

A few words from the Vicar

'Let's get together and feel all right.' (Bob Marley, 1977)

Happy New Year everyone!

Last month I wrote about the possibility of our forming a Mission Partnership with the three Radcliffe parishes (St Andrew's, St Mary's and SS Thomas & John's). Since then the four PCCs have agreed to actively explore the possibility of working together in this way.



So what is a Mission Partnership?

Quite simply it is an arrangement for enabling and encouraging collaboration between clergy and parishes in mission and ministry. The legalities are very simple; should we agree to form the Mission Partnership, clergy from each of the four parishes will be licensed as each other's curates. This will allow us to operate within each other's parishes as appropriate.

Each parish remains independent but, as our relationship grows, we begin to engage in mission and ministry together across all four parishes. There is no 'one size fits all' model, so how we do this is up to us. The extent to which we collaborate in mission and ministry very much depends upon the extent to which we are comfortable doing so.

Indeed, some sound advice received from someone already involved in a nearby Mission Partnership is that success comes by focusing upon a few things. If we try to do too much, if we try to run before we can walk, we shall fail.

Why work in partnership with others?

A good place to start is with God; one God in three persons, the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – working, serving and being in partnership. Rublev's famous icon (above) pictures this well, with each member of the Trinity inclining towards the others in a posture of deference and respect, as together they invite the whole world to join them at the holy table.

Collaboration is already at the heart of how we engage in mission here in Ainsworth. For example, I enjoy an excellent working relationship with our Churchwardens, Lillian and Jean and you can see week by week how Revd Elaine, Debra and I collaborate as we lead worship together. And many of you come together in so many different ways – too many to list here – in order to serve God and further the mission He has given us in this place. Think about it, and come up with your own list!

In a sense, a Mission Partnership is the extension of our collaborative style of ministry to include our brothers and sisters in Radcliffe.

There is some way to go before we will know whether a Mission Partnership is the way forward for us. However, we do have an incentive to do our best to make it work; the next time one of the stipendiary clergy moves on, they will not be replaced.

Over the next few months (however long it takes really) a small steering group comprising representatives from each of the four parishes plans to meet to thrash out a way forward. Our representatives are Chris Haworth, Bill White and I. Please hold us in your prayers.

Every Blessing

Dave