

# HOLY TRINITY CLAYGATE

## NEW CONGREGATIONS PCC DISCUSSION PAPER

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Background

1. This paper arises from the vision process and the priority which emerged to see *more followers of Jesus*. We recognised the capacity issues with our present Sunday service provision, and the fact that we had not grown significantly over the last five years. All the research and experience of other churches pointed us in the direction of starting new congregations, or services, to act as a lever for growth. After the Leadership Day Away in May we agreed that a working group would go away to explore a number of different options with a view to a PCC discussion in December.

#### Process

2. The PCC has received regular updates on the route which the working group has taken. After initial preliminary discussions within the working group three research groups were set up to explore possible new congregations:
  - midweek provision for children and carers, building on the strengths of Holiday Club ('Messy Church') – (Andrew Cowie, Gill Griffiths, Lorraine Huff)
  - extended provision for youth ministry and worship via a youth congregation (John Alpass, Stuart Wright, Andrew Cowie, Jon Hidden, Lee Jones)
  - 'son of 10am', that is, a congregation that addressed the capacity issues at 10am. (Tom Darwent, Philip Plyming, and others)

The choice of these three particular avenues arose from the results of discussions on the Leadership Day Away, an analysis of the opportunities which seem to be coming to the surface, and a general awareness of the experience of other churches.
3. Each research group pursued external and internal research. The external research comprised visits to other churches and extensive conversations with church leaders and other key practitioners. The internal research varied from group to group but included questionnaires and discussions with relevant parties (ie YF etc). Each of the research groups produced a report which form the substance of this paper.

#### Key recommendations

4. While each paper draw its own conclusions, it is helpful to draw out the key recommendations and how they might impact on the worshipping life of HTC.
5. The report on midweek provision concludes that Messy Church is an entirely applicable and appropriate route for HTC to go down. It will build on the success of Holiday Club and encourage those un-churched adults who are happy for their children to attend Holiday Club to come to a style of service that suits their needs. The report states that it would be possible to pilot messy church on a monthly basis after Easter 2008.
6. The report on youth ministry makes a number of recommendations, including the establishment of a contemporary-style worship-based youth congregation to supplant the existing provision of YF and also attract in other youth. The ideal scenario would be to build towards this youth congregation starting in autumn 2008, probably in Emmanuel Hall. Further to this recommendation, the report also concludes that a senior appointment is necessary to lead growth in this area.
7. The report on 'son of 10am' concludes that it is necessary to extend our provision currently offered on Sunday mornings. After reviewing the experience of other churches together with data from a questionnaire of the present 10am congregation, it discusses a number of scenarios before concluding that the most appropriate route for our situation would be to offer two services at 9.30 and 11.15. The services would not be identical; there would be some

difference in musical style and children's groups. The report concludes that it would be feasible for this extended provision to start in September 2008.

8. As a result of the above recommendation, the working group undertook some preliminary discussions concerning the development of the 6.30pm service (see Appendix A). Given the extended provision for organ-based liturgical worship at 11.15, the group believed that development at 6.30pm should be considered. Although further consultation and discussion is required, the group believed that a more informal service at or around 6.30pm would meet a significant number of needs and provide important extra provision for this popular pattern of worship. Further research is to be conducted on this basis.

### **Conclusion**

9. The above programme creates the capacity for significant growth and the potential for *more followers of Jesus*. It envisages significant, but measured, development in our worshipping life as a church. The cost to this change should not be underestimated, in terms of the greater commitment and support required, but this is itself exciting; we believe as we meet the challenge of seeking more followers of Jesus we will grow as deeper and closer followers of Jesus as well.

Philip Plyming

on behalf of New Congregations Working Group (Tom Darwent, Andrew Cowie, John Alpass)  
December 2007

# MESSY CHURCH RESEARCH GROUP REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Messy church is an exciting new development in church outreach which has been successful for a number of churches in recent years. Messy church has a proven track record in attracting people who do not normally come to church to attend Messy church services.
- Messy Church is aimed at primary aged school children, who must bring an adult to accompany them. The key components of a Messy Church service are a welcome tea; a time of arts and crafts in the church hall; a short service in the church including a talk which links into the crafts; and a hot meal in the church hall.
- The Messy Church experience is entirely applicable and appropriate for HTC as it can build on the success of Holiday Club, and encourage those un-churched who are happy for their children to attend Holiday Club to come to a style of service that meets their needs. In short, Messy Church can help us achieve our vision of bringing more followers to Jesus.

## Introduction

1. The Messy Church Research Group consists of Andrew Cowie, Jill Griffiths and Lorraine Huff. The remit for this group was to conduct internal and external research in the area of Messy Church. The remit defined for this research group was to include the following:

### ***External Research***

- to investigate what other churches have done in this area, with particular reference to
  - how the new congregation was established
  - what the target audience was and how links were made
  - what leadership was required to make the new congregation happen
  - what the format is for the congregation
  - what might be done differently next time

### ***Internal Research***

- to set out clearly the present context at HTC and what different options there are in moving forward in this area, undertaking whatever research is necessary within HTC (focus groups, questionnaires)
- to assess what questions HTC might have to address if it decides to go down this path, in terms of
  - practical issues
  - resources
  - process/timing
  - communication

## 2. EXTERNAL RESEARCH

Research for this report included:

- Attending a one day Messy Church conference
- Consulting with churches that run Messy Church or mid week children friendly services
  - Morden Baptist church
  - St James Emsworth, Hampshire
  - Emmanuel Church, Guildford
- Reading the book *Messy Church*, and discussions with its author, Lucy Moore who set up the first Messy Church at St Wilfrid's Portsmouth.

## Overview of Messy Church

### 3. Mid week church

Messy Churches typically run once a month, during term time, and take place on a mid week day (usually Thursday). Messy church does not take place on Sunday because:

- families often have other activities they are already committed to on Sundays.
- for non-churched families there might be a feeling that Sunday church belongs to church families.
- Messy church is timed to take place straight after school, but finishes before evening activities start that the children might want to go on to.

### 4. Shape of Messy Church

Messy Church typically follows a standard pattern:

- 3:30 – 4:00**    **Welcome:** Children and their parent(s) (or carers) arrive in the Church hall and are welcomed as they arrive with a tea, coffee or soft drink, and a biscuit. There are some simple games for the children to play with.
- 4:00 – 5:00**    **Crafts:** Up to ten different craft stations, each one based around a table in the church hall. Activities are intergenerational. Children and parents roam from table to table. Each table is manned by a leader who gives instruction and encouragement. Crafts cover a range of activities.<sup>1</sup> Each craft takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Both children and parents complete the crafts. The crafts follow a theme which is build on in the service talk / story.
- 5:00 – 5:15**    **Celebration:** A short all age service in the church. A typical order of service might include: opening song; story or illustration; response song; prayer; grace.
- 5:15 – 5:45**    **Hot Meal:** In the church hall, a simple two course meal is served. The dessert is usually a selection of cakes and or fruit.

These timings are not rigid. For instance over time, we may want to increase the amount of time allocated to the Celebration service.

### 5. Aims of Messy Church

Messy Church should not just be viewed as a feeder into Sunday services. Rather it is a real church service in its own right. As such, it has the following aims:

- An opportunity for people of all ages to worship together
- Help people of all ages feel they belong in church and to each other
- Help people have fun and be creative together – an opportunity to express our God given capabilities, for children **and** adults.
- Introduce Jesus through hospitality; fellowship; togetherness and caring

### Does Messy Church work?

6. Those churches that have started a Messy Church have only positive things to say about it. They have seen large numbers of people who do not normally come to church regularly attend Messy Church. Those who have been established for over a year are starting to develop a real sense of community within the congregation. Some churches have held Messy Church baptisms as people have wanted to make a commitment to Jesus. Other churches have had families start to attend Sunday services.
7. Messy Church is not just 15 minutes of all age service sandwiched into a social club. The theme of the service permeates through everything. The crafts are specifically chosen to help develop the theme. The people who lead the craft activities are encouraged to talk about the theme whilst the people at their station complete their craft activities. There is something about working on a craft with your hands that is satisfying, and also allows the participants to lose themselves in what they are working on, and to strike up conversations with the person

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of a Messy Church theme, and some related craft activities see Appendix A.

manning the craft station, as well as fellow participants. Consequently there is a lot of conversation and banter going on during the crafts, which quickly allow relationships to grow and flourish, and for people to feel a sense of belonging that encourages them to come back.

### **What alternatives are there to Messy Church?**

8. Some churches run mid week children's groups, such as Emmanuel Church, Guildford, who run a weekly event half hour service, which has a MegaMix flavour, involving action sheets, songs and puppets. Other churches provide after school clubs, but this is in reality a child card service.
9. The significant advantage of the Messy church format is that it involves the parents as well as children throughout. Consequently there is more of a family feel to Messy Church, rather than being aimed primarily at the children.

### **Messy Church resourcing:**

#### **Team**

10. Messy Church requires a large team of committed volunteers in order for it to work well. Average team size is 16-20 people. Broadly speaking, the teams are split between those who prepare the food; preparing and leading the crafts; and leading the service. In addition some churches have organised additional teams for other roles, for example to come in and help clear up afterwards, or to bake cakes for the meal. Team leaders meet once a term in order to plan out the themes, craft and menus for the following term, and to feedback on the lessons learnt from previous Messy church services.
11. Other churches have built their teams up over time, but the strong recommendation was to have as large a team as possible in place so as not to put too much onus on a few individuals. Lessons learnt from other churches included having a service coordinator(s) who could be focused on dealing with parents who had small babes in arms, or difficult children, in order to help them cope more easily.
12. Messy Church leadership is generally provided by a small team of committed leaders, normally non-staff. Church staff usually run the service, but this isn't always the case.

#### **Finances:**

13. Most churches ask for donations, but there is no pressure to give. St James Emsworth has organised a successful Quiz evening in order to raise funds for Messy Church. Tickets sold out in three days, and over 100 people came to the evening, mostly from Messy Church. Some churches have funds allocated from the PCC. St Wilfrid's has church funding of £25 per service.

#### **Crafts:**

14. Messy church requires significant craft resources. Some Messy Church teams appoint a craft quarter master who keeps track of materials. Other churches make use of craft banks to obtain materials from. Adequate and easily accessible storage space for craft materials is important. The experience of St James Emsworth was that the quality of the crafts was a key element in the success of a Messy Church service.

### **Messy Church congregations:**

15. The size of Messy Church congregations of the churches we talked to ranged from an average of 40 up to over 100 each month. Congregations seemed to grow by word of mouth, with minimal promotion by the churches involved. Publicity, if any, was targeted at local schools, especially if the church had strong school links already. A number of the churches we talked to were already running successful Holiday Clubs, and Messy Church built on that success.
16. Some churches saw Messy Church families progress on to attending Sunday services as well, although this was not an aim in itself. St James' Emsworth in Hampshire knew of four families in the past year that had started going to services on Sunday regularly. Some Messy

Churches, for example St Wilfred's Portsmouth, have also held messy baptisms for members of their congregation.

17. Messy Churches that were well established were looking to run social events to build on their sense of community, or were involved in whole church events, such as church picnics etc.

## **INTERNAL RESEARCH**

### **Context at HTC**

18. HTC, like a number of the churches who have set up a Messy Church, have a strong outreach into the local community through the success of Holiday Club. The recent Dreamworld one day holiday club, which ran in the summer and autumn, attracted 170 children, the majority of whom are un-churched. However, we have been unsuccessful in encouraging those families to come to church other than for Holiday Club events. If the success of Messy Church at other churches could be replicated at HTC, then it would be a vehicle which would allow those families to come to HTC more regularly, and participate in a worship service, and over time come to faith, hence building on the church vision of bringing more followers to Jesus.

### **19. Issues to be addressed:**

#### **1) Messy Church team**

One of the key learnings from other churches is that the right size of team is critical in order to make running Messy Church on an ongoing basis a viable option. A number of people at HTC already commit significant time to church life. We would therefore need to encourage a number of people who maybe not already heavily involved in church life to give their time, in order for Messy Church to be viable.

#### **2) Messy Church Location**

The church facilities at HTC are ideal for running a Messy Church. The church building, foyer, church hall and kitchens provide all the facilities and equipment needed for Messy Church. Indeed part of the original concept for Messy Church grew out of a desire to use these facilities at other churches for church purposes.

#### **3) When could Messy Church start?**

The timing of when Messy Church might start is, to a large extent, constrained by having the team in place to allow it to operate smoothly. Assuming that it took one to two months to recruit a team, it is entirely possible to have a Messy Church at HTC up and running by late Q1 or earlier Q2 2008, assuming a start to recruiting the team from January 2008.

#### **4) How would Messy Church be communicated?**

As well as using normal church methods of communication (notices in church, newsheet, Insight magazine and the church website), Messy Church could also be promoted at local schools, particularly Esher Church Primary School, and Claygate Primary School, where HTC already has strong links. Any family whose child has attended recent Holiday Club events could also be sent a Messy Church flier informing them of this new style of service. Jigsaw parents and baptism course parents could also be targeted.

## **APPENDIX**

This appendix sets out a sample themes, menu and related crafts that are used in a Messy Church service.<sup>2</sup>

**Theme:** I am the true vine

**Aim:** To explore what a vine is like and what Jesus meant when he said these words, discovering truths about growth, fruitfulness and staying close to Jesus.

**Bible Background:** John 15:1-11

Jesus was talking about being the true vine in a conversation with his disciples very soon after the last supper and before Gethsemane, so he's using the image to encourage his friends to stick with him, even though the going is about to get really tough. Staying close to Jesus, loving him and trying to do what he wants will result in a vibrant, fruitful life. It will mean discipline and submitting to being 'pruned' from season to season, but this is God's way of making both us and his kingdom grow and be fruitful.

For children and adults who aren't familiar with the Bible and its imagery, there are considerations to take into account:

- Very few people in the UK have seen a vine or have any idea how to look after one. To Jesus and his friends, vines were as common and mundane as cabbages in Lincolnshire or apples in Herefordshire. To us in the UK vines are exotic and special, so the image becomes super-holy and distant.
- People won't have heard of the powerful image of the vineyard representing Israel or God's kingdom throughout the Bible, so much of the resonance of Jesus' words is lost.
- Many people in a literal-minded society will think "I am a plant" is a really weird thing to say.
- The idea of discipline (or pruning) could easily be seen as a negative idea, suggesting a strict disciplinarian God rather than a Father-gardener who wants the best for his plants.

So our focus is on fruitfulness, growth and togetherness. By using fruit and vegetables common to our society, we try to regain some of the ordinary holiness of Jesus' image. But it's good to get to know what a vine is, as it's such a powerful image in Christianity and Judaism, so we include grapes and vines in among the apples and potatoes.

For some people, it's good to celebrate the simple idea that human life is about growth. Others may see that being a Christian is a great way to live, as the wholesome lovely side of being of being human will be encouraged to grow (love, joy, peace, patience and so on). This may be especially important for parents to see for their children as they grow up in a materialistic, greedy culture.

We also explore the idea that Jesus wants us to stay close to him through fellowship with other Christians and through talking to him personally. This session links well with Harvest festival.

**Food: Jacket potatoes with salad and fillings.**

Put out a bowl of salad and bowls containing baked beans, cheese, tuna and butter. Serve up potatoes on plates. People can help themselves to salad and fillings.

**Activity 1: Icing Vines**

**Materials:** Fondant icing coloured brown, green and purple; ivy leaf biscuit cutter; paper plates.

**Directions:** Roll brown icing into long thin branches. Roll out green icing and cut into leaf shapes using an ivy-leaf cutter. Roll purple icing into small balls and pile up as bunches of grapes. Build up a vine design on a small named paper plate. Ration each person with a set amount of icing or it will all vanish in the first five minutes.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about vines growing in vineyards. Perhaps people have seen some on holiday.

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<sup>2</sup> Moore, L., *Messy Church* (Oxford, Bible Reading Fellowship, 2006).

**Activity 2: Frosted Grapes**

**Materials:** Bunch of grapes (washed), beaten egg white, caster sugar, paper plates.

**Directions:** Dip grapes one by one into the beaten egg white and roll in caster sugar. Leave to dry on a paper plate.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about grapes growing on vines and being good to eat or to make into wine.

**Activity 3: Apple bobbing**

**Materials:** A baby bath, small apples (washed), towels and a mop.

**Directions:** Fill the baby bath with water and float small apples in it. The apples have to be taken out of the water using only the teeth. Allow people to take the apple away with them. Have a towel and mop handy.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about fruit and vegetables that grow in this country and whether they grow on trees or bushes or in the ground.

**Activity 4: Interwoven vine branch bracelets**

**Materials:** Balls of string or embroidery silks in different colours, masking tape, wooden beads.

**Directions:** Make simple macramé bracelets from string by plaiting three different-coloured strands together. (Use the masking tape to secure the strands while you are braiding them.) Finish with a bead fastener.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about the way the string gets knotted together so that it's strong, about the way people are joined together in families, friendship groups and in church, and how God likes us to be close to him.

**Activity 5: Grape treading**

**Materials:** An old baby bath, cheap bath sponges, purple poster paint, lining wallpaper (unpasted), brown felt-tipped pens.

**Directions:** Fill the bath full of sponges and purple poster paint. Tread in the bath with bare feet and walk down a very long piece of lining paper, which you have previously decorated with a very simple brown vine branch design. The footprints (especially the toes) look like bunches of grapes. Put the end result down the centre of the worship space for the act of worship.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about traditional ways of pressing grapes for wine.

**Activity 6: Hedgerow harvest plaque**

**Materials:** Oasis foam, masking tape or coloured tape, small plastic saucers, a selection of leaves and berries

**Directions:** Using a plastic saucer and oasis foam fixed in place with tape, make up a small display using leaves and berries from local gardens.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about the lovely plants that grow in the wild and in gardens and how God makes them grow even if nobody sees them. He also gives berries and nuts for food for animals: he looks after his creation.

**Activity 7: Potato printing**

**Materials:** Waxy potatoes, sheets of paper, scraps of fabric or cheap hankies (from the market), poster paint, acrylic or fabric paint, old saucers, kitchen paper.

**Directions:** Pre-cut some potatoes into geometric shapes, leaving some uncut for older children and adults to design their own prints. Pour a little paint into each saucer and print on paper or cloth.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about how useful potatoes are, where they grow and the sorts of ways people like to eat them – chips, mash and so on.

**Activity 8: Vegetable modelling**

**Materials:** A variety of vegetables, cocktail sticks, wobbly eyes and foam shapes.

**Directions:** Turn vegetables into people and animals with the cocktail sticks, wobbly eyes and foam shapes.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about how vegetables are good for you, what wonderful shapes and colours they are and how God provides good things to eat.

**Activity 9: Vine bookmarks**

**Materials:** Rectangles of mediumweight card, sticky sequins, laminating machine

**Directions:** On a rectangle of card, draw a simple vine branch and the words 'Jesus said, "I am the true vine"'. Then stick on small sticky sequins in bunch shapes to make bunches of grapes. You can laminate the result.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about how funny it was for Jesus to say 'I am the true vine' and wonder together what he might have meant. Did Jesus have green leaves coming out of his ears or grapes dangling from his fingers?

**Activity 10: Collage**

**Materials:** Sheet of mediumweight card, scraps of coloured paper, templates of leaves, grapes and letters, scraps of fabric, scissors, PVA glue, felt tipped pens.

**Directions:** Using templates of leaves, grapes and letters, cut out the shapes from paper and cloth scraps to make a collage for the noticeboard. Put the words 'Jesus said, "I am the true vine"' in the middle and make a border of vines around the outside.

**Talk about:** During this activity, talk about how things stick together best and what might be the glue that sticks people together.

**Celebration:**

**Setting up the church:** Decorate the worship space with the following items.

- Some real vine trimmings, weaved in and out of the seats
- Grape trading picture down the walkway into the church
- The picture of the vine without grapes on the firm surface at the front.

**Also needed:** PowerPoint with digital pictures of finished artwork; samples of artwork from each activity station; a dead branch, pencils, pieces of paper cut into the shape of a bunch of grapes (one per person), picture of tree with fruit.

As everyone comes in, give them a 'bunch of grapes' shape to write on during the prayers. Put the PowerPoint pictures up on the screens.

**Song selection:**

I'm forever in your love (Doug Horley)  
 Father God, I wonder  
 Our God is a great big God

Help me be your eyes, Lord Jesus (Doug Horley)  
 Jesus put this song into our hearts.

**Talk:** Show a broken-off fruit tree branch and ask if will ever grow apples again. Why not? Because it's dead – it isn't attached to the main tree any longer. Jesus said, 'I am the vine...remain in me and I will remain in you.' He wants us to stay close to him and to each other so that our lives aren't dead and empty like this branch, but have lots of fruit like this tree in the picture. We can stay close to Jesus by coming to church to be with other Christians or praying or reading the bible.

**Prayer response:** Write or draw a prayer on a grape shape and come and place it on the prayer vine. It can be a please, thank you or sorry prayer.

**Final blessing:** Lord, thank you that you have made us to be together as part of your family throughout the world and throughout history. Help us to live as one family, loving each other through thick and thin. Amen.

**Messy Grace:**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Hold out your hands as if expecting a present*)  
 And the love of God (*Put your hands on your heart*)  
 And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (*Hold hands*)  
 Be with us all now and for ever. Amen! (*Raise hands together on the word 'Amen'*)

## YOUTH MINISTRY RESEARCH GROUP REPORT

### Key findings and recommendations

1. Comparison with other churches and with our own past record indicates that we are not meeting the evangelistic challenge among 11-18 year-olds as effectively as we might. Work in the 'community' sector is going quite well but we are failing to reach out to most unchurched youth.
2. We recommend continuation of special effort to reach out to the community sector and, as far as is possible, integration of this work with HTC's other youth programmes.
3. We recommend exploring whether our provision for churched 11-14 year-olds (Pathfinders) would benefit from a more independent 'grown up' flavour and could be made more accessible to unchurched youth.
4. Our provision for 14-18 year-olds (Youth Fellowship) is looking old-fashioned and compares poorly with elsewhere – and with what we formerly achieved at HTC. It fails to attract unchurched youngsters. We recommend that YF be transformed into a worship-based Youth Congregation, with greater encouragement for young people to take the lead themselves. Cell-group work will continue to be an important element.
5. We should continue to look for opportunities to work in local schools but give highest priority to developing our own church-based programmes
6. Our youth work should in future be led by a more experienced figure than hitherto. We recommend that HTC make a new senior appointment exclusively to oversee youth ministry.

### Introduction

1. As part of HTC's vision process this group, comprising Stuart Wright, Andrew Cowie, Lee Jones, Jon Hidden and John Alpass, has reviewed HTC's ministry to youth in the light of the experience of the wider church. For these purposes 'youth' covers ages 11 – 18 (school years 7 to 13). Provision for younger children is made principally through Sunday morning groups and there is no tailored provision for young people over 18. There are not many people in the student or 'young singles' age brackets in Claygate.
2. Our sources of information are listed at Annex. We have:
  - Looked at the history of provision at HTC over the last thirty years and considered the strengths and weaknesses of what we do now;
  - Consulted and visited four other parish churches with youth programmes relevant to our own situation, and the youth church Soul Survivor at Watford;
  - Read books by a former adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the outgoing Guildford diocesan youth adviser; and consulted the latter in person.

### The aims and importance of youth ministry

3. It is generally agreed that most Christians acquire their faith when young: from earliest childhood if within Christian families; through church, school or other teenage activity; in the student environment; or through young-adult life events (marriage, birth of children etc). According to Scripture Union 75% of those who commit to Christian faith do so by the time they are twenty one. Any church seeking to *make more followers of Jesus* must therefore pay particular attention to these age groups. It must try to ensure both that young people brought up in practising Christian families ('the churched') are enabled to grow in their faith, and that active steps are taken to reach those who do not have this background ('the unchurched'). The general aims of church-based youth ministry are therefore to:

- help churched young people develop their faith during adolescence;
- attract unchurched young people to explore and adopt Christian faith;
- prepare young people for life-long Christian commitment by introducing key elements including worship, service, leadership and evangelism.

In HTC's situation there is an additional highly desirable goal:

- to encourage greater integration between young people of different social backgrounds within the church family.

### Where we are now

4. At present HTC runs three weekly groups for 11 -18 year olds:

- Pathfinders for 11 -14s on a Sunday morning, for children who accompany their parents to church. An average of 15 attend each week
- The Hub, a group for 'community' youth mainly in the 11 – 16 range, meeting on a Thursday evening. An average of 25 attend.
- Youth Fellowship (YF) for 14 -18 year olds on a Sunday evening. Some 20 attend on average, almost all from committed church families.

5. Young people are also able to attend Christian camps in the holidays and other one-off events. In the past our youth workers have maintained links with local schools, but this practice has been largely discontinued. (paras 27-29). There are strong links with the Scouts & Cubs however.

6. Attendance at Sunday children's groups indicates that HTC parents 'produce' about ten new children per year. During the Pathfinder and YF years some children drop away, so that perhaps only about half of HTC churched teenagers attend YF. Other churches experience a similar tail-off and regard 11 – 14 as the most vulnerable period.

7. YF attendance has crept up a bit since the mid-1990s; but earlier on it was much larger. YF was founded in the early 1970s by senior church members at the request of churched teenagers. It took off rapidly and until the mid 1980s had a membership of some 80 – 90 young people, mainly in the 14 -18 range but with some older. About 80% lived in Claygate. A number were previously unchurched. Thereafter numbers declined, for reasons that are unclear. Key features of YF in its most successful period were:

- The teenagers themselves *took the lead*, both in inviting their school friends along and in running some of the YF programme; the adult leadership consciously '*grew*' *potential leaders* from the membership, ensuring continuity over a number of years;
- There was a strong *social* element, organised by the teenagers themselves;
- The main weekly meeting included a large element of music-based *worship* as well as teaching, prayer and group work;
- A number of YF members in the 70s and 80s have gone on to significant leadership roles: seven have been ordained, at least three have entered other full-time Christian work, and a number have taken on substantial lay leadership responsibilities.

8. On the basis of the 2001 census, and assuming that almost all those who attend our three youth groups live in Claygate, we appear to be engaging around 9% of Claygate's 11–18 year-olds. This is a marginally better than our record with adults (7-8%) but it points up how many young people are being missed, even allowing for the work of other churches. The only sector where we are having significant impact in percentage terms is among Claygate's most vulnerable 'community' youth, who are targeted by the Hub. In the much larger middle class sector we are attracting only those who are already churched (Pathfinders and YF).

9. A crude statistical comparison with the four other parish churches we have consulted underlines this further. In relation to adult church membership, numbers of 11 -18 year olds attending groups at HTC are on the low side but not greatly out of line with the average; ditto the ratio of churched to unchurched youngsters attending. But this is largely because of the Hub, which has made progress in the 'community' sector that other churches cannot match. Aside from the Hub our performance looks distinctly poor because we are failing to attract the majority of the youth in the parish of Claygate. **We are not meeting the evangelistic challenge as effectively as we might.**

## Learning from experience elsewhere

### *Social inclusivity*

10. Pete Ward's book *Growing Up Evangelical* demonstrates that for many years evangelical outreach has been most successful among middle-class youth. It has proved difficult to attract and hold unchurched youngsters from other backgrounds. Social, educational and behavioural differences have often proved insurmountable. Churches that wish to work in this area need to be willing to make changes in order to encourage such unchurched youngsters to feel at home.

11. All five churches we consulted recognise this problem. None of them has achieved a significant breakthrough to non-middle class youth. Some have tried to make specific provision for such youngsters but there have been problems with integration. None of them has attempted what we have done at HTC – to search out young people from more diverse backgrounds actively on their own ground, at secular youth clubs etc. This work, led since 1999 by Stuart Wright, is widely admired elsewhere.

12. Stuart Wright has looked principally to the Elm Road youth club as a means of engaging with 'community' youth. He has been able to attract a number of young people (mainly boys) into new church groups, the most enduring of which, DV8, ran from 2002 to 2005 and had some 40 people aged 13–21 on its books, with an average attendance of some 20 at its peak. In 2004 eight members of DV8 were baptised and confirmed. But it was not possible to integrate DV8 members with YF; and – whether for personal reasons or because of lack of support from the HTC church family - only a small number of those involved appear to have made a lasting Christian commitment or remained attached to HTC. Latterly a new group, the Hub, has concentrated on attracting 'community' teenagers mainly from the 11-16 range because at that younger age social tensions are less marked. The Hub is flourishing but integration with groups for churched youth has yet to be attempted. The Hub limits its numbers to twenty-five. More would join if they could. The Hub is a course with a fixed duration, which allows the kids to feel that they are not making a life long commitment.

13. The unchurched youth of Claygate is predominantly middle-class. It would make no sense for HTC to devote resource to attracting unchurched 'community' youth to the point where it undermined efforts to attract unchurched youth from other parts of the village. But we have achieved some success in this area of ministry and it would seem wrong not to give special attention to overcoming the barrier to evangelism that HTC's predominantly middle-class ethos represents for some people. **We recommend that specific effort should continue to be devoted to youth work in the 'community' sector.**

### *Content of youth programmes*

14. The **Hub**, which is still a newish venture, has found an exciting style of meeting based on Youth Alpha. There is food (Raz's), an AV-based talk, contemporary worship using CD tracks, and work in groups. The evening ends with computer games and karaoke. The Hub discipleship course, which runs in the summer, is for kids who want to go deeper in their faith.

15. Looking ahead, the issues for the Hub are how retain the loyalty of the membership as they face the pressures of the later teenage years; and how to integrate them with the wider HTC

family. Three YF members already help with leading at the Hub. This link could be strengthened by encouraging senior Hub members to attend Eternal (the YF social), as well as having joint socials and joint outings. In future a Youth congregation (see below) that meets the needs of both groups might prove a good way of facilitating further integration. While recognising the difficulties **we recommend that efforts be made to integrate, as far as is possible, the Hub programme with those of other youth groups.**

**16. Pathfinders** functions at present very much as the 'oldest class' of Sunday morning children's work, circumscribed by the timing and duration of the 10 am service, although members have an opportunity to taste the atmosphere of YF at monthly 'Eternal' gatherings on a Sunday evening and there are occasional social activities. Pathfinders can also go on camps in the holidays. Everything we have heard from elsewhere suggests that getting the formula right for this age group, who have made the transition to secondary school and are becoming more independent, is crucial. This is when church-ed youngsters begin to fall away.

17. We found a diversity of provision elsewhere. One of the parish churches we consulted runs a single programme for 11 -18 year olds on a Sunday evening, partly in order to create a critical mass of young people and partly in the belief that the younger element is drawn in by being made to feel part of a 'grown up' group. They find the wide age differential manageable if handled carefully. The other three parish churches all run separate 11 -14 and 14 -18 programmes. They all run Sunday morning groups but in two cases the timings are different from, and the durations longer than, those of the main adult services, so that a certain distance is created between provision for parents and children. One makes additional provision for a group on a Sunday evening to coincide with a modern-style adult service. Two also provide club-type activities for 11-14 year olds during the week, which attract a number of unchurched as well as church-ed youngsters.

18. In comparison with HTC, the general thrust elsewhere is to provide *more variety, longer sessions, and greater independence from parental schedules for 11-14s*. This may offer a more attractive prospect to youngsters seeking to assert their own identity, and a better transition to 14-18 provision. And it certainly attracts unchurched teenagers, whereas HTC's Pathfinder membership is limited to the existing church family. **We recommend exploring whether our 11-14 provision would benefit from a more independent 'grown up' flavour, and could be made more accessible to the unchurched.** This might include provision for mid-week activities.

19. In certain respects our **Youth Fellowship** programme mirrors 14-18 provision at the other churches we consulted: a main Sunday evening meeting with talks/discussion, prayer, and social and club activity; and cell groups for bible study and personal spiritual development (although whereas our cells are held immediately before the main Sunday meeting, other churches hold theirs during the week).

20. But there are key differences that make provision elsewhere feel more adult, modern and 'cool' than ours at HTC:

- Elsewhere, the main Sunday meeting generally takes the form, however loosely, of *worship* – which means that standard elements such as talks, prayer, sharing of news, participative activity etc are interspersed with singing worship songs to the accompaniment of a band, and there may be occasional informal communion meals. This provides an opportunity to express Christian commitment through actions and emotions in a way that is not available at HTC at present. Given the primacy of worship in the Christian life it seems odd that we do not offer our YF youngsters a real opportunity to worship in an appropriate style;
- Elsewhere, there is a more relaxed and informal *use of space*, with the floor or cushions to sit on rather than chairs, ability to wander in and out, a general encouragement to 'chill out', and provision of refreshments in more of a 'café' style. By contrast our style at HTC still has perhaps too much of the atmosphere of the school-room

- Elsewhere there is a much greater sense that the group and its activities are *owned and managed by the young people themselves*, with assistance from adult leaders, rather than *laid on for young people by adults*. There is active encouragement for young leaders to emerge and take charge themselves, and plenty of evidence that teenagers would prefer things to be done this way even if the standard of execution is sometimes poor by adult standards. For example, on the evening we attended the 14 -18 youth group ('LIFE') at St George's Ashted, the proceedings were led by a recent school-leaver who had come up through LIFE and is now on a gap-year placement at the church. The talk was given by a returning LIFER who is now at university in London. The band and PA team were all current LIFERs, as were the prayer and catering teams that ministered at various times. St George's senior youth minister was engaged elsewhere and took no part in the proceedings.
- Youth ministers have repeatedly stressed to us the need to make 14-18 age programmes participative, to develop young leaders from within the group, and encourage as much 'ownership' and autonomy as possible. The good effects spill over outside the main group programmes: we saw more evidence elsewhere both of spontaneous *social* activity among group members and of engagement in *Christian service*.

21. These positive features have made other churches more successful in attracting the unchurched. All the evidence suggest that youth groups grow mainly because existing members are enthusiastic about them and invite their friends. Teenagers themselves are the best ambassadors. This is what happened at HTC in the 1970s and 1980s, when the style of YF was in many ways much closer to that described above.

22. There is no magic formula but we believe we could grow YF into a much larger group if we learned these lessons. A key change would be to move away from the idea that our 14 -18s are being invited merely to belong to a 'club' and to acknowledge that they form a vital and distinct part of the worshipping church family. For them, by and large, YF **is** church and should be presented as such. We should move towards creating a *youth congregation*, characterised by *worship* as well as other activities, with a high degree of *autonomy and self-determination*, and with more opportunity for both *Christian service and social activity*. **We recommend that YF be transformed into a new youth congregation on these lines.** While the main target age should be 14-18 we should look for ways to enable 11-14s from Pathfinders and the Hub to 'grow into' it; and we should not exclude older people where it best meets their need.

23. The new youth congregation should have a high profile and receive conspicuous support from the church family. But we should bring about the transformation sensitively. Self-conscious teenagers will not all spontaneously warm to singing in public or to the extrovert 'pop culture' tone of some modern worship styles; not all will want to 'chill out' or have leadership roles thrust upon them. At Christ Church Chineham, Philip Plyming's previous parish, worship was a key element in the youth programme but was set within a very varied menu of activity week by week. We should make sure we take our young people with us. A number of transitional issues will need to be worked through, including the choice of accommodation and other support, age structure and the relationship with provision for 11 -14s, and integration with 'community' sector work.

**24. We should also continue to give equal attention to the health of our cell-group work with 14 -18s, particularly core members, which works well at present.** The evidence elsewhere is that this is as important as the large worship-orientated meetings for the development of individual Christian commitment.

25. We have sought the views of the present members of YF. Most find the present formula helpful but there is a clear appetite for a more worship-based approach (if handled gently) including both music and non-musical elements; more social/sports and off-site activity; and more emphasis on community service and evangelism. The idea that the membership itself should take more control of its own agenda received some support. We conclude that the proposals made above would be well received.

### *Work in schools*

26. There is a long history of clergy going into local day schools to lead assemblies, teach RE and so on. More recently non-ordained youth workers have shared in this work. There is an obvious opening with church schools but many other schools also welcome this support, in part because it helps them fulfil the requirement to provide for religious education when there may be few committed Christians among their own staff.

27. There are no secondary schools in the parish of Claygate. In the state sector most Claygate young people go either to Hinchley Wood School or Esher High School, while a number attend private schools elsewhere. In the past HTC youth workers have visited Hinchley Wood School and one or two private secondary schools but our present team visit only primary schools. They believe that such visits are of some value in making individual contacts and keeping up the profile of HTC but are not a prime vehicle for evangelism.

28. This is in line with the experience of the other churches we consulted. All except one have youth workers who visit local secondary and primary schools – leading assemblies, taking RE lessons, helping with clubs and sport, working with excluded children etc. They regard this as a worthwhile investment, and some devote considerable resource to it. But they see it as ancillary to the main work, which is to build a strong *church-based* programme. Their main objective in schools is to use their presence to keep the profile of the church high and attract young people to it. Their best evangelists in school are pupils who already belong to church youth groups and invite their school friends along. Church youth staff thus work primarily in support of them. **We recommend that we should continue to look for suitable opportunities to work in schools attended by young people from the Claygate area but give highest priority to developing our church-based programmes.** We have not examined the potential for work with local Scout and Guide groups (which are thriving) but it is likely that the same principles apply.

### **Getting the right senior leadership**

29. The departure of both Stuart Wright and Asa Humphreys gives us the opportunity to review the leadership of our youth programmes. Neither Stuart nor Asa have worked full-time for HTC throughout their time here because both have been released to study; and some of Stuart's time has been devoted to work with adults. Andrew Cowie is devoting some time to youth work. A single new appointment would be the minimum needed to sustain a stable level of effort in the short to medium term.

30. When HTC first employed a youth worker in the mid 1990s it was normal church practice to appoint very young people to such posts – normally ex-students who had shown enthusiasm for the work but often had little experience or training or formal theological education. The appointments were often seen as short-term stepping stones to ordination or other Christian work. As the number of youth workers employed by parishes has grown and the importance of the work has been more widely recognised, the trend has been towards employing maturer people, with more experience and sometimes more qualifications, for longer periods. The status of youth work has been raised – as indicated by the increased use of the title 'youth *minister*'. Many youth ministers overseeing work in large parishes are now in their mid or late thirties or older. They remain in post for a number of years and function as senior members of parish staff teams. **We recommend that HTC should make a senior appointment of this type exclusively to oversee our youth ministry, if it is to develop in the way we would like.** This is an essential first step; but if the work expands we should expect to employ additional paid help, as our comparator churches have. A number of churches successfully employ gap-year students to assist and we should consider this in due course.

31. The key attributes we should look for are a proven track-record in Christian youth ministry elsewhere, a balanced and mature theological understanding, and a passion for bringing young people to faith. In recent years a variety of formal training has become available. The market-leader is the Centre for Youth Ministry (CYM), a consortium of evangelical bodies which offers

degree-level courses combining academic theology with theoretical and practical aspects of youth work. Some of the courses carry JNC endorsement, which means they are recognised for secular youth work also. We found mixed views on the value of such qualifications among the youth ministers we consulted. There is agreement that good theological knowledge is important; but it can be acquired in a number of ways.

32. Formal training in youth work theory and techniques is less valued, although the point was made that courses with JNC endorsement may help church youth workers carry credibility in secular environments (schools, youth clubs etc) and give a wider perspective. One youth minister implied that the 'professionalisation' of Christian youth work ran the risk of introducing too secular an attitude when what is needed above all is sacrificial commitment. Given that courses such as those run by CYM are fairly new, and that we should look for an individual with some years' hands-on experience as our senior youth minister, it may well be that we will not find credible candidates with a neat package of qualifications. We recommend that we should regard the possession of formal qualifications as desirable, particularly in respect of theology, but not essential, especially when considering older candidates.

33. We were warned that the market for experienced youth ministers is tight: too many churches chasing too few good candidates. We should be prepared to wait for the right person.

## Annex

1. In the course of our research we have visited and spoken to staff at the following Anglican churches, all of which have good youth programmes:

- St George's, Ashtead
- St Peter's, Farnborough
- St Saviour's, Guildford
- Christ Church, Chineham
- Soul Survivor, Watford

It is notable that all these churches are evangelical in orientation. Tim Sudworth (see below) has confirmed that evangelical churches tend to have the most extensive and lively youth provision at present.

2. We have consulted the outgoing Guildford Diocesan youth adviser, Tim Sudworth, and read his book *Mission-shaped Youth*.

3. We have read *Growing up Evangelical* by Pete Ward, a former adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury on youth ministry.

4. We have consulted John Smith on the history of youth Fellowship at HTC in the 1970s and 80s.

5. We have taken the views of young people currently belonging to YF.

## **'SON OF 10AM' RESEARCH GROUP**

### **Introduction**

1. As part of HTC's vision process, a working group was set up to explore different possibilities for new adult Sunday congregations within the church. This reflected our aim to see more followers of Jesus, in that there was a recognition that without increasing provision of our most popular style of service (informal worship with children's provision at 10am), there would not be space for increased numbers of people within the church building. Studies have shown that congregations stop growing once church buildings are 80% full, which is frequently the case at HTC. A secondary goal of the group was to consider the viability of running services at other times on a Sunday, to provide for families for whom Sunday morning is not currently convenient.
2. The other aims of the church also formed part of the context in which these issues were considered. There is a suggestion that some church members might be hindered in becoming deeper followers of Jesus, because they find it hard to engage with the current 10am service style or – due to its size – feel less of a sense of responsibility to get involved. It may also be harder for some to become closer followers of Jesus in such a large congregation because it is harder for new people to be welcomed and identified.
3. The work of this group complemented that carried out by groups exploring future provision of youth ministry, and the possibilities for midweek, 'messy church'.

### **Research undertaken**

4. The working group has carried out external and internal research. Building on the discussions at the Leadership Day Away in May, we first gathered information about a large number of churches that had successfully either split their main Sunday morning service into two (or have long established services following this pattern) and/or had started new late afternoon services in an effort to increase family service provision. It became clear that virtually every church in this category had first split its main morning service before beginning an afternoon one (reflecting the fact that morning remains the preferred time to go to church for the vast majority of the population).
5. We then visited several of these churches, including Holy Trinity in Redhill, St Nick's in Sevenoaks, St Peter's Farnborough and Christ Church Clifton's plant into Badminton School, in Westbury on Trym, and had lengthy conversations with people involved in setting these congregations up. Discussions were also held with leaders of several other churches, including St George's Stamford, Christ Church Cockfosters, St George's Ashted, All Saints Lindfield and St Thomas' Fair Oak.
6. Other than the Leadership Away Day, internal research centred around a questionnaire carried out with members of the 10am congregation at HTC. Questionnaires were distributed at three successive 10am services in October, of which 192 were completed. The questionnaire explored people's preferred times for going to church, their interest in attending a new congregation, the ways in which they would like a new congregation to differ from what is currently offered and how they thought this service could best attract new members to the church. This was complemented by various ad hoc conversations with congregation members about some of the issues raised, as well as between members of the working group.

### **Broad trends from other churches**

7. It is clear from the external research carried out, that many churches of HTC's size or larger have split their main Sunday morning service into two. There are those where this pattern of provision is long established, such as Highfield in Southampton, St Andrew's Oxford, Christ Church Clifton and Christ Church Winchester. Each of these churches are slightly larger than HTC, with a longer evangelical tradition. However, a number of churches more closely reflecting HTC's size and demographics have also made this change in recent years, such as

St Nick's Sevenoaks (which was HTC's size a few years ago), Holy Trinity Redhill and St Peter's Farnborough.

8. Most of these churches (though with the notable exception of St George's Stamford and St Nick's Sevenoaks) have deliberately allowed these services to develop slightly different styles and formats, typically with an earlier informal family service, followed by a more formal service without extensive children's provision. And it was notable that one of the two churches which had chosen to provide duplicate morning services - St Nick's – was now considering allowing these services to develop different characters, in response to the different profiles of the two congregations.
9. It was also apparent that the most convenient time for families to attend church varied according to the age of the children: those with younger children preferred earlier on Sunday morning; those with older children and teenagers though sometimes preferred later on Sunday morning (or indeed the afternoon, if their children were involved in Sunday morning sport). In general though it was clear that notwithstanding timing issues, the majority of younger adults (with or without children) preferred more informal services, and the majority of older adults (generally without children living at home) preferred more formal services, and every church visited experienced attendance patterns reflecting this.
10. In each case where the main Sunday morning service had been split, significant numerical growth had been enjoyed subsequently. (For example, Holy Trinity Redhill saw its Sunday morning attendance rise by over 50% in the five years following the split of the main morning service). However, it is important to note that this tended to come primarily in the earlier, more informal service. It seemed clear that substantial investment needs to go into a more formal, later morning service if it too is to retain its vibrancy and not feel like the poor relation. Factors that would appear to contribute to the success of such a service include starting with a 'critical mass' (so that the church still feels relatively full), provision of high quality music that remains attractive to newcomers as well as long-established members, maintaining an equally high quality of preaching and continuing to generate an evangelistic ethos within the congregation.
11. As far as afternoon congregations are concerned, it is clear that this is still relatively unusual in the UK. We researched three of the only UK examples of such services – Christ Church Clifton, St George's Stamford and St Nick's Sevenoaks – each of whom had been set up without any great awareness of comparable ventures (including of each other), and attracted between 50 and 100 adults. Of the two we visited - Christ Church and St Nick's - both took place in school buildings at 4pm, with high tea afterwards. Both were also at the informal end of the range of services their church provided ('café-style' in the case of Clifton), and both were led by highly gifted and regarded young ministers. It was clear that some people had committed to these congregations because they were interested in being involved in a 'plant', or in moving with that particular leader, rather than because they particularly wanted to an afternoon church, though that was not the case at St George's (where the leadership and venue was the same as their morning services). That said, a substantial proportion of those attending at Christ Church and St Nick's did now claim to prefer this time, and their expectation was that the number in this category would rise in the future, given the anticipated increase in Sunday sport and employment.
12. In both cases however, there were question marks regarding the degree to which these services were genuinely evangelistic. The vast majority of those attending had either transferred from attending church at other times, or were those whose church attendance had become irregular on Sunday mornings (due to other commitments) but who clearly came from a churchgoing background. It was still the case in these churches that the normal time for 'enquirers' to visit church remained Sunday morning, and that they were generally more likely to turn up to a service in recognisable church building. That said, the value of providing church services in the afternoon for those who would not otherwise attend regularly was seen as a good enough basis for continuing.

13. Every one of the larger evangelical churches we researched also had an informal evening service.

### Internal Research Findings

14. 192 questionnaires were filled in, which means about half of those who regularly / semi-regularly attend HTC's 10am service participated. 35% of these were adults who normally attend with children under 18, which has traditionally represented our biggest growth area (as evidenced, for example, in the substantial recent growth in the size of Scramblers). Some 82% of respondents though stated that they attend the 10am service most weeks, so the findings (inevitably) are skewed towards those who attend most often.
15. Given the context of this research, the main purpose of the survey was to see to what extent an additional Sunday service is viable (or the two new service times if the main morning congregation was split). So although just over half (53%) said that 10am was 'ideal' for them, our interest concentrated on the proportion who would be willing or enthusiastic to attend at other times.
16. Two in five (40%) of respondents said that they would be happy (or considered it ideal) to attend at 9.30am. A further 19% said they 'could' attend at this time, making 59% for whom 9.30am was a possibility, with the figure rising to 81% among those who attend with children under 18. The proportion saying they would be happy (or considered it ideal) to attend at 11am was lower, at 26%, but a slightly higher proportion overall said they could attend at that time (62%). This was also higher among those with children (75%), though not as high as for 9.30am. Thus though the majority of respondents are very happy attending at 10am (or would be at 10.30am), it is clear that services at 9.30am or 11am would both have the potential to attract the majority of those taking part in the survey, particularly at 9.30am among families with children (HTC's key growth area). The figures are lower for 11.30am (31% could or would be happy to attend) but we did not ask about 11.15am.
17. Of the afternoon service options, the most popular time was 5pm, which 10% would be happy to attend, rising to 22% when those who could attend are added. 18% said they would be happy to or could attend a service at 4pm.
18. The most significant other findings concerned style of service. Respondents were asked how, if at all, they would like a new service to differ from what is currently offered at 10am, or how they thought a new service *ought* to differ to attract new people. Four in seven (56%) made any comment, of whom 37% said they would like the service to be more informal (who tended to be younger), 28% said they would like the service to be more traditional and 22% said it should remain as it is.
19. Specific comments within the 'informal' category included guitar led worship, having more contemporary songs (in 'blocks'), greater use of testimony or spiritual gifts, and a reduction in liturgy. Specific comments within the 'traditional' category included having more organ led worship, more hymns and less contemporary songs, less children's slots or All Age Services, a quieter, more reflective style, and greater use of liturgy. Overall, this suggests therefore that in the event of a split main morning service, there is some appetite for the services moving in different directions in terms of style, but that they shouldn't stray too far from what is currently offered, with which the majority of respondents are currently happy.
20. Other than style, the only other comment made with any frequency was that they would prefer services to be slightly shorter, a comment made particularly by older members of the congregation.
21. When asked if they would be willing to regularly attend a new service at a different time (if that service was at a time that was convenient for them), 47% said they would be (suggesting the appetite for change is there), whilst a further 38% might be.

Just under half (46%) would consider coming to more than one service a day, though in the vast majority of cases this interest was tentative (given they only said they 'might' be interested).

## Options for the Future

22. In the light of this external and internal research, the working group has identified a number of options for the future.

*Scenario A: 10am service split into a 9.30am informal service and 11.15am more formal service*

23. The timing of the first service would be necessitated by the duration of the 8am service (which lasts about an hour) and the minimum set-up time the stewards and worship group would require for a subsequent service. The same issues apply for a third morning service; we do not believe a 9.30am family service could be guaranteed to be shorter than 75 minutes, which would make 11.15am the earliest a subsequent service could take place.

24. The 9.30am service would offer full children's provision, and follow the existing pattern of children's talks and all age services. Compared to the current 10am service, it would be allowed to become less liturgical, include more contemporary worship songs (which could be concentrated in longer 'blocks' of singing), encourage more lay involvement in leading and preaching, and adopt a more flexible service structure. Greater use of multi-media and interactive teaching methods could be encouraged and there could be more opportunity for testimony and extemporary prayer. For both services though, we would not envisage substantial changes to the length, style or focus of sermons currently given at 10am and would ordinarily anticipate the same sermon being given at both services.

25. The 11.15am service would be shorter (around an hour), with limited or no provision of children's groups and no children's talks, baptisms or all age services. It would be slightly more liturgical than the current 10am service (though not substantially so), typically following the 'Common Worship' model, and would be quieter and more reflective. There would be a greater proportion of traditional hymns (and use of the organ), though a balance with contemporary songs would be maintained. There would also be an opportunity for the use of a choral style group.

26. Both services would offer coffee afterwards, with the possibility of more regular congregational lunches after the 11.15 service. Those attending at 11.15 could also be encouraged to have coffee before the service.

27. We have identified the following points in favour of this option:

- (i) Evidence from other churches suggests there can be a galvanising effect of change which can have a substantial benefit in terms of congregational enthusiasm and involvement. That in turn can generate growth as more people commit to come regularly, invite others along and welcome and encourage newcomers.
- (ii) It would create substantial spare capacity in both services to accommodate this growth.
- (iii) It is clear that a sizeable minority of those currently attending the 10am service would like the service to become more informal, whilst another sizeable minority would like it to become more traditional. We also suspect that many of those who did not make such a comment, are not in fact resolutely committed to the status quo (certainly few explicitly indicated that they were). Therefore we believe that a slight differentiation of the two services, as outlined above, would please more people than it would disappoint and may lead to more regular attendance or increased commitment.
- (iv) Given the likely demand for an 11.15am service that was slightly more traditional and slightly shorter, especially from older members of the church, we anticipate both services would be popular, whilst also providing substantial spare capacity for future growth.
- (v) Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many of those currently attending Evening Prayer would rather attend church in the morning, if a more traditional hymn-based service was available. In particular, we are aware of the reluctance of many older

members of the congregation to come out in the evening, given the choice. If this were indeed the case (which future survey research could determine) this would provide the opportunity to allow an evening service to develop in a different direction. For example, there is evidence of some potential demand for a more informal evening or late afternoon service (see Section 6).

- (vi) Each of these two new morning services would be less 'busy' than 10am, given they would be trying to do less things. This would make the task of service leading more straightforward, opening up the opportunity for greater lay leadership. The services would also have clearer 'identities' and would offer members of HTC greater choice.
- (vii) There is a widespread perception that the 10am congregation is not as welcoming and friendly as it could be, due to its size. It is harder to spot new or irregular attenders and some visitors can find it overwhelming.
- (viii) Smaller services (with clearer identities) could also help congregational engagement and ownership. This could manifest itself in a variety of ways including a greater willingness to chat to neighbours and to become involved in running services and other church ministries. Opportunities for contact between church staff and congregation members would also be increased.
- (ix) Families with young children may find 9.30am easier than 10am. Those attending at 11.15am would have greater opportunity to prepare dinner beforehand.

28. However, a number of points against could also be raised:

- (i) There are undoubtedly some people who like the current time of the main morning service, as well as the current balance between informal and traditional. There are also others who enjoy the buzz of a full church, which may in the short term be diminished.
- (ii) There will be those who prefer the style of the 11.15am service who would miss the involvement of children (though others would welcome this change).
- (iii) More volunteers would be needed to run services and in provision of music.
- (iv) There would be implications for car-parking, with cars leaving / arriving at the same time.
- (v) The music group for a 9.30am service would have less set-up time than at present.
- (vi) As in all churches, some people find change difficult (though others find it energising).

*Scenario B: 10am congregation split into identical 9.30 and 11.15am services*

29. This would be please those who want the balance of the current service to remain exactly as it is.

However, it would have the following disadvantages:

- (i) The numbers of people wanting to come at 11.15am might not be high enough to make it viable (and to thus free up enough space for growth at 9.30am) without the incentive of a more traditional style.
- (ii) The findings of our survey suggest significant support for differentiation.
- (iii) Services would remain very busy, with the same pressure of time, the same complex identities, and the same difficulties for lay leadership.

*Scenario C: Current 10am service unchanged*

30. Given that numbers attending at 8am and 6.30pm have not grown substantially for many years, it is difficult to see how – with the 10am service full - the church could continue to grow. The many other opportunities presented by Scenario A would also be lost.

*Scenario D: 10am congregation and new late afternoon family congregation*

31. This would add provision for those currently unable to regularly attend church on Sunday mornings, but our congregational survey suggests demand would be insufficient to free up substantial spare capacity at 10am. It would also require duplication of children's provision without necessarily attracting sufficient numbers of children to make this worthwhile. This is supported by the evidence from the larger churches we researched, all of whom split their main morning service before pursuing this option.

### **The viability of a future late afternoon congregation**

32. It was clear that the two churches we visited who had begun afternoon congregations were in a more advanced stage of their development than HTC. Christ Church Clifton has well over 1000 members and many of them commute some distance to church. Given the number of people they had to draw from and that many of their members live in Westbury upon Trym, it is not surprising they have managed to attract enough people to make the service viable. St Nick's Sevenoaks is also now substantially larger than HTC and they decided to split the main morning service several years before they then began their afternoon service (i.e. they saw this as the more obvious short-term solution). Christ Church Clifton also has two main morning services so these two examples would seem to suggest that this also represents a more viable first initiative for HTC, given our current size of membership.
33. This is supported by the evidence from St George's Stamford, who likewise introduced an afternoon service after they had split their morning service. Their afternoon congregation differed in being more aimed at children (with a 'play spot' during the service) and being held in church, but like Christ Church and St Nick's they had not seen any new Christians specifically through this service.
34. However, there is clearly already some demand for a late afternoon / early evening informal service at HTC, that suggests this could be realistic in the future. The survey findings also suggest that if any future youth congregation was open to the Pathfinder age group, it could provide an alternative partial solution to the sport-on-Sunday problem (though care would need to be taken that this did not deter older teenagers). Indeed given the age at which children start playing Sunday sport is about 9, it would thus only be for the 9-11 age group that we did not offer alternative provision, in that scenario.

### **Conclusion**

35. The working group had as its principle aim to increase provision of the type of service which has proved most successful in attracting newcomers (Christians *or* enquirers). We recognise that this is essential if the church is going to continue to grow.
36. Our external research has indicated that most churches larger than HTC have in the first instance sought to do this by providing two main Sunday morning services (i.e. in addition to a service at 8am). These have also tended to prove more successful if the two services have distinct identities. The earlier of the two is universally regarded as the most suitable time for families with young children. Neither of the two churches visited with afternoon services began these without first splitting their main morning service (and did so with a substantially larger overall membership than HTC currently enjoys).
37. We therefore believe that introducing two main Sunday morning services, allowed to develop slightly different characters, will create substantial spare capacity in each, yet both with considerable potential for growth. We further hope that given the contrasting preferences of many current 10am members (as indicated in our survey findings) freeing these services to develop separately could substantially increase congregation enthusiasm and engagement. If many of those currently attending Evening Prayer were willing to transfer allegiance to a new 11.15am service, this would also create the opportunity for a different style of evening service (that might have greater potential for growth) and for earlier FAQ events.
38. We recognise too though that the most members are already broadly happy with what is offered at 10am and so its successors should maintain much of the current balance. We also recognise that the success of this solution will be optimised if current 10am attenders divide relatively evenly between the two new services, and that for this to happen, both services would require substantial levels of clergy investment (especially the later service). We also recognise that both services would need to remain firmly evangelistic - and seeker-friendly - in character.
39. Though there is much preparation that would need to be done, we believe that it is feasible for both services to begin in Autumn 2008.

## Appendix A - Implications for 6.30pm service provision

### Introduction

1. In discussing the recommendations of the report on 'son of 10am', the working group recognised that it raised questions for the existing provision at 6.30pm. Informal conversations and anecdotal evidence suggested that a number of people who currently attend the 6.30 service were likely to prefer the enhanced provision at 11.15 (this included some older people who would prefer to go to church in daylight). Indeed, such a movement would contribute to a critical mass for the 11.15 service and create a sense of occasion which would be much valued. In the light of this likely trend and other considerations, the group felt that some preliminary discussions on the 6.30 service provision were important.

### Options

2. Although full research has yet to take place, the group was aware of three broad options
3. The first option is to maintain the 6.30 service in its current pattern. This has the advantage of not having to face change, but on further examination it does not appear an attractive option. The 6.30 service would effectively be in competition with the 11.15 service, and both services would be weaker as a result. Moreover, if we pursued this option the result would be an unbalanced service pattern which comprised three services at the more traditional end of the spectrum and only one at the more informal end. This does not appear to be a sustainable solution given the vision for the church to offer a balance of worship styles accessible to all.
4. The second option is to withdraw the provision a 6.30 service and focus all efforts on the three morning services. The group was firmly of the view that this was not an option that should be pursued and that an evening service should be maintained. The reason for this was that at present a number of people go to the service not particularly because of the liturgical style but because it is at a convenient time of day. This trend is likely to continue and even grow; given the existence of a youth congregation at Emmanuel Hall it is probable that a number of parents with teenagers would come to an evening service while their children were worshipping elsewhere. To withdraw evening service provision would be a short-sighted move.
5. The third option is to offer provision for informal, low-key evening worship with a flexible and relaxed feel. The group envisaged that such a service could appeal to a number of different groups
  - those helping with children's work in the morning
  - those whose work / family / children's commitments rule out regular Sunday morning attendance
  - those who have children at the youth congregation
  - younger adults who prefer to come to church in the evening
  - those who wish to explore leading music and worship but in a less pressured context than Sunday morning
  - those who enjoy a more relaxed informality than the current 10am service
  - those who on occasions miss the Sunday morning services and would like an accessible alternative in the evening
  - those currently in the START group
  - those who moved on from Messy Church
6. Such a move would also be consistent with the practice of other larger churches with the Sunday morning pattern we envisage moving towards. Indeed, every other church with a membership comparable with HTC has some form of more informal evening worship provision. It would also tap into the potential demand indicated by the findings of the 10am questionnaire that 46% of attenders would consider going to another service on a Sunday.
7. It would also create the opportunity for a more discursive and interactive approach to learning from the Bible, possibly delivered in small-groups.

**Conclusion**

8. The group believes that further consultation is required before final plans are drawn up. This should involve consultation among the existing 6.30 congregation to ascertain the numbers who would prefer to worship in the morning at a new 11.15 service or continue to worship in the evening.
9. Nevertheless, the group believes that there is considerable potential in the 6.30 service, and that the possible changes would complement well the developments elsewhere. Further research would help ascertain the exact nature of this potential and help plan for the ongoing growth of evening service provision.