

The Church of England in Wythenshawe

From September 2014, five parishes in the Wythenshawe area will embark on a new pattern of working together. This is a new grouping and, although there will not be many obvious differences in church life, there are some important changes to the way we will relate to each other and work together. Here we hope to answer some of the questions that have arisen from this new relationship.

Is St Michael's joining the Wythenshawe Team?

The legal answer to this question is no. The benefice of St Michael's, Lawton Moor will remain distinct and separate from the parishes that make up the Wythenshawe Team. However in many ways St Michael's will benefit from being connected to the Wythenshawe Team, just as the Team will benefit from its new connection with St Michael's.

What is the Wythenshawe Team?

The Wythenshawe Team is the group of four parishes that form the Benefice of Wythenshawe. The four parishes are: St Luke, Benchill; St Martin with St Francis, Wythenshawe; St Richard of Chichester, Wythenshawe (Peel Hall) and William Temple, Wythenshawe. They have worked together as the Team for 15 years.

So how will St Michael's be linked?

The new priest-in-charge at St Michael's will also be a Team Vicar within the Wythenshawe Team (with particular responsibility for the parish of St Martin with St Francis). Sharing a parish priest will require some experimentation at first as to how time and energy is spent between parishes but the wider ministry Team are committed to ensuring both churches and congregations receive appropriate ministry.

Who are the ministry Team?

The creation of this new group of parishes brings with it a large team of lay and ordained ministers. The stipendiary clergy of the Wythenshawe Team will also be licensed as Assistant Curates at St Michael's and in time the Readers will also be licensed across the five parishes. This means that the five parishes of our new group will have a ministry team consisting of four stipendiary priests, one OLM priest and two Readers, as well as two very active retired ministers: one OLM and one Reader.

Will the PCCs still exist?

Yes. The four parishes of the Wythenshawe Team and the Parish of St Michael's remain distinct parishes and each have their own Parochial Church Council. But the Team Council will play a valuable role across the churches in coordinating a shared vision for mission.

What is the Team Council?

When the Wythenshawe Team was formed, the Team Council was set up as the coordinating body for a shared mission and ministry across the parishes. Although the PCCs retain most of the authority, the Team Council has a role in encouraging and coordinating ministry. At its Spring meeting this year, the Team Council unanimously agreed to invite St Michael's to appoint two representatives to the Team Council.

What will the new group of parishes be called?

This is the question with no easy answer! The new grouping of the five parishes is neither a new Team, nor a Group ministry. And yet it is a team and a group and a cluster. It is a new relationship that will require patience and experimentation. The new partnerships need to be nurtured carefully and not just at clergy and minister level. The five congregations share ministry across Wythenshawe together.