

## Partnership for Missional Church, St Mary's, Sawston

### Where We Are Now

**Our journey begins with trying to think about where the Church is now.** In the last 50-70 years we have experienced a vast cultural change from a time of Christendom - where the Church was intertwined in society- to a more secular and diverse society.

**Christianity used to be more 'normal':** an important part of families, schools, art and music. The Christian story was well known, Christian symbols were familiar and the language of Christianity was understood. The Church was at the bottom of a cultural valley where people naturally rolled into Church.

**We are now in a new era where Christianity is now no longer the norm.** The Christian story is largely unknown to many young adults, Christian symbols and ritual are unfamiliar and our language is incomprehensible. People are more likely to be wary of Church authority, to be suspicious of Church history and self-conscious in a church atmosphere. The Church is at the top of a cultural hill where the gravity in society is such that people naturally roll away from Church rather than into it.

**Understanding these cultural changes gives us a healthy start for a new adventure in the life of God post Christendom.** We need to discover a new time and know that God is at work in all of this.

### What Does Being a Missional Church Mean?

**A missional church is one which is always seeking to partner with God.** With this, comes the joy of knowing that He is really with us and the excitement of finding out what God is, and has been, doing both in our church and in our community.

This helps us to walk out in **faith and trust** to where He is at work and to join in with what He is already up to.

Through prayer, listening and reflection, mission will run at the heart of everything we do. This comes from **asking what God would want us to do** rather than asking Him to bless activities we are already doing.

**Mission is for everyone.** It is a journey that everyone can take part in together.

Matthew 28:20-  
'And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age'.



Church at the bottom of a cultural valley



Church at the top of a cultural hill

- What is God's vision for our growing children's ministry?
- What is God up to already in our Community? Where can we join in?
- How does God see us using SYG to help children and young people?
- Where is God at work in our worship and what is his plan for it?
- How would He see us using Refresh, S&S + the fete to reach out to the Community?

## What is the PMC Process?

**Partnership for Missional Church is a journey lasting 3-5 years which is led from within our own Church in partnership with God.** We are helped in this journey by the Diocese and the Church Mission Society who will provide resources and training. We would also work with a network of other local churches. **A Steering Group** has been set up to help steer the process and we would welcome anyone who wished to join the group. Mission is for everyone and it will help us to explore the God given talents and gifts that we have right here.

**The first year of the process is all about listening:** to God, to each other and to our community. This will help us to find out exactly where we are now.



### Listening: Listening to God:

We will develop a practice called Dwelling in the Word to help us to prayerfully listen to God and to each other. This practice involves dwelling in one passage of scripture over an extended period of time. We start by using Luke 10: 1-12.

### Listening to each other and our community:

This first year will be mainly about listening to you, to gain a better understanding of the church's past experience and people's current thoughts and hopes for the future. In the later part of the year we will also listen to our community.

- Between now and September, we would like to **interview** around 24 people from a cross section of the church congregation and people who participate in church led activities. Each person would be asked 8 questions and their answers would be anonymous.
- We would like to set up a **Listening Team** to carry out the interviews.
- We have the basis of a team of listeners, but we would really **welcome additional members** of the congregation into the team. All listeners would be trained.
- The interviews would form the basis of a '**Discovery Report**' which the Church Mission Society would help to compile.
- The Steering Team will spend some **significant time discussing what they can learn** from this vital work. Knowing what people think and feel from their point of view is essential if we are to be truthful and compassionate and make wise decisions.

**Listening to the collective memories of our past and looking at where we are now:** We will look at building up a collective memory of our church's past to value our foundations and history and help us to build into the future. The Steering Team will pay attention to what God might be saying to us through ourselves, others in our community, our history, context and cultures to help us to better understand where we are now.

**Members of the Steering Team are:** Revd. Alan Partridge, Jose John, Andy Overitt, Anna Lovewell, Rebecca Herrick, Dianne Conway and Caroline Burgess. Others are very welcome to join us. Please speak to Alan or Andy if you would like to be more involved.

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