



Serving and engaging with the community

The Community Action Group will lead our community engagement and aim to serve and engage with the community in order to bring social issues to life for the rest of the congregation. We continue to affirm the needs of our older members. The development of the Green Group will be encouraged further as we work towards achieving Eco Church status.



Young People

We shall develop different mission strategies to engage the younger community, including going to where they are and using resources that they use. Varying styles of engagement, such as the Halloween event, will also be encouraged.

Technology

We shall continue to use of new technologies during worship and the congregation's wider life - in all of the Church's resources and its buildings.

Resources

We shall seek to bring the congregation with us as we identify, agree and develop, aiming to ensure that the church is financially sustainable in the long term.

Buildings

We will explore the options for:

1. Installing environmentally sustainable heating and power
2. Opening the body of the Church to create space for worship, performance and social activity
3. Modernising facilities in the vestry and toilets.

A conclusion from our Parochial Church Council

These mission actions reflect the Vision Group findings, modified by long and deep discussions in early 2022. If there is to be a worshipping community at St James's Church, Riding Mill for the Third Century - 2058 onwards - it is not an option to do nothing: yet it is equally imperative that our congregation needs to be cognisant and alongside any changes. We shall invest love, time, energy, enthusiasm, images and words into the task of bringing people with us. We commend this plan to you all.

Towards our Third Century



The Parish Church of St James, Riding Mill

God is missionary and looks outwards to act lovingly towards creation. The Church is called into partnership with God to serve just that mission of love. Therefore, the primary question is: how, in today's context, with our expected resources of people, buildings and finance, should we order the life and work of St James's so that we are most able to participate in God's mission to the created world? And in particular, how shall we ensure that God's mission carries forward in Riding Mill to a Third Century? We have spent three years listening to what God and people are saying and thinking. This pamphlet describes the results of that process and charts a path for the years to come.

Rev'd Diana Johnson

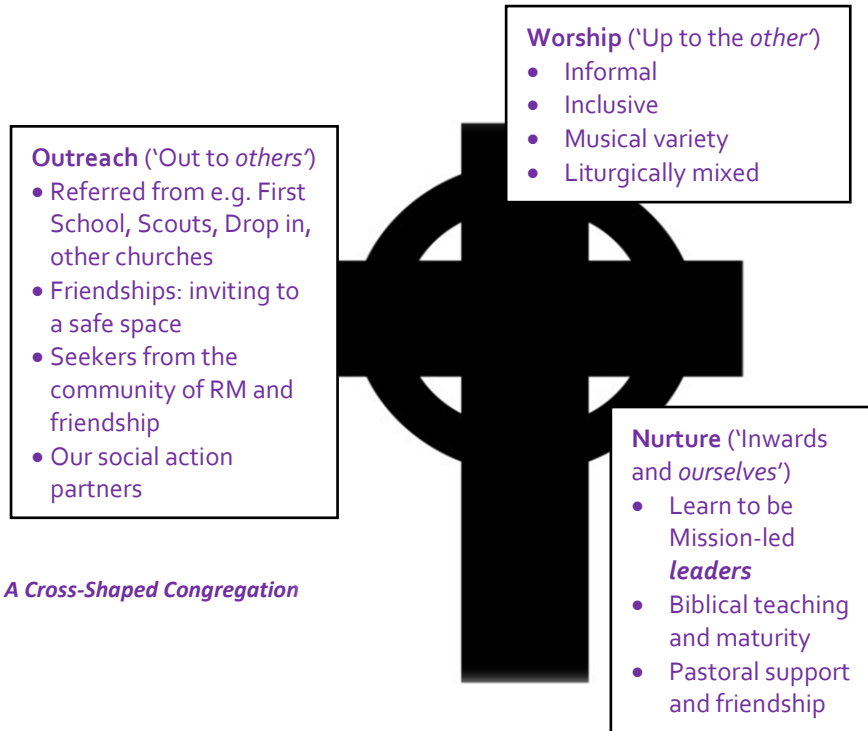
Priest in Charge

November 2022



Our Desire – a ‘Cross-shaped’ Church

Our witness to the incarnational nature of Christ may be imagined as having three parts, symbolised by the Cross: for our own people in the congregation; with the wider church in deanery and diocese and nation; and to the community of Riding Mill, Newcastle and the world. It must include ways this witness can be brought into the consciousness of the congregation and the wider community.



A Cross-Shaped Congregation

Our Vision

This, then, is our vision as the Parochial Church Council has developed it: we must model Christian love and reach out to those who need help; we must strive to bring in like-minded Christians and seekers in faith from around about; and that means we must continue to be net contributors to the deanery and diocese.

It means, too, that we need trained, licensed or authorised lay leadership. We should have a priest, preferably resident here in Riding Mill. It will be served by a practicable and beautiful building, too, that speaks of the spiritual and it means we must have the financial resources to do all we need to do.

How, though, do we achieve this vision?

Our Plan for a Third Century

Building God's Kingdom in Riding Mill: the next years

Ethos

The authority of Scripture is of first importance, and we will work towards greater understanding of how reasoning, tradition, experience, and the Holy Spirit's action enrich our faith. We shall:

- develop high quality teaching, for example through preaching in collective worship, establishing small study groups, providing on-line courses, and encouraging individual study.
- be open and overt about inclusivity, for everyone matters to God.
- engage in issues that matter to the community, intending to show that we are not just talking about God's love but actively doing something to 'love our neighbour' wherever they might be.
- develop a resources centre to help people understand what the church is trying to achieve.
- interpret all that we do in the light of Jesus' two Great Commandments: love God and love our neighbour.

Styles of Worship

We shall:

- develop a distinctive style of informality within a mixed liturgical framework, hoping to achieve a balance of the new with the familiar.
- continue the recent trend of a variety of music resources and styles. The successful outdoor services will be retained and expanded.

Involvement in Worship

We shall seek and develop wider opportunities to involve more laity in services. In liaison with the Deanery and Diocese we shall develop the successful links with the Methodists through worshipping together.

Engagement with others

The recently established technical team will be resourced and encouraged to make full use of the new AV System. Our Anna Chaplains will be encouraged to act even more widely. We shall prioritise whole-community use of the Cottage. Our congregation will be alerted to reach out to others as part of their involvement in other organisations.

