

Shared Ministry Team

Membership of the team is: Rev. Shirley Cowan (Vicar), Bren Hutchinson, Ian Lazarus, Anne Morgan, Frances Nunn, and Richard Nunn

Since our last report Caroline Batey and Gregor Stewart have stepped down from the SMT. The remaining members of the SMT have continued to meet regularly to study scripture, pray together and discuss the mission and ministry at Holy Trinity and consider the vision for Holy Trinity.

Vision Process

This is a summary of our approach to discerning the vision for Holy Trinity. At our October SMT we discussed different models of evangelism, including proclamation, attraction, and relationship models, and felt drawn to a relationship model.

On our SMT prayer away day on 16th November we looked at our parish profile and Ian explained the difference between a Parish church's ministry and a Town centre church's ministry, and we were drawn towards Holy Trinity being a Town centre ministry.

The vision was further clarified at our meeting in January and was later presented to and approved by PCC. SMT felt this vision needs to be owned by the whole church so whilst PCC has agreed the vision for Holy Trinity, we were encouraged as a congregation to pray about the vision of Holy Trinity as a church over Lent, with a planned day after Lent when everyone could share their ideas and responses. Unfortunately, these plans were not able to go ahead due to the lockdown that was imposed on the country due to COVID 19.

Lockdown

SMT met fortnightly at the start of lockdown via Zoom. The focus of the initial meetings was on supporting one another, rather than on the longer-term ramifications of the crisis for our mission or on God's longer-term vision for Holy Trinity.

Our main concern at the start of the lockdown period was that some people may need practical help and/ or be feeling isolated and lonely, and worried about how long this situation would go on for. As a team we felt it was important to work out how to keep in touch with people from Holy Trinity while the church was closed. We did this through developing an on-line presence and by ensuring that good pastoral care was available to members of Holy Trinity. We felt this would be helpful to our congregation and allow contact with people exploring our website.

On-line presence.

- A 'Welcome and keep in Touch page was developed that would facilitate up to date information during the lockdown together with links to the weekly Sunday Services/ messages <https://htwarrington.org.uk/worship-together-and-keep-in-touch/>.

- In addition, a new page with links to a number of on-line services from larger churches was set up. <https://htwarrington.org.uk/links-to-churches-streaming-services-online/>
- A link to the weekly service was included in the Holy Trinity Skype chat group each week.

Pastoral Care

Caroline organized the shopping support for many of the older members of our congregation as soon as the lockdown was announced. And Paul Crane set up a Skype group which proved to be a vital forum for keep in touch during lockdown. SMT was conscious that not everyone in the congregation had joined the Skype group or had access to the internet, and that there may be others in the congregation who were not in touch with anyone from church. We felt that at a time when people may be understandably anxious, worried about the virus, and feeling isolated especially if they live on their own, we wanted to ensure that everyone was contacted and felt cared for by Holy Trinity Church Family.

- We therefore individually contacted people we knew had not joined the Skype group, and spent time over a couple of Zoom sessions ensuring that everyone we considered to be a member of / closely associated with Holy Trinity was in contact with a least one person from the congregation and /or had good family and friends supporting them during lockdown. Ken kept in contact with as many people from coffee bar that he has contact details for.
- In addition, we were concerned that some carers who were giving support to members of our congregation might not be getting the support they need (i.e. who is caring for the carers?). Members of the SMT contacted them as well to check how they were.
- As lockdown continued, SMT continued to monitor this pastoral support and ensure that everyone felt cared for by Holy Trinity Church Family.
- A Zoom coffee morning was set up and was well supported by St Ann's and Holy Trinity members and has provided social contact for all those who have been able to attend.

Reopening of Churches

Once the government announced that churches could start to reopen PCC decided Holy Trinity could reopen, initially for private prayer. A small PCC working party put a lot of work into preparing Holy Trinity to be able to open up for private prayer from 30th June and for services from 9th July. As a result, SMT meetings focused on the

implications of the imminent re-opening of Holy Trinity and on the ways Holy Trinity can start to be a presence in the Town Centre in line with our vision.

SMT recognised that although we might be open, Holy Trinity could not operate as it did before lockdown.

- The service now is very different to what we are used to in order to comply with government guidelines. i.e. There is no sung worship, we must wear face coverings and are not able to have coffee or stay around chatting in church after the service. SMT discussed at our meetings around this time that these changes would mean that there may be many in Holy Trinity congregation who would still be reluctant to meet in the building as some of our congregation are shielding and will continue to do so. Others are in “at-risk” groups of one sort or another. Still others are caring for vulnerable members of their household or wider family and will not feel able to risk gathering together in the church building with others.
- All this means that we will have even fewer people who feel able to attend the service on a Sunday morning and fewer people who will be able or willing to help with activities in church during the week.
- We also felt that many people will have become used to the new lockdown normal and may have become comfortable being at home during lockdown and so have a fear, anxiety, or reluctance to go back to meeting physically again in church.
- SMT also felt that it would be important that when services re-start in Holy Trinity they should be recorded and live-streamed so that more vulnerable members of the congregation can join the service live on-line or later in the day. Unfortunately, there have been practical issues with recording services live so we will put an audio version of the service online for people to listen to.

Holy Trinity Vision

PCC has agreed the vision for Holy Trinity. Over Lent we were praying over the vision as a church and were planning at the end of Lent, to talk through the vision of Holy Trinity. This was so that the vision could be affirmed by the congregation as indeed being God’s vision for Holy Trinity and to ensure that the congregation feels connected with committed to the vision.

- Part of this process would be ensuring that everyone understands the differences between a parish ministry and a town centre ministry, and what that means practically for Holy Trinity, so that we can move forward together. This process had to be put on hold because of lock down and now needs to be revisited.
- People’s attitudes have changed during lockdown and people have different priorities. SMT thought that most people would be affected by Covid in some way, so

when we return to the new normal of meeting as a church post lockdown we need to decide as a church what we want life at Holy Trinity to look like.

- SMT felt we need to be selective about the things we do when we go back into the building. We recognise that, with limited resources, it is better for us to do a few things well rather than try and do everything. Therefore, we should only re-start things that are in line with our vision, and not just restart everything.
- This means that we must be willing to stop some things, change some things and introduce new things that are in line with our vision. For relational evangelism to work, the activities we restart at Holy Trinity need to be relevant and enable us to engage and build relationships with people in the Town Centre.
- We have to consider activities, events, and groups we can partner with at Holy Trinity alongside ways of creating and opening new doors whilst not compromising on mission. For example, we have continued to be involved in Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) during lockdown and both Shirley and Bren have recently agreed to become members of the ROC core team. In addition, Shirley has been involved with Room at the Inn during lockdown and particularly in their initiative to house 29 homeless people on Museum Street.
- Key to and underlying everything is and always must be the fourth point of our vision statement, which states 'The spiritual life of Holy Trinity church underpins the whole vision and will be focussed on growing and equipping a Christian community to serve the town centre.
- So, for part of the first year, the initial focus would be on worship bible teaching and prayer. This would be followed up by discerning together as a congregation what relational evangelism looks like in practice, and how we could get involved in issues of social justice etc. To this end, we felt a sermon series that explored relational evangelism might be helpful to enable both us as individuals and as a church body to understand what this could look like in practice. The sermon series on our frontlines was introduced with this purpose in mind.

Prayer

- SMT set up the May evening prayer meetings via Zoom initially planned to be weekly prayer meetings between Easter and Pentecost. As they were well supported, these continued in June. However, to enable people to explore the ideas raised in our sermon series On Our frontlines more fully, we decided to hold some Zoom discussions on a Wednesday evening in July and August to accompany the LICC sermon series.
- It was felt that people may have lost focus on praying for the vision for Holy Trinity and it would therefore be important to remind everyone of the vision. A copy of our vision is therefore included below.

SMT Commissioning

Unfortunately, with Archdeacon Roger leaving Warrington and the COVID 19 pandemic SMT has still not been commissioned. Hopefully, now churches have reopened, albeit on very restricted numbers due to social distancing, we will be soon be in a position to set a date for recommission the team.

Anne Morgan On Behalf of SMT

Holy Trinity Church APCM Agenda 2020