**The Two Rivers Mission Community**

***Seeking to encourage people in their faith, devotion and biblical understanding***

***so that they may be better equipped to worship Christ and serve others***

**The Context**

* “A Christian presence in every community” (Church of England)
* Traditionally a priest in every community – now too expensive!
* Rural churches often seen as a problem and drain on resources. Current methodology: group churches, cut clergy and services, and encourage lay leadership
* But rural churches are the backbone of the Church of England and can be a powerhouse for growth. It’s time to regain confidence and renew the vision!

**Priorities for the new rector**

* Build a prayerful worshipping community
* Enable the churches to exercise a ministry of presence
* Strategic vision
* Empowering and enabling lay people and encouraging discipleship

**The plan**

* Each church gathers every Sunday for worship every week at the same time (ideally involving food!)
* Appoint a member of clergy to focus on the largest village and church – High Bickington (& Atherington?)
* Group the other churches into three clusters.
* The team rector would lead the ministry team in resourcing these other churches. Using a ‘Pauline’ model of visiting churches for a period of encouraging and teaching and then moving on I’d spend January in cluster 1, February in cluster 2 etc; taking one service during the month in each church. On that Sunday I’d also hold a congregational meeting to plan strategy and activities over the coming 3 months. I’d stay for lunch and fellowship; and possibly a community outreach activity in the afternoon/evening.
* Use Sunday evenings to run larger gatherings in clusters or as a Mission Community
* Wider ministry and mission, eg children and youth work, schools’ ministry, pastoral offices, alpha, homegroups etc, would be done within clusters or the wider benefice.

**Resourcing**

* Each PCC retains responsibility for its building, money and ‘presence’ in its community
* Appoint a single Mission Community PCC secretary, who will clerk all PCC meetings and ensure safeguarding, health and safety, GDPR, trustee responsibilities etc are dealt with.
* The Mission Council acts as a “board of directors” to oversee the wider life of the Mission Community. The council will consist of parish reps and ministry team. It will have its own budget.
* The ministry team will have three main responsibilities:

1. Supporting individual parishes, enabling them to ‘be church’ locally
2. Delivering and supporting ministry across the Mission Community, eg pastoral care, schools work etc
3. Raising up more leaders

**Non-negotiables**

* We pay our share of the common fund without moaning!
* We pay the leadership team’s expenses in full
* We do admin well – including safeguarding, health and safety, GDPR, trustee responsibilities
* We work together, show generosity of spirit, and in all things love….