

St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze vote on the Partnership

Today you are voting on the future of the Partnership, Scenario's 1 and 4 are not recommend by the MLT, because as a Church we at our previous meetings strongly voted in favour of being multi-denominational, celebrating all that we receive and give to others within the partnership.

I am not present with you at this time so that you make this vote knowing that the decision you make will last beyond my time, (ministers are temporal) you will be guided by Paul and he will outline the Pro's and Con's of each.

I do believe it right however to share two pictures that came to me over the last few weeks which I believe relate to this situation,

The first was of a family going on holiday and a teenager not wanting to go, and the family struggling to find consensus and the second was of an Ocean liner struggling to set sail because it hadn't raised its anchor.

You too might have had pictures or messages whatever they are, the time now is to pray into them and these scenarios in the sure knowledge that God is ahead of us and leading us.

Clive

Scenario 1:

The Partnership is dissolved. Each separate church is adopted by a denomination. The Review Team suggests that All Saints, Holy Trinity and St Mary's are adopted by the Anglican Church, that Toothill is adopted by the Methodist Church and that Westlea is adopted by the United Reformed Church. Under this scenario the Review Team suggest that the separate churches consider the formation of a looser Covenant or Council of Churches.

7.2 Scenario two

All five churches remain within the Partnership, but with the Partnership Council, all the local church councils and all staff members agreeing to the following structural changes and ways of working:

a) A Partnership Team Leader is appointed by the Sponsoring Body who acts as line manager to the other Partnership Team members (possibly an external Team Leader or a Team Leader who is a lay member of the Partnership), with changes to the Partnership constitution to this effect.

- b) The Partnership Team Leader and the other Partnership Team members are accountable to the Partnership Council for all areas of their work which relate directly to the life of the Partnership, with changes to the Partnership constitution to this effect.
- c) All churches of the Partnership promote a diversity of worship which respects and reflects the denominational and theological diversity of the Partnership, including an open policy on pulpit exchange and the use of preachers and worship leaders in good standing with their local churches, with changes to the Partnership constitution to this effect.
- d) The four denominational bodies operate with the administrative flexibility necessary to accommodate the unavoidable limitations on data collection and data submission which a four denomination partnership of churches implies.
- e) The Partnership Council acknowledges in its ways of working the changes in the wider ecumenical context. In the spirit of “receptive ecumenism” each church of the Partnership should primarily focus on what it can receive from the other churches’ worship styles, theology, practice, governance, rather than what the other churches can receive from them.
- f) The Partnership Council draws up an action plan for mission which identifies specific mission projects to be undertaken by the Partnership as a whole (in addition to Emerge and Messy Church).

Scenario three

All Saints withdraw from the Partnership and becomes an Anglican congregation, probably in a new parish or benefice with one or more local Anglican churches. One member of the remaining Partnership Team oversees St Mary’s and Shaw (and acts as Partnership Team Leader), one (new) member of the Partnership Team (possibly half time) oversees Westlea and Toothill churches, and one member of the Partnership Team oversees Emerge and associated youth work (half time). Under this scenario the same ways of working (a-f) for the Partnership are adopted as in scenario 2.

Scenario four

All Saints withdraw from Partnership and become an Anglican congregation, probably in a new parish or benefice with one or more local Anglican churches, St. Mary’s and Shaw leave Partnership and become Anglican congregations within a new Anglican parish or benefice. Emerge becomes a project of the new St. Mary’s and Shaw Anglican parish or benefice. Toothill and Westlea churches form a new Local Ecumenical Project with a full time or half time Methodist or United Reformed Church or Baptist minister.

Scenario 1, Not recommended by the MLT Scenario 1

Scenario 2, We all stay together and make a solid commitment

Advantages

We can give and receive resources using a bigger pool of skills
We have enough financial input to support administrative support.
We receive a diversity of tradition and theological input.
We can access a number of different training courses across all four denominations.
We can support a paid youth worker.
We can do Messy Church together.
We can be part of a bigger group.

Disadvantages,

The present partnership is across two council boundaries,
It is geographically large,
Individual Church Mission priorities can be suppressed,
Decision making can be cumbersome,
It requires a heart to give and receive.
It needs those working within to be accountable to it,
It requires excellent communication and fluidity of information.
It requires commitment from all involved

Scenario 3, All Saints leave and the rest of us continue to work closely together

Advantages

We can give and receive resources using a bigger pool of skills
We are geographically more compact, and within one local authority.
We receive a diversity of tradition and theological input.
We can access a number of different training courses across all four denominations.
We can support a paid youth worker.
We can do Messy Church together.
We can be part of a bigger group although smaller some of the historical angst is removed.

Disadvantages,

We might lose the ability to remunerate administrative support,
Individual Church Mission priorities can be suppressed,
Decision making can be cumbersome,
It requires a heart to give and receive.
It needs those working within to be accountable to it,
It requires excellent communication and fluidity of information.
It requires commitment from all involved.

Scenario 4 Not recommended by MLT

11

17