

Mission Partnerships

The Parish Partnership idea was developed in Bradford Diocese and avoids all the lengthy procedures needed to set up a Team Ministry. It also avoids the insecurity of a Group Ministry, which can collapse if one incumbent alone decides to pull out. In a Parish Partnership, the rights and responsibilities of both the incumbent and the PCC are intact.

A Parish Partnership is one in which:

1. At the Bishop's invitation, the incumbent clergy meet to agree to work together;
2. The respective PCCs vote to work together; and
3. Clergy and PCCs petition the Bishop and the Bishop then licenses the incumbent clergy as assistant curates in one another's parishes.

Possible aims to focus on

1. Shared spiritual fellowship and discipleship - including prayer groups, spirituality exploration, bible study, house groups, faith nurture.
2. Pulpit and altar exchanges for the incumbents - and exploration of issues around assistant ministers, including possible OLM accreditation across the parishes
3. Social fellowship - sharing of music, drama, celebrations, noisy days, quiet days, retreats, outings, events, children's holiday clubs
4. Shared worship - including specific shared festivals and all-age worship
5. Mission projects e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, community involvement.
6. Sharing experience and facing issues together - e.g. mentoring schemes, skills-base, talent sharing, even joint decision making eventually!
7. Sharing resources - e.g. marriage preparation, baptism preparation, confirmation preparation, administration (e.g. a parish office), leadership and lay ministry training.

In some of these areas it is possible to achieve 'critical mass' to make possible together what is for one church alone impossible.

It would be for the Deanery Pastoral Committee to agree the principal of whether or not to recommend a Partnership and then for local clergy and PCCs in consultation with the Archdeacon and/or Suffragan bishop to agree the details.

This should include some sort of agreement for some external monitoring and evaluation - so that the Partnership can grow and not just get stuck on its original objectives.