**VISION AFTERNOON - Saturday 23rd February 2019**

**Present:** Revd Becky, Charles and Joanna Woodd, Jane Greenaway, Linda Baker, Robert and Joyce Salkeld, David Stone, Margaret Jackson, Neil Turpin,

Revd Penny Joyce, Kate Mash, Debbie Mussellwhite, Frances Howard, Ian Davidson, Jenny Potter, Sarah Hawtry, Isabel Waters, Jenny West, Helen Evans, Olivia Thomson, Sue Reeder, David Baker, Josa Snow, Tony and Jean Mercer, Barbara Laws,

Revd Julian Poppleton, David and Marion Blackwall, Jacqui Brown, Debbie Orriss, Caren Clarke, David and Anne Paterson, Katherine Callard.

**Apologies:** Pam Pointer and William Alexander.

Revd Becky welcomed everyone to an afternoon of sharing and discussing. Joanna Woodd started off the afternoon with a reading from John 15 and a short prayer.

**SHARE**

**Observations from National Statistics and Research concerning growth.**

Revd Becky began by setting the scene. She showed everyone observations nationally and locally on church attendance. Nationally attendance in 10% of parishes has increased, 39% of parish the attendance decreased and 50% there was insufficient evidence to form a clear conclusion. So generally a pattern of gradual decline.

**Observations of the whole of the parish for us to gain a wider perspective than our own congregation successes and learning from Messy Church**

In Harnham attendance has both increased and decreased, although children attending was much less than the national average of 20%. The majority that attend our churches in Harnham are retired!

In Harnham we do more occasionally offices, ie baptism, weddings and funerals than any other parish in the Deanery. Stratford Sub Castle is the closest to us with regards to funerals, but it is also noted that Harnham and Stratford are the only churches in Salisbury that still have an open churchyard.

Jane Greenaway pointed out that we have two churches, where most other parishes in Salisbury have only one church. St Thomas’s do very little occasional offices, but have a large number of retired to help, which is why when Revd Becky was off we were able to use some of St Thomas’ clergy to help out. So we are offering/doing far more in our parish with only 1 vicar.

Revd Julian asked how this related to all the new housing in Harnham and against national data. Revd Becky showed with a graph that none of our Sunday morning services reflect the demographic of our wider community.

Observations – Nationally and Locally – Post It Notes

* If people won’t go to church, then church must go to them – more community involvement, social media, church of England phone app?
* Do we get more baptisms because our vicar is younger than in a lot of other parishes?
* No provision in Harnham for secondary aged children maybe cos not secondary school.
* Surprised at lack of working people.
* Where are all the baptism and wedding folk
* Church needs to get involved in the communities lifestyle

**Messy Church and what is the point of growth and what makes it work?**

Jean Mercer and Debbie Orriss began by explaining that Messy Church began as workshops, where children were dropped off without parents, and this worked well with over 30 children attending and having to close the books to demand. It was agreed after the Messy Church programme was launched nationally to go with this programme.

What happens at Messy Church

* Families arrive from 3-3.15pm, the leaders have no idea who is going to turn up, (much the same as a Sunday service in church) and they sign in.
* Each child makes a badge when they first attend Messy Church. Initially it was just the children but with so many people quietly asking who someone else was, it was agreed that everyone would wear a badge and it works very well.
* There is a “clergy team” made up of Revd Becky, Revd Penny Joyce and Debbie Orriss.
* Each meeting involves a theme and everyone goes into the Meeting room to be introduced to the theme.
* Following ¾ hour is activities linked to that theme, all go down really well and often it is hard to get people to move on as they want to finish what they are doing.
* Then there is a short service.
* Tea follows and starts with a Grace. Nationally it is a hot cooked tea, but as our kitchen is not suitable to do this, so we have cakes, sandwiches etc.
* Messy Church finishes after tea and parents and children all help to clear away.

Charles Woodd asked if in the new hall we had a better kitchen would they do hot meals? Jean replied yes, if we had the volunteers to do this, with the right qualifications/certificates.

Debbie went on to say that Messy Church has a real sense of community, a great team that compliments each other. There are some older children that attend, ages between 11-13 so the leaders treat them as “young leaders”. They do this as they don’t want to lose anyone because they are too old for Messy Church. The whole afternoon avoids jargon, it is aimed at all ages, and it is interesting to see themes interpreted differently by adults and children, as each see it with a different perspective. There is a team of 9 working on Messy Church, there is no structure, no reserved pews, there are creative ways of praying and everyone learns from each other. Revd Becky has also started meeting and talking to baptism families at Messy Church and they usually stay to the end of the afternoon.

Jean went on to say that to more forward, Messy Church is having a review, with Debbie Orriss’ guidance. There are 5 different headings for the review and one has been completed. New ideas are being looked at to be introduced, these include a baptism at Messy Church and an introduction to Communion. Comments received from families have included “feel part of a large family”, “helps with BVT” (beliefs, values and traditions studied at school), “there are some jolly songs” and “we meet new friends”

Debbie mentioned they do include a collection and it is taken up during the service, parents are still learning and it was interesting to see on one occasion how the money taken up during the service totalled £20 but by the end of the afternoon this was doubled! She highlighted too that no child is left alone, a parent or grandparents say with them.

Jane Greenaway mentioned that its not just the children that are learning the system. At a recent baptism she, the vicar taking the service and a couple of others were the only ones reading the words from the service booklet as those attending had no idea on the structure and how to behave at a service.

Messy Church – Post It Notes

* Would a Messy Church away day to Rowbarrow Green be a useful link to that area of the Parish. Could the NISA store be a partner in any event held there.
* No ‘Gradvates’ yet from Messy Church to 9.30 or 11.00.
* Messy Church/Community Tea. Is there any (even periodic) synergy possible.
* What follows Messy Church? Teenagers need some activity led by the church.
* Do we think that because the Infant and Junior Schools have quite a bit of church input and focus, parents think religion is “done” in that context and not in the churches.
* 11.00am Church Alive! Weekly service aimed at families (West End SOTON)
* Deduction. Our church services are not attracting youth. Action. Consider a more relaxed “all age” service on Sunday every week.
* Booklet for community explaining church as well. Website is only good if looked for. Put it in their hands. Given out at baptisms, weddings, funerals, contact conversation.
* If the pews were taken out of All Saints then Messy Church could use the church!!
* Do parents still want to come even when the children are older?
* food handling certificate?? Bishops permission for use of hall for baptism.

Revd Becky talked briefly on church growth. Key factors in church growth were:

* Vision, mission and values
* Inviting atmosphere
* Welcoming experience
* Care for church members
* Opportunities to serve
* Resources
* Enjoyment

Recent growth within Harnham have been:

* People moving to the area
* Pastoral services, especially funerals, 5 people have started attending our churches following a funerals we assisted with.
* Attending events, then thinking ‘we are ok’ . We know of couple of people who attended the Pet Festival, we also took a funeral for a family member and they saw that we were “normal” and started attending church regularly.
* Messy Church invitations
* pupils from Junior school coming for confirmation. (not necessarily when they are at the junior school, sometimes it happens later).

Groups discussed who they knew that didn’t come to church, what would we invite someone to and why?

Growth and Invitation – Post It Comments

* Communion services not appropriate because of inexperience of church services. Invite to Prosecco, Pet Service. Invite to things linked with Christianity like Mothers Union and Community Teas
* Could groups be formed to help nurture people who come enquiring about, baptisms, weddings and bereavement. These people would stay in contact with the enquirers – this would ease things for Becky.
* Can we run a parish sports day with races and events for all ages on St George’s field? Could have a few casual practice sessions and refreshments. Celebrate community, family and Christian values together.
* Impact of presence of Cathedral? (especially for occasion attendees) Saturday early evening get together??
* Give people a good experience of church ie a football match or lunchtime concert on a Saturday.
* We need to find out what individuals want and need before we implement any structured change.
* Warning Family Services are very timing!!!!! Time/people/resources
* More family services

**EXPLORE**

**The cultures we now inhabit.**

Revd Becky talked about how we are all grouped into different categories according to when we were born:

* Builders (c 1925 – 1945)
* Boomers (c 1946 – 1963)
* Xers (c 1964 – 1981)
* Millennials (c 1982 – 2001)
* Generation Z (c 2002 – present)

As a parish we are aiming to attract the Millennials as they are the ones getting married and having families at the moment.

PEW research suggests this group:

* Own voices heard
* High priority on self expression and authenticity
* Access to meaning making instantly and digitally
* Question institutionalised religion and absolute truth
* Value work life balance more that other job prospects e.g. home working, balance of work and life experiences.
* Value of ‘flat’ structures ie delaying authoritative structures with shared values.

“Never before has a generation emerged into adulthood with mearly limitless access to diverse people, ideas, products, information at the click of a mouse or swipe of a finger” – Barna Research Team.

**The need for change in the Parish**

Groups were then given an example of a Millennial. *Imagine you are a woman in her early 30’s and have a young family. You work to support your family. Your social life involves watching box sets from the TV on demand, you can choose what to watch and when. Often this is watched on your Ipad. You participate in the social media site ‘Mums Net’ sharing and getting ideas on how to bring up children. You shop online as it is quicker. You discuss with your child what they want to do and decide as a family. At school your child has personalised learning, sits around a group of tables facing inwards to each other, discusses ideas and reviews their own work, accessing some learning information through Ipads. At the weekend you take your child to football.*

Using the example above the groups were asked to answer the following questions:

* What would you want from your Sunday?
* What would you find alien about our current Sunday morning worship?
* What would attract you?

The feedback from this was as follows:

(blue indicates feedback during open discussion, green from post its on wall)

What would you want from Sunday

* family time
* time to visit grandparents or more likely grandparents to visit us.
* food at right time
* insular – do things when they want to
* day of rest after an exhaustive week
* chance to catch up on household jobs
* take kids to clubs
* not having to set alarm
* no choice, work on a Sunday/

What would you find alien about our current Sunday morning worship

* service too structured, not relaxed
* times are wrong, not convenient
* not interactive
* corporate act of worship, all sitting in rows, not comfortable.
* don’t know how we are supposed to act, behave, what to do
* no one of my own age group

What would attract you?

* Messy Church
* All age relaxed service
* service focussed on values
* food at right time/socialising
* maybe a service not on a Sunday
* honesty and truth
* something with a visual impact rather than someone standing up and talking
* something joyous, relaxed, sharing and accessible
* a retreat
* table fellowship – gathering over a meal
* Christianity should be acceptance, somewhere you can be yourself
* something that attracts children
* child involved in a service
* social event aimed at family
* parish run

Revd Julian commented that if people were attending a wedding, he was surprised that they can’t cope with a Sunday service. Revd Becky mentioned that most church weddings are now mostly requested by those who do not have too much money.

* Can we provide a cooked evening meal to take the pressure off families on a Sunday or weekday with relaxed worship or prayers
* After school
* Baby sitting, football, family engagement
* confirmation classes at the Junior school
* Breakfast church
* Café church
* Lunch church, church with food
* Would and ‘Away Day’ be helpful
* Find out why no attendance at church. You don’t need to come to church to believe and do God’s work, pray on the internet.
* Can we attract families, gen X and millennials through eco-church? Avoid waste and tackling climate change is important to these people.
* Should we be asking a genuine millennial what would appeal to them?
* Woman in her 30’s, insular, just about family, not about local community. Sundays would want to be told what to do in a service. Would want to mix with own age group. Would want some choice in worship. Open churches – Saturday coffee.
* We need to ask the Millenia what would draw them to learn about God.
* Could retired clergy be used more with the present pattern of worship?
* If service times and places vary people get muddled and stop coming.

**DISCUSS**

**Different ways forward for the parish as a whole**

Jane Greenaway and Charles Woodd talked about Simplification. Charles began by saying that he and Jane had met to see how they could streamline and simplify things we do, to release people, resources and time to do new ventures.

The main principles to doing what we already do but more efficiently and effectively are:

* Operate as one parish - we have 3 buildings, but how can we intergrate more.
* Volunteers – we need more, we need to use the ones we have more effectively.
* Team Work – sharing more experiences, and learn from each other.
* Getting Balance right – how to juggle between the needs of a long standing congregation and a new community.

Some of the ideas they have come up with are:

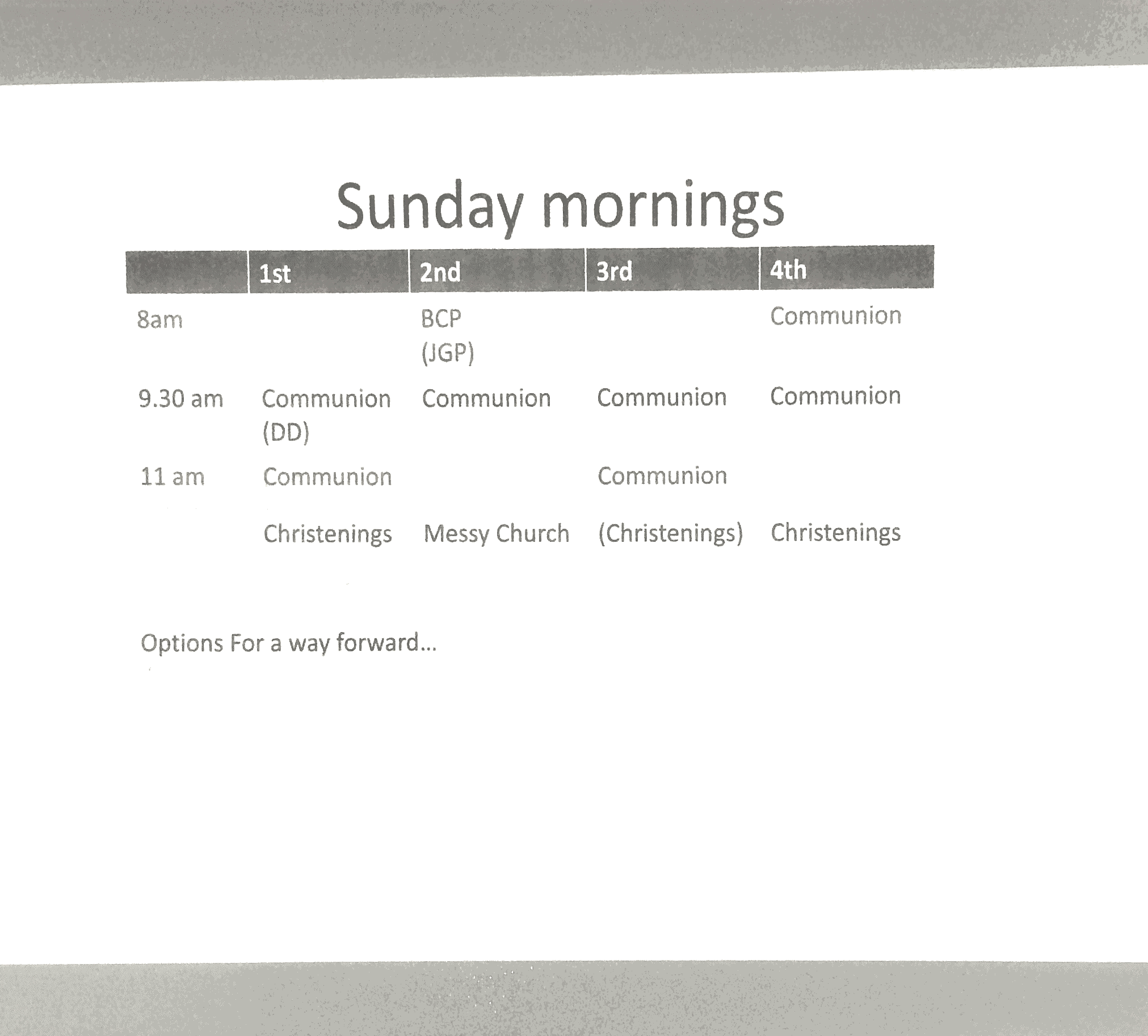
* Introducing Sunday wardens. We legally have to have Churchwardens, but they don’t have to do all they currently do, and don’t have to be around on a Sunday. A Sunday warden could have a duty say every 6 weeks ie 8 times a year. The role would include opening up the church and setting up. Sidespeople could still welcome.
* Centrally co-ordinated lifts. Some people have lifts to church in an informal basis, if this was done more effectively, taking into account safeguarding issues, it would make moving services from one church to another easier for those less able to walk/drive there.
* Prepare Rotas. Instead of several rotas, why not have all Sunday roles on one sheet.
* Identify volunteer roles, current and new. Advertise the roles more widely as they don’t necessarily have to be from the congregation. Look critically at current services. Organise training for all.

Revd Becky then asked everyone to think critically. We need to adjust the services on a Sunday. She had already been asked when we would be going back to the old services on a Sunday. Her reply was simply “we are not going backwards” we have to move forwards. If we stay as we are for the next 5 years, we will continue to lose people. She then handed out a sheet with the current Sunday services on and asked everyone to think about how it could change. If we want to suggest ideas for the week we can do so on the sheet. The groups had around 15 minutes to do this.

(Outcome from these discussions are on a separate sheet)

Afterwards everyone enjoyed a cream tea, and the afternoon ended with a prayer/the Grace?

**SUNDAY MORNINGS**

Copy of table circulated for those present to amend and add comments.

(anything in red is what I cannot read)

**Sheet One**

No change to table on sheet.

Coffee before 8am service.

Only two Christenings a month, not 3!!

Saturday Café Church or Breakfast Church (get rid of the pews in All Saints. Coffee machine, small oven, more fresh coffee.

Rota – more retired clergy to take Sunday services.

**Sheet Two**

No change to table on sheet

Flexibility of style of worship, perhaps 5th Sunday something creative.

Family friendly version of communion?

?Seating?

10am or 10.30am in each church alternating?

8am alternating? where

non-eucharistic service once a month.

**Sheet Three**

8am Twice a month

Main service at 10/10.30am

Once a month an evening service aimed at new people

Saturday morning coffee, café church, make more of the morning, activities, small tables,

proper coffee.

Remove pews from All Saints.

Christenings first and third Sunday.

Messy Church second Sunday. Family Service in afternoon or Pop Up Youth.

**Sheet Four**

Table - it looks like 8am at AS second and fourth Sunday. With Julian doing 2nd and CW doing 4th.

11.00am 1st and 3rd Sunday at AS.

At SG it looks as though they wish to lose one or two of the services to accommodate table service.

We want to accommodate a Table service aimed at attracting Millenials, ??early Sunday evening – 6pm in Church Hall. Possibly two per month possibly starting with 1 a month.

In future.?? Quarterly All Age church service.

**Sheet Five**

Table – looks like they are keep 2 8.00am services at All Saints but wish to build on it with breakfast. 8.00am value distinctive.

9.30am success to extent ……….? flexible

* Family Service – lay team/leader at St George’s as transition from Messy Church
* Evening service – music Taize/ Iona?
* All Saints potential as flexible and creative space
* S……@ All Saints St Johns Bemerton

Event or Service

**Sheet Six**

Looks like Communion and Christenings at ALL Saints on 1st and 3rd Sunday linked.

9.30/10.00am Best option, shortened and coffee for remainers.

8.00am Prefer shorter.

2 people ch manning for open church Sunday am.

**Sheet Seven**

Table changed to make one main service at 10 or 10.30am. Fifth Sunday for specials.

If/when we drop the 1 per week need to get the lift system going, same time more ……………

afternoon service.

Have one service per Sunday at each church eg 1st and 3rd at All Saints and 2nd and 4th at SG. Compromise on time 10am. Co-ordinate lifts to both churches.

?All Christenings on First Sundays – Joint services for several families.

Obtain research from baptismal families re service time

Afternoon/Informal/Tea Evening