

Many are called... a framework for mission and ministry across Yorkshire

Introduction

'Many are called' is a flexible framework for mission and ministry across Yorkshire. It aims to encourage and enable local churches, in partnership with the wider church, to identify and resource appropriate ministry in order to fulfil their identified mission priorities. It encompasses the ministry of all believers, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary.

It is a permissive framework, encouraging local church initiative, mindful that appropriate ministry for one church will not necessarily be the right model for another. It recognises that this is a dynamic process - as local mission priorities develop, so the ministry needed to deliver them will change.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful..... From 1 Corinthians 12, The Message

Mission

God's mission, exercised through the Church, is the proclamation to all people of the saving Good News of Jesus Christ lived out through the works of love, justice, care, forgiveness and healing.

This may be done through the regular life of the local and wider church, building relationships and presenting the gospel to the wider community and the world through its common life and through mission projects which demonstrate God's love for all people

Ministry

Ministry is the work of Christ delivered through the gifts and graces of all those who respond to God's call and offer their lives in service. Particular ministries are exercised according to the specific calling and gifts of individuals. Examples (in alphabetical order) include:

- Administration for example Secretary, Treasurer and Property steward
- Caretaker/Cleaner
- Caterer
- Church leader (regional/local)
- Church Related Community Worker (CRCW)
- Elder

- Musician
- Pastoral Carer
- Personal ministry in life at work or in the community
- Training and Development Officer
- Word & Sacrament (stipendiary/self-supporting)
- Youth and Children's Worker

Christian Team Work

A Christian ministry team is a manageable group of diversely gifted people who hold one another accountable to serve joyfully together for the glory of God by:

- sharing a common mission
- embodying the loving message of Christ
- accomplishing a meaningful ministry
- anticipating transformative results

(S A Macchia, *Becoming a healthy team*, Baker Books 2005, p. 41)

Call

We recognise and embrace the importance in our tradition of 'call' to all Christians. That 'call' is often multi-faceted:

- to a place/congregation(s)
- for a task/role/mission priority(ies)
- for a period which would benefit from review

The above is applicable to all ministries from children's work to pastoral care, Church outreach projects to following and sharing Christ's way in our lives Monday through to Sunday. Through reflection and review amidst changing contexts, a call to a role may be re-affirmed or given a new direction.

An exploration of salient issues

Call to Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Amongst those Christians 'called' are Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs). For many ministers, (but not CRCWs), this call has been to a particular church or pastorate for an indefinite period until the minister receives a different call or retires. Other ministers, such as Synod Moderators, ministers in Special Category Ministries and ministers serving the wider church through Local Ecumenical Partnerships are typically appointed for a specific time and / or task, which is subject to review. Many ministers and congregations may well feel that this approach is beneficial to the minister's personal development and to good stewardship of a valued resource. We see this review process as a vital part of flexible and accountable ministry.

Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) incorporating Church Life Review (CLR) and Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal (MASA)

The United Reformed Church is rolling out a review programme to enable churches and ministers to review where they are and identify their priorities for future ministry.

Yorkshire Synod (March 2011) agreed that Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) is a vital part of our life to help churches and ministers plan for their future.

Therefore the outcomes of LMMR will guide the collective Synod allocation of valuable resources such as people, training and financial support.

Mindful that Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are subject to review by their sponsoring body rather than through denominational processes, other forms of clearly identified mission priorities are equally acceptable in seeking resources from Yorkshire Synod.

Flexible Ministries

We recommend the development, (alongside 'traditional' ministries) of more flexible ministries for both Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers and lay people. These could include:

- Synod-wide ministries e.g. Evangelist, Youth Chaplain, Fresh Expressions Advocate

2013 examples:

Regional Pilots Officers (Alan and Janet Kendall) whose ministry includes supporting local churches in their ministry with children and young people through Pilots, a Christian organisation that aims to share the love of God in the on-going life of Jesus Christ by inviting.

Worship Development Officer (Sheila Telfer) whose role includes encouraging lay members in their understanding of worship and encouraging and supporting people to develop their calling and offer their skills as worship leaders.

- team ministries across a number of churches, with teams including Ministers of Word and Sacrament, elders, youth workers, workers with the elderly, and those from another denomination

2013 example: SPACE, the Spen and Calder Enterprise.

Here the five SPACE churches are served by four elderships and the LEP leadership team as well as a joint leadership team, 2 URC ministers and 1/4 Methodist minister. They try to do separately only those things that are specific to the mission in the local area (so, for example, there are three pilot groups and four luncheon groups because they are tied to their community) and to share together the resources, finances and people skills across SPACE without the limitations of 'MY Church' thinking. This means that members may worship in church A, but help out at church B luncheon club or Church C prayer group, it means that ministers and leaders spend more time exercising their special skill set across the churches and, if the team is balanced, the thing one person is not good at is picked up by another. They recognise that this is work in progress with many challenges, but the growth in fellowship and the encouragement of being able to share visions and mission has been life giving.

- Ministers of Word and Sacrament working part-time within one pastorate and taking on a specific, time-limited task within another pastorate or across a Mission and Care Group, to help churches address a challenge or opportunity.

2013 example: Revd Peter Clarkson, minister of Wigton Moor Church, is spending 50% of his time as URC Chaplain to the Institutes of Higher Education in Leeds for a 12 month period.

- Church Related Community Work being a more creative use of team working ministry – because of a scarcity of posts, CRCWs often work in isolation in difficult situations.

2013 example: the development by an ecumenical team of a Church Related Community Worker post based on the Manor Estate in Sheffield rooted in the city centre URC fellowship.

All of us have specific gifts and, by the development of flexible ministries, can be encouraged to offer them to the wider church.

What could be possible:

1. A minister as an evangelist, based at one church but linked to others, which could be anywhere, but sharing a vision for evangelism and needing visionary leadership, focused bible study and evangelism training.
2. **Interim ministry:** a Minister of Word and Sacrament or lay person, who is gifted and experienced in a particular ministry, doing a defined piece of work for a specified period. This could be to prepare a church to seek long-term ministry through confidence-building, healing of relationships, leadership training.

Mission and Care Groups

Within Mission and Care Groups there is the potential for:

- Independent churches to develop partnerships and/or projects with one another e.g. a youth project or developing a viable pastorate
- Sharing skills and resources, with people being loaned/borrowed for a piece of work for a period e.g. developing a 'fresh expression' of church or a seniors café
- Building ministry teams, e.g. lay worship leaders, who rather than criss-crossing Yorkshire, focus on a group of churches, so enabling greater continuity for the congregation, and ministry teams of treasurers, magazine editors or Pilot Officers supporting each other across a group of churches.

We recommend the exploration of partnerships, development of projects and team working within Mission and Care Groups.

Identifying Needs/Developing People

We envisage that an outcome of Church Life Reviews may be the need for more people with particular skills such as worship leader, lay pastor or youth leaders.

We think that there is expertise, perhaps hidden, across the Synod of some people with skills to train and some with the interest and aptitude to have their gifts developed. We encourage people in the development of their personal ministry.

We recommend that training - locally within teams and Synod-wide, is focused to equip people with the necessary skills to meet the locally identified needs. Where such training is not available within the Synod, Ministries Committee should work with the Resource Centres for Learning and other training providers to arrange provision.

Further, we recommend that Ministries Committee work with Resource Centres for Learning to ensure that core skills sought in 21st century ministry, including team working and team building, are provided for those in training.

Local leadership including Elders

We affirm the importance of the spiritual leadership of Elders. We uphold:

1. the importance within the United Reformed Church of the Elders' Meeting working as a team, in relationship together.
2. the importance of every Elders' team having a relationship with the wider URC to aid support and the mutual sharing of experiences. Such a relationship may be through a Minister of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Worker, Interim Moderator, the local area Synod Pastoral Link Person or a.n.other person representing the wider church.

Some churches may also wish to appoint a local leader to be a focus/ representative/ contact for the local community and other churches.

Ministers of Word & Sacrament

Typically ministers have several gifts which may include evangelism, preaching, teaching, healing, pastoring, nurturing, being prophetic and activism.

We encourage individual ministers to use Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal to identify their gifts and explore the potential to develop and practise their calling both within and beyond any pastorate for which they are responsible.

Ministers are expected to undertake regular spiritual, personal and ministerial development and we recommend that local churches encourage such development.

Buildings and Facilities

Congregations typically gather in church buildings; for some their premises and facilities are a vital resource and for others an increasing millstone.

A ministry of presence can be enabled through the buildings. We encourage churches to take a look at what their buildings say about the church, and reflect on the suitability of their buildings to fulfil their mission priorities.

2013 example: Intake Church, Doncaster, houses the Surestart Centre.

What could be possible:

1. A church using its buildings as a community resource, housing a post office, a library, advice centre or other facilities.
2. A church offering cafe refreshments for parents and carers who bring children to activities in the building.

It is recognised that whether a church does or does not own premises, there may be other more suitable premises for a church's mission available locally that could be utilised.

2013 example:

Luddendenfoot LEP, Halifax, worship in the Civic Centre, which they now manage on behalf of the local community.

What could be possible: A Church with a small congregation becoming a house church and using other buildings for larger gatherings.

In addition to looking at the physical premises we encourage churches to review whether 21st century facilities, from comfortable chairs to new technology may enhance their outreach.

What could be possible:

1. One church is exploring the development of a virtual worship service through their website.
2. Another church suggested the use of Skype and a webcam to enable one minister to preach to a number of churches simultaneously.

Churches are encouraged to work with Synod Property Committee, which welcomes involvement in new and innovative schemes. The Property Committee recognises that we cannot sustain what we have and be creative and this may bring risk, but history suggests that doing nothing may lead to closure.

Finance

For appropriate ministry to happen, we recognise that certain things, such as paying or training lay workers may be helped by a more flexible financial approach. There may be creative ways of sourcing finance or sponsoring projects.

We also recognise that Synod and many local churches have considerable capital resources, that the 'rainy day' may have come and there is a calling to free up some capital mindful, that it would change the way Synod is financed.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)

A significant and growing proportion of Local Ecumenical Partnerships are provided with ministry of word and sacrament from beyond the United Reformed Church. It is beyond the competence of Synod Ministries Committee or any one denomination to address the issues.

We recommend that:

- appropriate authorities within the URC
 - encourage sponsoring bodies to undertake regular reviews of all LEPs
 - promote the establishment of a review by ecumenical sponsoring bodies, to develop an approach through which ecumenical vacancies are filled more equitably
 - encourage more parity in remuneration of ministers serving LEPs from different denominations and moving to a level playing field in terms of the cost to the local church of ministry from different denominations.
- that the United Reformed Church reviews how ecumenical vacancies are filled.

We further recommend that:

- work continues to promote the recognition of lay leadership in LEPs
- in any given area the URC works to promote and deliver an ecumenical strategy for mission.

Flexibility

A key element of the 'Many are called' framework is to build flexibility, enabling adaptations as circumstances change.

We recognise that this framework may need to be reviewed and amended in the light of:

- local experience
- changing national circumstances (which we may choose to seek to shape)
- development/changes within ministry teams

3. Recommendations for consideration at March 2013 Synod

1. Synod receives the 'Many are called' report.
2. Synod adopts and applies this framework, recognising that it is a process of evolution taking us from our current unsustainable position to one with in which we can best utilise gifts, skills and resources according to our mission priorities.

The above resolutions were agreed at Yorkshire Synod, March 2013