

The transformational change will significantly impact our existing churches and congregations. The challenge will be moving from a traditional church led by a Vicar to a **refreshed** Worship Community led by a Local Missional Leader and team with the oversight and help of the clergy in the local Hub and wider Parish.

All clergy are working with their churches and congregations to identify potential Local Missional Leaders and those who might be part of a LML team to help in the renewal and refreshment journey for these traditional Worship Communities.

Together with the Diocesan Church Growth Team and other relevant Officers we are developing a new 'EQUIP' stream to run hand-in-hand with other training schemes to enable, encourage and strengthen emerging lay leaders.

The radical change will be in the future role of our clergy who will need to be released to lead, equip, resource and help the new Local Missional Leaders and teams to refresh and grow Worship Communities. They will also apply this help to the new 'fresh' Worship Communities. Of course, clergy will continue to provide sacramental ministry appropriately. We will inevitably reduce the number of services that require a priest to lead the service. We will maintain ample opportunity for good and varied worship but it will not all rely solely on a priest.

WHAT WILL STOP US from accomplishing this vision?

Fear, church politics, finance, buildings, people ... and other things that wake me up at night! It is very difficult to work out how to engage in significant change and we often reject and fight it because we prefer the safety of the status quo.

WHAT WILL HELP US to accomplish this vision?

Prayer and obedience. Nothing is impossible for God. Jesus said he would build his church so we just need to do the work he gave us – making and growing disciples – and watch things grow. Love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control will also help – especially on my part.

STEPPING ON

These are challenging times! I encourage you to pray for us and to engage with the Transforming Wigan movement locally or wider in the Diocese.

Revd Tim Montgomery, Director of Mission
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Reviving the spiritual heart of Wigan

REPORT TO LIVERPOOL DIOCESAN SYNOD. March 5th, 2016.

“The prime objective is to turn around the mission and financial strength of the Church in Wigan.

The secondary objective is to transfer the learning and good practice to other parts of the Diocese.”

‘Transforming Wigan’ project doc

We are just starting the second year of the *Transforming Wigan* movement.

Year one was a year of prayer, listening and discussion as well as a lot of hard work by many people as we have taken time to seek the vision and set out the strategy to see the spiritual heart of Wigan transformed by God through His church in the power of His Spirit.

The specific objectives/outcomes were set in the project bid document 2014.

These focus on addressing those three well known downers of broken, ageing and declining things and trying to set some targets that might get us on the up.

Simply putting a plan together to reach a few targets might seem like a good idea but it was clear that, on the whole, we had no real sense of vision ... and maybe even any confidence, hope and faith that things could be different. My first task was to engage us in a vision for a better future. This dove-tailed with the 'Fit for Mission' movement in the Diocese. By September we arrived at:

THE VISION ... for many disciples of Jesus.

Our focus is on **making and growing disciples**. We have a One-in-Ten Vision **to see 10% of people in Wigan on a discipleship journey with Jesus by 2022.**

This means a range of people at the various stages of discipleship from exploring to engaging to enrolling.

"The plural of disciple is church."

Alison Morgan

Our three key aims are to **renew the faith** of the disciples of Jesus in Wigan, to **re-orientate Church** in Wigan to make the good news of Jesus known in word and deed and, hence, to **revive the spiritual heart** of Wigan through the church of disciples living out their faith every day in the power of the Holy Spirit

THE STRATEGY ... to make and grow disciples of Jesus.

Our strategy focuses on **gathering the passionate disciples**, equipping us to deepen our faith and serve with our gifts. We will **germinate prayer** and

"Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you."

Dallas Willard

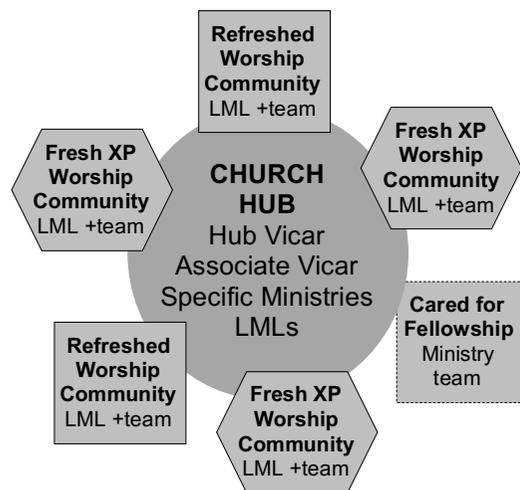
establish a new 'House of Prayer' network. We will **grow leaders** of every type to enable us to grow existing and new Worship Communities. In all of this we will endeavour to **give love and care** especially to our older church members who will find much of this very hard to embrace. *We have to make significant change in how we do church in the future and we will try our hardest to help everyone engage in the journey as well as we can.*

THE GOALS FOR 2016 ... working together as one church.

In 2016 we will work on establishing ourselves as **One Church in Wigan** with several **Church Hubs** growing existing and new Worship Communities. We will set up the **House of Prayer network** and embed **Deeper Discipleship** through specific teaching and serving opportunities. We will identify and begin to equip **50 potential missional leaders** who will be recognising a call to be involved in leadership in some way in our existing and new Worship Communities. We will also plant a **Youth Hub** to better engage young people with following Jesus.

Church Hubs of Worship Communities

Within the Diocesan vision and strategy to create 'a bigger church to make a bigger difference' we plan to connect all our existing and new Worship Communities together as **One Church in Wigan**. To structure this for growth and fruitfulness we will establish several **Church Hubs** with a variety of **Worship Communities** with different characteristics.



A Hub will be established more on **relationship** than on church buildings or current boundaries. A lot of buildings will be needed and most boundaries will need reviewing, but both will serve the mission purpose as we proceed.

A Church Hub will have a **Hub Leader** and an **Associate**. The core Hub Team will comprise these two leaders with the **Local Missional Leader (LML)** from each Worship Community in the Hub as well as **Specific Ministers** appointed for particular roles across the Hub and possibly also across the whole parish.

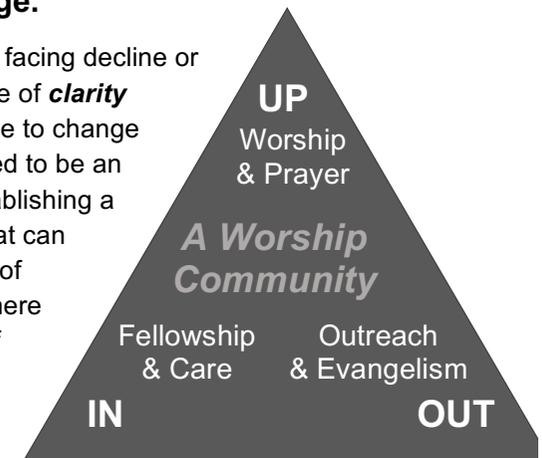
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES going forward

This is a transformational movement. Some jaws will drop at the scale of the change required and others will find themselves strangely warmed! It has been so helpful to have Ian Woods – a Leadership Change consultant from 'Emmaus Leadership' – working alongside me with individual leaders, groups and teams to engage in the first steps forward in leading change and to keep us aligned to the difficult but necessary direction of travel towards accomplishing the vision.

Our vision and strategy is one of **hope and future growth**. However, to assure this growth we have to do two things. First is to identify the existing churches – our traditional Worship Communities – that can be **refreshed** and resourced for making and growing disciples. Secondly, we have to identify potential places and people-groups where we can plant **fresh** expressions of Worship Communities.

Clarity, Capacity and Courage.

For our existing traditional churches facing decline or growth, there needs to be a measure of **clarity** among the members that things have to change and focus on growth. There will need to be an assessment of the **capacity** for establishing a Local Missional Leadership team that can begin to refresh the key ingredients of church (the 'up', 'in' and 'out') and there will need to be a determined level of **courage** among the existing church members to pray and work together for this refreshed future.



Where we have a church that cannot establish the clarity or capacity for refreshing and growing into the future we have to find a way to care well for that fellowship within the overall growth and care plan going forward.

A **Local Missional Leadership** team may be easy to identify – some of these leaders may already hold a licensed or authorised office – but in many cases they will need to be recognised (and persuaded!) as gifted for this purpose.