christian Faith.

Continue to use the relationships built around Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals as an opportunity for people to explore Christianity.



“ People are not looking for a church that is friendly, they are looking for a church where they can make friends” ”

*Bob Jackson, Everybody Welcome Course*

On Sundays at St. Pancras, newcomers will receive a friendly welcome at the door and in the church and, as our survey responses revealed, deep friendships have evolved naturally and organically.

In common with other areas of church life, making friends is not something which can be orchestrated by the organisation. What can be done is creating the conditions in which friendships stand the best chance of developing.

A large part of creating these conditions is helping newcomers to feel comfortable. We can help this by answering the following questions:

- What is going to happen?
- How do I participate?
- Who's Who?
- Where are my Children and what are they doing?
- Where are the things I might need?
- Am I able to control my level of involvement?

Ensure that the website always has up to date information about service types and time, children's groups and other details about access, parking and which door to use.

Welcome team members and clergy need to be clearly identifiable, through badges, clerical collars and by introducing themselves.

The notice sheet should explain what will be happening for young people during the service, and this should be re-iterated by the service leader.

Internal signs should be clear, indicating toilets, exits and other rooms.

When there are visitors, the Service Leader needs to take time to explain how to participate (especially during communion) and what is happening. Service leaders need to brief the welcome team about anything unusual in the service and also let the office know to update the notice sheet.



The extent to which visitors feel 'welcome' in church is mostly due to the people who greet them and speak to them. There are also a number of 'environmental' factors which can either help or hinder the welcome and systems which can help to ensure the personal welcome is consistent and appropriate.



Members of St. Pancras took part in the 'Everybody Welcome' course during Lent in 2012. Over three quarters of participants thought that the grounds and exterior of the church were untidy and unattractive, the building was not sufficiently accessible to wheelchairs and the kitchen were unhygienic.



In 2012/13 the Church Hall was extensively refurbished, with the creation of a new café and open-plan kitchen, offices, large foyer and new enclosed storage rooms. Some downstairs rooms were also been repainted and re-carpeted and a wheelchair ramp fitted into the church.

In 2015/16 we completed a second round of refurbishment, focussing on improving usability, security and energy-efficiency across the site. This included: replacing the path from the carpark to the church; installing Photo-Voltaic cells to the hall roof to generate clean electricity; replacing the windows in the hall with double glazing; completely refurbishing the downstairs kitchen and upgrading hand-dryers in toilets.

The church centre is used throughout the week and we rent office and activity space to Popin Children's Centre and community groups.

Continue to invest in our buildings so that they are comfortable (warm, light and clean), safe and accessible throughout.

Use the Quinquennial inspection to identify any urgent issues with the church, particularly with the roof. Redecorate the ceiling in the church.

Update and replace external signs to illustrate how the Church Centre is used, and that the site has a historic building which cannot be seen from the road.

Update internal notice boards and displays to make it clear who we are, what we do and how to get involved.

# GROWING CHURCHES



A CHURCH THAT HAS CLERGY  
AND LAY LEADERS WHO INNOVATE,  
ENVISION AND MOTIVATE PEOPLE

Formal leadership within a Church of England parish church is a partnership between the Vicar, the Church Wardens and the Parochial Church Council (PCC), all of whom are trustees of the church. Trustees are concerned with both the material and spiritual stewardship of the church. Lay members are elected as Church Wardens and PCC members and licensed clergy are also members of the PCC.

“ I have been involved in the PCC in past years but it became apparent to me that most decisions had been made prior to meetings ... I didn't feel that there was an opportunity for open and honest debate. ”

*Survey response to the invitation to comment generally about leadership and management at St. Pancras.*

In response to such valid criticisms in the past, we have been working to ensure that the role of trustee of St. Pancras Church is meaningful, with decision making genuinely shared. In order for leadership to be shared in this way, trustees need to be both informed and consulted, with time to express support or reservations and to gather the opinions of the wider church family.

PLAN

Continue to plan meetings with detailed agendas and with supporting paperwork distributed at least a week before the meeting. Include an informal PCC update in the newsletter after every meeting.

Being informed doesn't mean that everyone on the PCC needs to be an expert in every area where decisions are made, but the PCC needs to have a balance of skills and experience, genders, ages and lengths of service.

PLAN

Actively recruit PCC members, seeking to include people with specific skills. Provide or seek out training to fill skills gaps across the PCC.

Balance across the team should also be considered in the recruitment of staff and the appointment of an incumbent.



Specifically, an incumbent should:

- Embrace and uphold the charismatic evangelical tradition of St. Pancras
- Be a model of the Christian life in their prayer, personal evangelism and relationships.
- Have a 'light touch' using collaboration as their default leadership style.
- Be able to teach the Bible to different ages and in different settings.
- Be committed to their own spiritual growth and ministerial development.

CURRENT STAFF

**Vicar** (full-time with 20% responsibilities to Diocesan Roles)  
**Curate** (full-time, with 20% commitment to training)  
**Pioneer Minister to Chaucer Way** (part-time 1 day per week)  
**Administrator** (8 hours per week)  
**Cleaner** (3 hours per week)

“ Churches are more likely to grow when there is one leader for one community. ”

*From Anecdote to Evidence, Page 8*

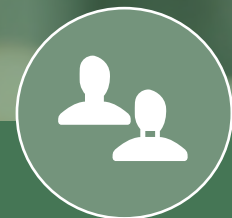
While there are good examples of lay ministry teams flourishing as paid clergy are shared across a multi-parish team, there is a clear pastoral advantage where an incumbent is able to be part of the same worshipping community every Sunday.

Sustain a large enough church family and sufficient annual income to remain viable as a single parish Mission Community with a full-time stipendiary incumbent and curate in training. (Target: 150 Participants.)

Continue to monitor our budget to ensure that St. Pancras is viable in terms of making Common Fund payments in full and on time.

Play an active role in the development of a city-wide Mission Action Plan by electing representatives who can engage positively with Plymouth Deanery Synod and Mission and Pastoral Committee.

# Growing Churches



*A church where lay people as well as ordained clergy are active in leadership and other roles*

Baby and Toddler Group

Bookstall

Bridging the Gap (Ladies)

Building Maintenance

Finance and Banking

First Friday Friends

(Community Lunches)

Flame Youth Group

Flower Arranging

Home Groups

Knit-a-Square

Marriage Enrichment

Men's Breakfast and Activities

Music Group

Pastoral Team

Prayer Ministry

Safeguarding

Sunday Coffee

Tuesday Coffee Mornings

Welcome Team

VOLUNTEER-LED  
MINISTRIES

St. Pancras has a long tradition of encouraging the ministries of skilled and committed volunteers. As attendance patterns have changed, and the number of regular participants has fallen, we find ourselves unable to resource the fullest range of activities. The paradox is that without these ministries we are not attracting new people who will volunteer to help.

## ACTION PLAN

Recognise that we cannot do everything we would like to do and prioritise those ministries which we believe will most help us to grow.

Actively recruit new volunteers for these ministries using testimonies from existing team members, an annual stewardship Sunday, undertaking a skills audit and developing attractive role descriptions for volunteers.

Do not attempt to continue running ministries for which volunteers are not coming forward or where volunteers or staff are working in an unsustainable way.



“

If you want something done, ask a busy person.  
*Quotation often attributed to Benjamin Franklin.*

”

Another paradox of volunteering is that people are unwilling to put themselves forward because they see the time commitment and effort given by existing volunteers.

The perception is that new people are not needed to help, when the reality is that existing volunteers would be extremely grateful for others to share the load. The organisation needs to invest in order to lighten that burden.

The voluntary world is in the gift economy. People give of their time and their skills for no money ... In such a world, poverty becomes almost a badge of virtue; we must make do and mend rather than invest in better equipment, better premises, better people. More careful thought might suggest that more investment could lead to better delivery. ”

*Charles Handy, Understanding Voluntary Organizations.*

Ensure that all volunteers and staff are able to serve joyfully and sustainably. Specifically:

- Invest in and train people to use technology and systems which will save time and effort for volunteers.
- Provide a formal review process for volunteers and staff.
- Limit the length of time office holders can serve to six years.
- Work towards having role descriptions for all volunteers roles.
- Identify and enable volunteers and staff to have appropriate training for, and encouragement in the roles they take on.
- Encourage volunteer team members to share leadership and coordination of teams, allowing effective succession planning as existing members leave that team.
- Identify tasks which 'just happen' in church life and around the church centre and find out who is doing them and how they can be supported.

# GROWING CHURCHES



## A CHURCH THAT ACTIVELY ENGAGES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Meaningful engagement with young people requires the church to welcome the whole family.

“We were looking for a church to attend as a family; having two young children at the time, it was important to find a church which had thriving young people’s groups. At our first visit we were made to feel very welcome and we quickly became involved with activities on Sunday and throughout the week.”

*Survey Response to the question  
“Why did you come to St. Pancras in the first place?”*

“Where both of their parents attend church once a month or more, around half of young adults will also attend. Where only one parent attends, this drops to a quarter. If neither parent attends regularly then the chances of the child doing so are negligible.”

*Data from “Religion in Britain: neither Believing nor Belonging”  
by David Voas and Alisdair Crockett.*

Identify and allocate significant resources to work with children, teenagers and young families. This is likely to require the appointment of a new full-time member of staff.

Ensure that safeguarding and safer recruitment policies and practices are up-to-date and fully implemented.

Continue to build positive relationships with local schools and other organisations working with children and families. Key relationships will be with staff at Popin Children’s Centre, the Chaplain at All Saints Academy and staff at other local schools.





Messy Church is a national initiative which has been growing pace across the country. The name 'Messy Church' is not intended just to describe the craft activities, but to recognise that traditional understandings of church membership and attendance are not appropriate for the culture which we find ourselves in. Instead, we can see 'church' as the relationships which Christian people have with each other and the wider world.

“ we see that the network of connections spreads from those inside the church to those who may have no connection with regular Sunday worship. When we start to regard the network itself as a church, then the notion of insiders and outsiders starts to break down. Instead, we have a network of communication and relationship where Christian love and mutual support form part of the flow. The boundaries have started to become more fuzzy and less well defined. ”

*Pete Ward, Liquid Church.*

The aim is for Messy Church to become a worshipping community in its own right, rather than being seen as a 'stepping-stone' to the Sunday morning services. It should be a place where people of all ages are welcome and involved, with a particular focus on providing teaching and activities suitable for families with younger children.

Messy church events typically lasts between 90 minutes and two hours. There are three essential elements which are included in every event:

- #1 Informal activities including craft and play which encourage discussion and conversations about faith;
- #2 Worship and Bible teaching which is accessible to all ages;
- #3 A shared meal.

Since May 2015, St. Pancras has been running a monthly Messy Church event. This usually takes place in the afternoon on the third Sunday of the month, with one event integrated with Holiday Club, a break for the summer holidays, and the December event held on Christmas Eve.

In view of the number of volunteers which will be needed to run this event sustainably, other events and services will need to be regularly reviewed to release volunteers from other commitments.

# Growing Churches



## A church that nurtures disciples

Nurture takes many forms and includes spiritual, emotional and physical care. Much of this will take place naturally and organically within the church family, but the organisation also has a role, ensuring that care is offered appropriately and that the burden of care is not carried alone by staff or individual members of the church.

Within this shared task, there are general responsibilities carried by each individual member and specific responsibilities belonging to a pastoral team.

Each member should be equipped to take responsibility:

To understand that wise communication is the key to effective pastoral care. We will work to develop an ethos of loving communication and openness with appropriate boundaries of permission and confidentiality.

To develop relationships in an effort to further support the church family and the local community. We will work to maintain an 'organic' system of pastoral care rooted in our worshipping community which builds on the strong relationships of care that already work well.

To offer a warm welcome and practical support for those who are ill, housebound or in need of extra care. We will continue to share responsibility for practical aspects of community life.

To refer pastoral concerns to the church leadership and pastoral team. We will ensure that all referrals are followed up appropriately by the Pastoral Team and support offered.

To share urgent prayer needs (with permission and confidentially within the church family) so that members can support one another in prayer. We will ensure that prayer needs are shared through the prayer focus, home groups, prayer meetings, Sunday intercessions and team meetings.



The pastoral visiting team and the prayer ministry team have played an active role in the nurture of disciples at St. Pancras for many years. Home Group leaders also meet together regularly to coordinate the teaching and care offered in the small groups which meet weekly in members' homes.

“ At St. Pancras I was met with friendliness before even entering the building and was immediately invited to a house group where I have been for the last 25 years. ”

*Survey Response to the question  
“Why did you come to St. Pancras in the first place?”*

## ACTION PLAN

Home Groups and Pastoral Teams have a particular responsibility:

Report back regularly through a termly Prayer Breakfast.

Ensure that each member of the church has someone who is aware of their needs and keeps in regular contact with them so that nobody 'falls through the net' of pastoral care. We will keep an updated list of who is in each home group or other activity, and who is visiting those who are housebound, ill or on the fringes of the church family.

To ensure that all personal information is kept confidential and that any published prayer requests are suitably anonymous.

Home Groups follow a programme which includes Bible studies and social activities. Once a month, home groups do not meet to allow members to attend the church prayer meeting. While all Home Groups study the same material, these studies need to address a wide range of discipleship needs, including those whose only contact with church is through their Home Group.

## ACTION PLAN

Continue to use a range of study materials which include: Evangelistic and 'Christian Basics' content; Bible Studies with different levels of academic depth; material to help understand our church heritage and 'charismatic, evangelical Anglican' context; deepening discipleship and understanding vocation.

Regularly run courses distinct from Home Groups, which focus on seekers, newcomers and those returning to the Christian Faith.





# Appendices

Download from  
<http://bit.ly/STPSmapappendices>  
(2MB PDF file)





This main section of this document uses graphical elements from the Church of England's resource 'From Evidence to Action'. These are used with permission.

Copyright for all graphics is retained by the Church Commissioners for England (2014) and original design was by Creative Stream. ([www.creativestream.co.uk](http://www.creativestream.co.uk))

St. Pancras is part of the Diocese of Exeter and the Church of England.

St. Pancras Church Centre  
Honicknowle Lane  
Plymouth  
PL2 3QT

(01752) 772499

[www.stps.org.uk](http://www.stps.org.uk)