

MICANEWS

Leeds **M**ission and **C**are Group

Mission and Care Leeds Partnership Meeting held at The URC in South Leeds on Tuesday 12th November 2019.

40 of us met together representing 9 churches and the 18-25 project and including Rev'd Kevin Watson the Synod Moderator and Rev'd Simon Copley from the Synod Vision and Opportunities Group and Team Sheffield.

We were welcomed to the URC in South Leeds by Alex Walker before Simon led us in worship based on Matthew 8:18-27 (Stilling the storm)

The next meeting will be on Wednesday January 22nd at Wigton Moor which is just before the deadline date for all churches to have responded to the discussion paper "Enabling effective future ministry across Leeds". It is hoped that between now and then all Church meetings (or the equivalent in LEPs) will have made their decisions on the proposals. *Then the talking can be converted into action for those who commit to this!*

A reminder of the contact details for Rev'd Clare Davison, Leeds Mission and Ministry Enabler
07485065413 (mobile)
01132752359 (vestry Headingley St Columba)

Feedback from Synod Vision and Opportunities Group

Simon Copley provided some feedback from this group which had begun its life as the Crisis and Opportunities Group but has now taken on a more positive title!

Phase 1 All churches in the Synod had been circulated but only 50% had responded. Many saw their buildings as a resource rather than a problem, had considerable community involvement and wanted ministry but not of the old fashioned kind.

Phase 2 All Mission and Care Groups had been asked what leadership was needed in their churches. There had been a patchy response and Simon suggested that some clearly needed leadership in order to answer the question!

It was stressed that churches and Mission and Care Groups should see the Synod staff as a resource to be consulted as required. In order to ensure that Synod is seen as being there to support churches some funding has been released for the use of churches for ministry and mission. This is one million pounds over two years. In the first year each church has been given £3000 and feedback on the use of this would be welcome. The Vision and Opportunities Group had a meeting planned on the 14th at which they would be considering the use of the second years funding in the light of the responses from churches to the earlier questionnaire. Any suggestions from churches would be considered. The suggestion was made that if some provision was made for administration it could free up church members for local mission.

The group is also looking at Synod structures and Mission and Care Groups and will be bringing a proposal to the March Synod as to how the Synod will function when the number of Ministers of Word and Sacrament is reduced to 14.

Enabling effective future ministry across Leeds

A discussion paper had been circulated in advance. This was an updated version of the one which had already been seen by churches. It was agreed that the updated paper was clearer.

A number of questions were asked about how it would all work and Simon Copley was able to contribute to the debate as he is involved with a similar situation which has now been running for several years in Sheffield. They had similar concerns when they started.

Questions asked included:-

- How would the ministry team be managed?
- Costings?
- Additional Minister for Leeds – procedures?

All of these would need to be dealt with once churches had opted in (or not) It is essential to know how many churches are willing to commit before these matters can be sorted out by the churches involved. The Moderator stressed that if churches felt called to mission then the proposals would work. It would not work if churches joined the partnership reluctantly. It would be necessary to think in terms of what churches can give rather than what they can receive. Covenanting together would be the churches working as the body of Christ in Leeds and would be for the benefit of all our communities.

Simon suggested that key words were trust, honesty, openness, generosity and journeying along with confidence in God. He outlined some aspects of a similar project with which he is involved in Sheffield.

- Ministers – all the 3 ministers serve all the churches and attend elders' and church meetings.
- When a minister was called a super church meeting of all the partnership churches was held. The current "normal" system does not really cater for this situation.
- A steering group was set up with representatives from all the churches and others. This was about 20 people and had proven to be too big a group. It was suggested that it was better to have a smaller group of strategic planners rather than simply representatives from churches. 7 or 8 people prepared to take an overview may well have been the ideal size.
- LEPs – The relationship between the partnership and the LEPs is a very loose one.

It was felt that in Leeds a full involvement of those LEPs that wished to covenant was desirable subject to agreement with the other denominations involved.

There were further comments about the appointment of an additional Minister of Word and Sacrament for Leeds. All the replies in the Vision and Opportunities questionnaire about the ministry needed in each church had been collated and these would be matched against the existing skill sets of the current ministers to work out what was needed to complement them.

The proposals that were discussed were as follows and the paper that all churches are asked to consider and make a decision about gives further information:-

1. URCs and LEPs with URC involvement within the Leeds Mission and Care Group covenant together to form **The Leeds Partnership**
2. A Ministry team to serve the Leeds partnership is formed.

Please give this matter careful consideration and forward the decision of your church as to whether or not you agree to these proposals to Rev'd Clare Davison by January 31st 2020. Clare would be happy to answer any queries that you might have.

There was only time for a very quick item of church news so the following by no means represents all the exciting activities taking place in our churches:-

West Park – Believers baptism of an 8 year old, annual parade service on Remembrance Day, Charity fair involving 22 charities.

Headingley St Columba – Young people's group (11-18) started on the first Sunday of the month and Worship @ 4 continues on the last Sunday.

Wigton Moor – Lighting up of High Ash Drive Christmas lights at 4pm -5.30pm December 1st. Refreshment in church. A request was made for a volunteer pianist for the event.

Next Meeting – Wednesday January 22nd at Wigton Moor Church