

Resourcing Church – Update April 2018

What is the aim of becoming a Resourcing Church?

Since the Great Commission the vision of the Church has been to go, with the authority and presence of Christ, to make disciples of all nations. The aim of becoming a Resourcing Church is to continue to fulfil our calling to reach the 93% of our nation that have little or no contact with the Gospel through Church Planting. Church Planting is currently seen as the most effective way of Church Growth. The principle behind a Resourcing Church is one of multiplication. The aim is to plant churches who then plant churches, who plant churches.

How did this come about?

Resourcing Churches have been in the Diocesan thinking for about 18 months. In August 2017 we, along with every other parish in the Diocese of Leicester, were invited to an evening at St Martin's House, with Bishop Martyn and the Mission and Ministry Team, to explore the issues associated with becoming a Resourcing Church as well as the overall concept.

Prior to this meeting I had met with Revd Sue Willetts, Vicar of the Good Shepherd Church (GS), to discuss the possibility, as well as the opportunity, to work in partnership to plant a church into the Grange Park Estate in the Good Shepherd Parish. Five of us from Emmanuel and three from the Good Shepherd attended the initial meeting at St Martin's House. In total twelve Churches were represented that meeting. The Bishop and Diocesan Officers explained the way forward should any churches, after further prayer and consideration wish to pursue this idea further. This involved submitting 5 papers prior to attending a Discernment Retreat in November at which further presentations would be made by those wishing to be considered as Resourcing Churches. In partnership with the Good Shepherd, we submitted our 5 papers and attended the Discernment Retreat.

After a rigorous as well as exhausting process the Bishop designated 4 out of the 6 churches who attended the retreat to be a Resourcing Church and we, in partnership with the Good Shepherd, are one of them. Two churches, Holy Trinity Leicester and the Market Harborough Team Ministry, had already been pre-designated as Resourcing Churches.

What are our plans?

We are planning to plant at least two churches within the next 6 years in partnership with the Good Shepherd. The first will be on the Grange Park Estate and later the second in the Beacon Academy Area; both in the Good Shepherd Parish. Alongside this we intend to plant some fresh expressions of church in both of our parishes. Overall it is recognised that Emmanuel has the resources and the Good Shepherd the relationships for us to plant within these two areas.

It is proposed that Ben, with Helen, ably assisted by Beth, will lead the first church plant with a team drawn from Emmanuel and the Good Shepherd, in about 12-18 months from September 2018. A pioneer Curate will then work to plant another church in a further 12-18 months in the Beacon Academy Area.

The fresh expressions will run concurrently with the Church Plants but we sense that the second church plant could well emerge out of one of the fresh expressions.

Exciting and Daunting

We feel that this is an exciting as well as a daunting venture. It is exciting in terms of seeing what God can do amongst us.

Being a Resourcing Church is daunting because there will be demands made upon us and the Good Shepherd in terms of our generosity and sacrifice. There will be support from both from the Diocese of Leicester as well as the Church Commissioners.

We will look to appoint an Associate Minister to focus on Discipleship and Leadership within Emmanuel as well as the Good Shepherd. If we are going to plant churches that plant churches, then both churches will have to be growing as a church, both in terms of leadership as well as discipleship. Emmanuel will also look to appoint a Pioneer Curate in 2019 / 20 as well as a curate to replace Ben. We will be allocated £50,000 to spend on Church Planting. We will also join a learning community with the five other designated Resourcing Churches.

There will be losses as well as gains for both churches. The people who will form the new church plants will take with them their gifts as well as their finance. However churches who have planted in the past have discovered that God inevitably provides the growth in the sending churches.

What happens next?

As we are working in partnership together we are forming a Memorandum of Understanding. This will focus on how we work together in planting churches.

The Diocese of Leicester are preparing the final submission for the Church Commissioners and we will hear on 29 June 2018 if this has been successful. The Diocese are cautiously optimistic that the submission will be accepted.

Conclusion

For Emmanuel this feels like a bold as well as challenging initiative. We feel that it dovetails with our intentional focus on Discipleship for the past 4 years.

For the Good Shepherd this is an exciting opportunity to ensure the growth of the Kingdom of God in our extensive and growing parish. It will bring challenges along the way we know, but we feel it is an exciting chance to see God at work amongst us all.

We would all really value your prayers as well as support as we embark on this exciting venture in Christ.

Michael Broadley and Sue Willetts