

St Mary's with St Peter's – Mission Policy

Preamble:

This policy, agreed by the PCC and followed by both churches, has been created to give a structure and a sense of purpose to our involvement with mission in St Mary's and St Peter's churches. Each church has a Mission Focus Group, with liaison between them as necessary.

Our understanding of mission is any work done for God, at his prompting, that extends his kingdom and reaches people of any age with the gospel. It may be very local, such as in the local church, or far away in another country. It may be with an established mission agency such as Tear Fund or as an individual initiative such as Town Pastors. The key point is that it is work done for God and having an impact for his kingdom.

Our vision for mission in our two churches is one where we aspire to be 'sending' churches, in other words churches where people suitable for mission work are identified, challenged, encouraged to train and prepare, supported in practical and financial ways, refreshed during breaks from the work and received back again when they relinquish the role God has given them.

This is an approach that will alter all our priorities. It will be seen in our praying, preaching, giving, mentoring and supporting. Not everyone is called to go into so-called "full-time Christian work" but every Christian must be part of the family that gives time, energy and resources to further God's kingdom. The over-riding consideration should not be "Can we afford it?" but rather "Is this God's will and if so how is he intending to provide what is needed?"

This document sets out:

- how we should articulate our vision,
- how we should identify the people we need to organise and implement it,
- the kinds of organisations we think will make the best partners,
- how that partnership should be developed, and
- how we should support those organisations and individuals we have identified.

The Mission Focus Groups are sub-committees of the respective church committees and work in partnership with them, using their specialist knowledge and expertise to enable the churches to fulfil their agreed vision and purpose to further the cause of God's kingdom.

We commend this document to your prayerful and positive consideration.

Section 1: Mission Vision and Aims

1. Why the church is involved in mission

We believe that the church's involvement with mission should be an essential and central part of church life, as indicated by Jesus in his great commission. Mission is at the very core of the Father heart of God reaching out to a lost world.

2. The key elements of the vision

The parish has a strong evangelical tradition, and its vision is to:

- worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit
- teach the Bible in a way relevant to everyday life
- offer people opportunities to meet Jesus and discover forgiveness and new life
- grow people in faith, understanding and love
- equip people to serve others, including challenging and enabling them to give and serve
 - overseas,
 - in their communities,
 - through Bury church initiatives,
 - through our own parish initiatives and
 - in serving the parish community

3. Current involvement

We are currently involved with a number of organisations, with a specific focus on one each month, as well as with some special appeals and projects. We deliberately include local, national and international mission foci.

4. Specific aims

- Raise awareness of mission
- Promote prayer and financial support
- Send and support through meaningful partnerships with individual missionaries and mission organisations
- Walk alongside those considering or preparing for longer term mission
- Encourage church members to participate in short term mission
- Provide opportunities for the agreed 10% of the church's unrestricted annual giving to be given to the organisations we have chosen to support

Section 2: Responsibility and Coordination

Each church has a Mission Focus Group [MFG] which has the responsibility to coordinate and stimulate mission-related activity in the church through

- Providing information and resources, through appointed representatives of each of the organisations we have chosen to support
- Raising awareness of mission situations and needs, locally, nationally and internationally

Members of the Groups are actively involved in one or more of the organisations and provide official links to the organisations; some representatives are not included in the core membership of the Focus Groups but may be invited to participate for specific reasons.

Section 3: Forming Mission Partnerships: requirements, criteria and process

A. Each year the Mission Focus Groups make recommendations to their respective church committee of specific ***organisations to be supported and focussed on in the coming year***. Each partner organisation has an active representative in the church

B. ***Families/Individuals who sense a call to specific mission service*** (locally, nationally or internationally) meet initially with the vicar of their church to discuss their sense of calling and to agree next steps. The vicar then delegates further action to the Mission Focus Group. A specified person from the Group works with the person to determine the most appropriate next steps, including agreeing which organisation is most appropriate. Once an organisation has been identified, the MFG person works with staff from the organisation in the selection, preparation and review (after return or during home leave) processes.

Section 4: Relationship with Mission Partners and Organisations

1. What can the mission partner expect from the church?
The church will provide practical and prayer support, an agreed financial contribution, and an agreed person or group (perhaps a home group) as primary contact while the mission partner is engaged in their ministry
2. What can the church expect from the mission partner?
The mission partner will provide regular communication, will pray for the church, and be accountable as is agreed
3. What is the church's relationship with the mission organisation?
Communication and committed partnership, as is agreed by the church and the organisation

Section 5: Financial Support

1. Both St Mary's and St Peter's have decided that 10% of the annual unrestricted giving shall be for mission.
2. Each Mission Focus Group will make recommendations for managing the allocation of this money, including
 - a. Developing criteria for deciding which organisations will be supported each month
 - b. How the budget should be allocated to the organisations
 - c. Policies for financial support of mission partners from the parish (*see 3 below*)
3. Financial support for mission partners, particularly regarding different types or lengths of service:
 - a) A person/family who will receive financial support must normally have been active in the church for some time (at least a year for ongoing rather than one-off support)
 - b) Endorsement from the MFGs that the ministry to be undertaken by the person/family is one that the church can unreservedly recommend

- c) The MFGs recommend that the churches should consider setting aside a certain amount in the mission budget to underwrite (to some percentage or amount to be decided) support from the churches for short term mission service (people going for up to one year)
- d) The MFGs recommend that people in the churches be actively encouraged to support the person/family individually, in addition to what the churches provide from the mission budget
- e) Special gift days should be encouraged, and sponsored special activities allowed, with previous notification

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES

(this section will be revised once the Mission Focus Groups have been finalised, later in 2016)

1. The allocated space on the mission noticeboard should be used for current information to inform readers about the organisation's activities, priorities, personnel and financial needs, etc
2. The organisation will have at least one month of the year allocated to it as the 'Mission Focus':
 - a. Write an article of about 500 words for The View and send it to Nigel Beeton (editor) nigelbeeton@btinternet.com , to reach him by the date listed in the previous month's The View (usually within the first two weeks of the month before the month when the organisation is the focus).
 - b. At St Mary's, keep the A4 space on the mission noticeboard up to date, making sure that contact information (website, name of contact person at St Mary's) is included.
 - c. Provide a special display on the noticeboard (the larger central space at St Mary's, space allocated at St Peter's). This larger display should be up before the first Sunday of your month and taken down after the last Sunday of your month.
 - d. Inform the Treasurers (Colin Firth at St Mary's colin.firth1@btinternet.com) and Joy Banham at St Peter's joy@joybanham.plus.com) if the gifts given that month are to be designated for a specific need; at St Mary's, tell Colin if the gift needs to be sent off immediately (if the total given is less than £50 he will hold it till the end of the year unless asked to send it straight away).
 - e. Prepare and lead a 25 minute prayer focus at the Parish prayer meeting in your month. This 25 minutes will include information/prayer points and time for prayer
 - f. Organise and lead (if appropriate) a short 'slot' in the services as follows:
 - 7 minutes at St Peter's on the 3rd Sunday
 - 5 minutes at each of the 9.30 and 11.00 services at St Mary's on the 4th Sunday