

COME WITH US ON THE JOURNEY
BIMC Conference 23 April 2017
Script

Powerpoint Slide (PPT) – READING by:

163:11a. God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world.

PRESENTER: *[Start by reading the Mission Prayer]*

PPT – Mission Prayer

God, where will your spirit lead today? Help US to be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant us the courage to risk something new and to be a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

In 2014, congregations were asked to join us on a 3 year journey to participate in LCM, or, Leading Congregations in Mission.

[Talk about what you thought and felt when the idea came about to do LCM in the British Isles. Were you a part of it? If so, describe that journey. If not, describe how you sense a call to enter into that journey through www.missionalleaders.org and with the Congregational Support Minister.]

Here are a few of the ideas that have come from the LCM trainings that we will continue to keep central as we move forward in mission in the British Isles:

PPT – There are 3 fundamental spiritual disciplines for mission

PPT – The Mission Prayer

(Describe how the Mission Prayer has helped congregations move forward in mission.)

PPT – Dwelling in the Word

A word or phrase that stands out.

1. Something you'd like to explore further.
2. Is there an missional invitation in this reading.

(Describe how Dwelling in the Word has helped congregations move forward in mission.)

PPT – Sharing in the Round

(Describe how Sharing in the Round has helped congregations move forward in mission.)

PPT - READING:

162: 1 b. Listen to the Voice that echoes across the eons of time and yet speaks anew in this moment. Listen to the Voice, for it cannot be stilled, and it calls you once again to the great and marvelous work of building the peaceable kingdom, even Zion, on behalf of the One whose name you claim.

2a. Listen carefully to your own journey as a people, for it is a sacred journey and it has taught you many things you must know for the journey yet to come.

b. Listen to its teachings and discover anew its principles. Do not yearn for times that are past, but recognize that you have been given a foundation of faithful service, even as you build a foundation for what is yet to be.

PRESENTER:

Being FULLY AWAKE is the first part of the Mission Prayer. Being awake, alert, open, conscious... seeing more clearly, listening more carefully, breathing more deeply. It is about waking up to God's nudges, God's Spirit, God's gentle and sometimes even harsh blowing wind calling us into a new reality, a new future, a future with God!!!

Said in other words, being AWAKE is about seeing, recognizing, and contemplating:

PPT – “What is God up to???” It’s about seeing the possibilities of a future with God!!!

Spiritual practices or disciplines are how we WAKE up to God’s action in our world and around us. It’s “BEING” before “DOING”.

I want to share with you a few ways some of the congregations and pastor leadership teams from LCM have been WAKING to God’s invitation to new possibilities:

PLACE	ACTIVITY
Bournemouth	Meeting regularly together as a group and using spiritual practices it has brought them closer together as a community. They experience church in living rooms, in the countryside, and by the sea. Being open to the spirit has led them to events at Dunfield and helped to start ‘Supper in the Smoke’ in London.
Clay Cross	Has an active leadership team that meets once a month. Spiritual practices have transformed the worships and has led to new activities such as the once a month relational worship and the BeanStill. BeanStill, spelt bean and still, is a time for people to come together and chat on a Wednesday morning. Then at lunchtime they share in a meal of baked beans on toast together. This activities feeds both the soul and the stomach! Then afterwards there is an optional walk too!
Enfield	Leadership Team meets every other month to share in a delicious meal together and open themselves to where the Spirit is leading the congregation. Members of the team feel comfortable sharing their ideas. From those meetings, there is an idea in the making for a Peace Café which will reach out to their local community. If you want to know more about that, talk to Ann! Enfield have also been transformed by Spiritual Practices in their worships as they share informally and grow together spiritually.
Kington	Kington’s worships feel like one big spiritual practice. As they meet in the round, members and friends feel comfortable sharing at every moment, especially when they feel led by the spirit. The spirit they encounter at the Kington worship is then taken out into their communities and they discover what it is like to be a Community of Christ truly in the community.
Leicester	In Leicester they listened the prompting of the spirit to start a coffee morning on Wednesday mornings. Several members of the congregation gather together with tea and biscuits and welcome anyone who comes in the door. This ministry has reached out to an old friend and neighbor of the church who now visits regularly on a Wednesday. Leicester is also buzzing with the involvement of a young family in the church who were invited by the prompting of the Spirit, to say ‘Would you like to come to church?’
Nuneaton	In Nuneaton, their gatherings are continually transformed by Spiritual Practices and the essence of Shared Leadership is truly being lived out. It has been amazing to see the development of leaders and how they are responding to the call. Each leadership meeting begins with a time of connecting and spiritual practice which helps the team to grow stronger together and to listen out for the spirit. Nuneaton are constantly listening and looking for ways they can respond to the needs of the community and how they reach out to more and more people both within and outside the church walls.
Penllergaer	The introduction of a Leadership Team and Spiritual practices has transformed the congregation. The team continually listen out for where the spirit is leading them. This has led to more social gatherings, the reintroduction of Sunday School followed by a relational service once a month, and a deep desire to connect with their local community. When the days are warmer, the team are already planning on ‘Walking the Neighbourhood’ so they can reach out to more people in their area.
Stockport	In Stockport, engaging in LCM led to the introduction of #InstaGod. #InstaGod happens once a month and originally was aimed at young people and was a chance for them to informally learn about God and engage in Spiritual Practices. Since then #InstaGod has reached out to youth, young adults, and even the young at heart. It has led to opportunities to get to know each other better, an informal way to learn about God, and a way they can respond to God

	in their lives. It is about friendships, faith, and response.
Sutton-in-Ashfield	Through engaging in LCM Sutton started a once a month gathering around the table to share in Spiritual Practices and talk about continuing and new ideas for the congregation. This meeting allows for the spirit to breathe and to bring members closer together. The welcoming atmosphere in Sutton is bringing new people into church and their community.

READING: (PPT)

162: 7 d. The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.

PRESENTER:

Community of Christ is touching countless lives. Members and friends are transforming lives as teachers, doctors, parents, students, community organizers, ministers, volunteers, peacemakers, children. The list goes on and on.

But we face many challenges:

- Decline in membership
- Reduction in people willing or able to take on responsibilities in the Mission Centre and congregations
- Limited finances to support current structures
- Maintenance of properties
- Reduction in employed staff
- Few active 25-45 year olds

Take a few moments to share with someone near you:

PPT –

- In what ways have you experienced these trends in your local congregations or group?
- Are there other trends you have experienced which may challenge our current understanding of what it means to be and do church in the British Isles?

[Give opportunity for people to talk in groups, and then share some of the other trends that were mentioned in their groups.]

These trends have led to some essential questions in regards to mission for Community of Christ -- around the world as well as for us here in the British Isles:

- What does mission mean in a 2017 context?
- How do we support local congregations and groups who are trying to faithfully respond to the question: “God, where is your Spirit leading us today?”
- How do we faithfully respond to the challenges in front of us?
- How will we address the loss of young adults in our activities, and what does it mean to be an active young adult?
- Who is currently seeking and responding to Christ’s call through the message and invitation of Community of Christ, and how do we equip ourselves to form these eager disciples?
- What opportunities lie ahead of us, and how do we best prepare to live into them?

READING: (PPT)

165: 1c. Lovingly invite others to experience the good news of new life in community with Christ. Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them.

165: 1f. Continue to align your priorities with local and worldwide church efforts to move the initiatives forward. Additional innovative approaches to coordinating congregational life and supporting groups of disciples and seekers are needed to address mission opportunities in a changing world.

PRESENTER:

Here are some fundamental shifts in thinking. Not that either of these ways of thinking is necessarily good or bad, but how would we be and do church *differently* if we were to make these small shifts in thinking. See if any of these resonate with you:

[Work with these two questions: **1) How many of you have ever heard mission being described this way, as...? 2) What if we shifted our perspective just a bit, in order to...?**]

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What I'm going to do today for God? (my agenda)• Plant seeds of the Gospel in people's lives (I change lives).• Convince others to be baptized (baptism is the destination).• Know more about God (knowledge).• My/our plans for the future of the church.• "What would Jesus do?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See what God is up to and ask: "How am I going to be a part of it?" (God's agenda)• Become soil where seeds of the Spirit can grow (I help God transform lives).• Invite others into authentic relationship and community (baptism as entry into a life of discipleship and journey with God in community).• Know more God (knowledge and experience)• Discern God's vision for creation and our role in realizing that vision, making it real.• "What type of relationship is Jesus inviting me/us into right now and what will my/our response be to that invitation?" (being BEFORE doing)
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It is precisely some of these fundamental shifts in paradigm that have led the leadership team to propose to you today the following philosophy as a way forward through the uncertainties of the challenges before us, a way to define where we place our focus, time, energy, resources, and talents, as we journey with each other towards a missional future in the British Isles, a future with God.

PPT - WE'RE PROPOSING TO STEP OUT OF TRADITIONAL MODELS OF BEING AND DOING CHURCH AND INTO A NEW FUTURE WITH GOD.

The following 3 slides present the model with 3 different images. Hopefully one of these images will connect with you:

PPT – Circle presentation of third, third, third

- Congregational support
- New entry points
- New expressions of ministry (ways of being and doing church)

PPT – Triangular presentation of third, third, third

- Maintenance of what works
- Experimentation
- Integration

PPT – Columns third, third, third

- Things we will continue to do... but less of it, to give room for:
- Things we will start doing... and more of it
- Things we will end up doing... as much as possible

1. WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO:
 - a. Continue to support missional congregational activities, programs, and gatherings.
 - b. Promote LCM principles and process.
 - i. Introduce LCM to the congregations that did not participate in the training.
 - ii. Help LCM congregations start the “experiment” phase of the LCM process and support emerging ministries that come out of those experiments.
 - c. Support Leadership Teams and Pastors in their willingness to lead their congregation in mission through administrative and spiritual support.
2. But we will have to find where we will do less of somethings, in order to: START DOING:
 - a. Entry-point experiments
 - i. If we are to respond faithfully to where God’s Spirit is leading us, we need to be willing and ready to step into a new future with God. This future may require us to look for new entry-points to minister with those whose hearts God’s Spirit is already stirring. Of course God’s Spirit is alive and working in our congregations and locally with us in our communities... **[PPT]** but entry-point focus puts its energy on *how to go deeper to where God is calling us in non-traditional ways*. To quote star trek, it’s the mission to “boldly go where no member has gone before.”
 - ii. **[PPT]** – An entry-point is:
 - An experiment.
 - Intention experiment *outside the walls* of the congregation or house church.
 - It’s not having an agenda beyond, yet “living into God’s vision for us (all of us) and for Creation.”
 - It’s openness to let God form us into new ways of being and doing “church”.
 - It’s intentional positioning of Community of Christ in the world. We have a REALLY GOOD MESSAGE... and we’ve worked HARD for it!
 - It’s “Minding the Gap” between the realities of our world, and the future to which God is calling us.
3. WHAT WE WILL END UP DOING – and do AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF IT:
 - a. This is the unknown. We have glimpses of it, but we cannot completely describe what it will look like.
 - b. It’s our ultimate desire and hope... to reflect the image of God, to be like Jesus.
 - c. To make God’s vision REAL (realize it!)... among us, in front of us, for us.
 - d. It’s to be a blessing of God’s love and peace.
 - e. **PPT** - It’s ZION – communities of JOY, HOPE, LOVE, PEACE.

You might ask: But WHY?

Well, in addition to the challenges mentioned early in this presentation:

- PPT - WE BELIEVE GOD IS AT WORK IN AND AROUND US... throughout history, presently, and into the future!!! We’ve been addressed personally by God in the most recently revelations:
 - “Community of Christ, a divine vision is set before you.” 165
 - “All who actively engage...” 164
 - “Community of Christ, your name... is your identity and calling.” 163
 - “Listen, O people of the restoration...” 162
 - “Lift up your eyes and fix them on a place...” 161
- PPT –
 - WE HAVE A WONDERFUL MESSAGE THAT RESONATES WITH PEOPLE BECAUSE WE’VE WORKED AT IT FOR QUITE A WHILE, LETTING GOD MOLD AND SHAPE US.
 - WE DO NOT SEE OURSELVES AS IN TRANSITION... WE ARE THE TRANSITION. WE ARE GOD’S AGENTS OF CHANGE. WE ARE THE VESSELS, CHOOSING TO CARRY GOD’S LIGHT AND LIFE INTO THE WORLD.

- WHAT LIGHTS YOUR FIRE? WHAT'S YOUR PASSION? Is it: History, Education, Campaigning, Changing the World? THEN STEP OUT INTO IT.
- PPT –
 - o BRINGING ALL OF THIS TOGETHER BECOMES THE NEW THING THAT WE DIDN'T ENVISION UNTIL WE STARTED THIS PROCESS.

So, here are some things:

WE'LL CONTINUE DOING... but less of it... some things:

WE'LL START DOING... but more of it... and

THIS IS WHAT WE'LL END UP DOING... as much as possible

Listen to this scripture to prepare us for what we will do less of, in order to start doing more of what is needed for the journey ahead...

READING: (PPT)

165: 6 a. Beloved Community of Christ, do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love, and share as Zion: those who strive to be visibly one in Christ, among whom there are no poor or oppressed.

LESS AND MORE SCRIPT

Continue – So, we'll continue doing things like the news update and rise magazine

Start – but start using more Website/social media (facebook, twitter, etc.) – different ways to share our story with more people.

Continue – Sermons – it's always important to listen to another person's ideas about God's vision for the world.

Start – But we're going to start have more discussions in church – discerning God's will for us... TOGETHER.

Sermons are the model of a people with a prophet, which is GOOD! We are that people! But we are more and more becoming a prophetic people who discern together God's will!!!

INTERRUPTOR 1

WAIT A MINUTE!!! Are you saying we're not going to have any more camps and retreats at Dunfield?

PRESENTER: Of course we're going to keep having camps and retreats... but we are going to start looking for ways for Dunfield to serve MORE as a centre for personal, community, and inter-faith PEACEbuilding for Community of Christ and others pursuing peace in the British Isles!

INTERRUPTOR 1

But what about youth groups?

PRESENTER: Yep – we're gonna have youth groups, too... and maybe even MORE youth groups... but more developing disciples in those youth groups, and MORE emphasis on families and their physical and spiritual needs, and how we can respond to them.

INTERRUPTOR 2:

Well, church is where I tell my story and share my testimony! I don't want to lose that!

PRESENTER: KEEP doing that. Our story is how we share who we are, where we come from, and where we're going. But now we're going to spend MORE time doing this with friends and other people, too, and even help them identify God's activity in THEIR stories, as well!!!

INTERRUPTOR 3:

Wait a minute. So we can keep taking the offering and giving by standing order? But we might be spending our time looking more at new ways of supporting mission? And talking to people about a whole life of stewardship and generosity which includes their:

TIME, TALENTS, TREASURE, and TESTIMONY???

PRESENTER: You've got it!

INTERRUPTOR 3:

And we'll keep taking care of our buildings and using them for mission, but we might spend MORE of our time, efforts, resources, and such, look at the needs of the community and how to respond to those needs? MORE community?

PRESENTER: GREAT idea!!! Yes. And we're going to continue to be crazy pastors who work endlessly and tirelessly as congregational spiritual leaders, preparing services and responding to needs of members, but we're going to do a bit less of that now and spend a little more time coordinating leadership teams and working on shared leadership models so that we can grow mission and develop disciples while doing it!

And we will always strive to live the enduring principles within our church community, on Sundays, at camps and at retreats, but we're going to take some of that time and put it into finding CONCRETE ways to live those principles out in our surrounding communities!!!

- **INTERRUPTOR 1:** You mean MORE diversity???
- **INTERRUPTOR 2:** MORE worth of persons??
- **INTERRUPTOR 3:** MORE grace?
- **INTERRUPTOR 2:** MORE helping people know they are CALLED???
- **INTERRUPTOR 1:** MORE responsible choices?
- **PRESENTER:** Yep! And MORE pursuit of peace??
- **INTERRUPTOR 2:** MORE sacredness of the creation??? MORE blessings of community?

PRESENTER: Yes... less of some other things, so we can make space for MORE of the things that will continue our journey towards God's vision for creation!!! And:

- COFFEE MORNINGS ARE A GREAT PLACE TO START
- YOUTH GROUPS ARE GREAT PLACES TO START
- WHAT OTHER IDEAS ARE GREAT PLACES TO START? AND WHERE CAN WE LOOK OUTSIDE OF THE CONGREGATIONS AS PLACES TO START?
 - Where are people yearning to know and feel what we are becoming in Community of Christ, and how can we MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE to bring that vision to the world?

PRESENTER: We will continue dialoguing about how our congregations/groups can respond to the mission initiatives, but start EXPERIMENTING with INNOVATIVE ways to:

- Abolish poverty
- Pursue Peace (We're going to START this afternoon!)
- Develop disciples
- Invite people to Christ – NOT church – to CHRIST!
- Experience congregations/groups/new ideas in mission!

We'll continue spiritual practices in our churches... but we'll also start doing them with our spouses, children, family, friends, colleagues, strangers, enemies, seekers, and people in need... MORE practices.

And Sacraments!!! Giving those sacraments more emphasis... meaning, freshness, symbolism, and transformative purpose in the British Isles context. MORE SACRAMENTS!!!

Apostles –

- Continue to be an administrator, working with staff, priesthood, and volunteers, but we may see you less, and you may need to do some of this less, so that there will be:
- MORE expansion! More time with new groups and people sharing your special witness and growing the church.

Mission Centre congregational support minister –

- Continue LCM principles
 - o And you've been particularly focused on helping congregations WAKE UP through spiritual disciplines.
- MORE experiments in mission – support them as they are courageous... and “risk something new”.

Dunfield Staff, Committee and Board

- Keep making Dunfield a place of rest and renewal.
- MORE PEACE
 - o More gatherings about and for peace
 - o More people coming together to THINK, LEARN, and BUILD the peace of Jesus Christ.

Mission Centre leaders of generosity (bishops, financial officers, bookkeepers) –

- Keep creating budgets, taking care of buildings, finances, and offertory - stewardship.
- MORE true capacity in our generosity to grow mission through:
 - o Time, Talents, Treasure, AND Testimony

Mission Centre leaders of mission (MC President, Pastors, co-pastors) –

- Continue preparing services and sermons and shepherding your congregation.
- More MISSION
 - o Connecting congregations and members to respond in local groups and to local needs!

Evangelists –

- Continue to be on the edges, observing and accompanying others. Write beautiful prayers and share them.
- More REVIVAL. This puts you not on the borders, but at the CENTER of people's lives. Literally means: BRING BACK TO LIFE.

70 –

- Keep radically inviting others.
- More focus on planting church WHERE it should be found!

High Priests –

- Continue to provide a vision
- MORE bridging from what IS (reality) to what COULD BE (future with God)!

Elders –

- Model Jesus as SERVANTS
- MORE community-building within and around the congregation.

Priests –

- Continue to love and visit members in their homes.
- MORE community... focus more on being a really good friend to others – to family, friends, colleagues, and others in the larger community.

Teachers – PLEASE STAND if you are a TEACHER! First of all, we need MORE TEACHERS!!!

- Teachers are our most precious asset in CofChrist because they promote the worth of all persons.
- Create MORE environments where people are ready to listen and slow to criticize. More reconciliation.

Deacons –

- Keep being hospitable and welcoming.
- MORE KINGDOM - by addressing the physical needs of the poor.

Disciples –

- Keep growing in Christ-like character.
- MORE BEING like Jesus!!! Entering into covenant relationships with others! Inviting others into covenant relationships with you and with Community of Christ.

PPT – Questions regarding the model

- What questions do you have from this presentation?
- What do you like about this model and how might it liberate you, your congregation, and the Mission Centre, to faithfully respond to God's vision for creation?
 - What steps are you feeling invited to take right now to implement it?
- What worries or concerns do you have about this model?
 - What steps might help to overcome those worries and concerns?

READING: (PPT)

163: 1. "Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.