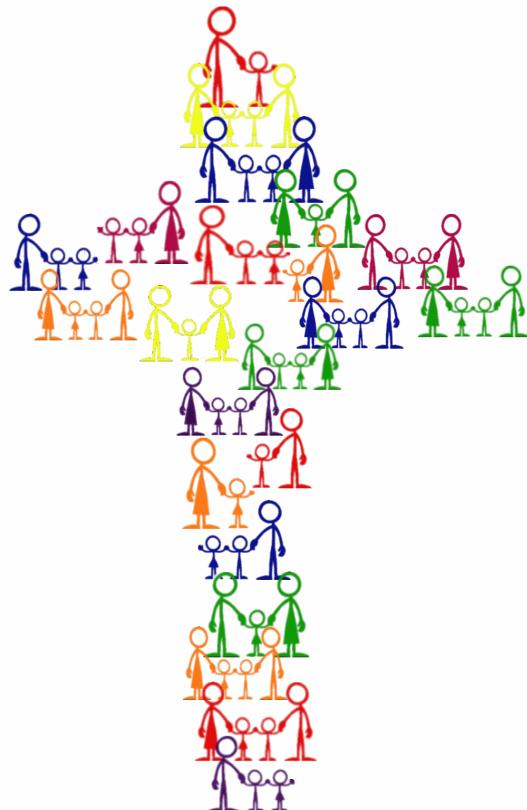




Churches in Lunesdale Family Project

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Background to the Project	3
Project Vision	5
Principles and Values.....	5
Objectives.....	5
Approach.....	6
Terms and Conditions..	6
Appendix I - God for All	7
Appendix II - Role Description for the Project Leader.....	9
Appendix III - Person Specification for the Project Leader	10

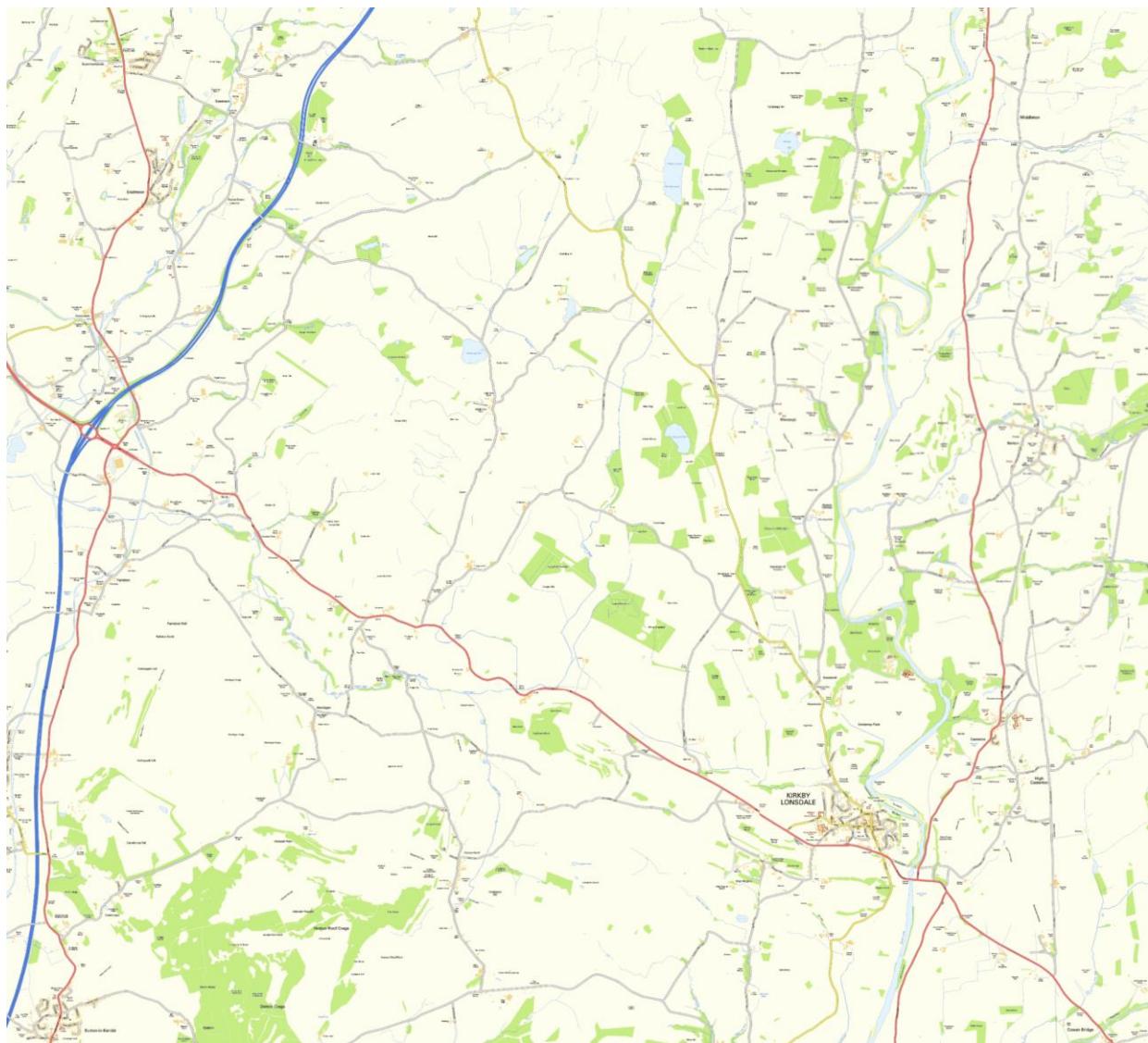




Introduction

The Family Project is a joint initiative between the Kirkby Lonsdale Methodist Church and the Kirkby Lonsdale Team Ministry (the Rainbow Parish). It will operate under the authority of the respective church councils.

The project will work in the area covered by 'Christians Together in Lunesdale'. This includes Kirkby Lonsdale Methodist Church, Cowan Bridge Methodist Church and the eight churches of the Anglican Rainbow Parish centred around the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale



Kirkby Lonsdale is set in the valley of the River Lune on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales and also close to the Lake District.



Background to the Project

The vision for the Family Project has grown out of discussion, debate and prayer over the last two years. It has been informed and shaped both by our local context and also by conversations that have been taking place within our denominations both locally and national.

The Diocese of Carlisle, the Cumbria Methodist District and the United Reformed Church in Cumbria have agreed joint strategies for ministry, for outreach and for our buildings. The three strategies have been brought together under the banner ‘God for All’ – representing the overarching objective that: by 2020 every person in Cumbria of all ages and backgrounds will have had an opportunity to discover more of God and God’s purpose for their lives, so that they will discover more of Jesus and the Good News and become followers of Jesus within a Christian community. Appendix I provides more information about ‘God for All’.

Like many churches, the work with children and young people is seen as a high priority and a good deal of thought, time and effort is given to this aspect of church life. There are many ‘positive’ signs: many families still look to the Church to have their children baptised and, in Kirkby Lonsdale, ‘See and Know’ (parent and baby group) is thriving. An after school club for primary ages children has recently been started in Barbon and there is a half-termly ‘Messy Church’ event in Endmoor. We have two voluntary aided primary schools, both of which welcome and support the involvement of the churches. We also have a very successful secondary school which has built a number of church services into its annual calendar. However, the evidence, both locally and nationally (e.g. statistics for church attendance and age profile), suggests that the lasting impact of the churches’ engagement with children and young people is very limited.

Many factors contribute to the lack of impact, some are ‘external’ and some are within the Church itself. Externally, within society, there is the perceived irrelevance of Christianity and the growing distance from the Church by each successive generation since the middle of the last century. Within the Church itself there is the sub-conscious belief that the Church and its worship still are, or can be, ‘attractive’ and that each new generation can be drawn in. This might work in a small number of cases but it fails to recognise how great the gap has become. It also ignores the Church’s fundamental calling to be outward looking or missional; to be salt and light and a blessing to the whole community.

The phrase ‘sticky faith’ can be used to describe the aspiration underlying much of the Church’s work with children and young people. This is the hope that the teaching and learning that takes place in the formative years will ‘stick’ into adulthood. In the past, the solution to the lack of impact has tended to be ‘if only we can recruit more workers/volunteers, and run the right sorts of



groups and activities, then we will be able to keep the faith of children and young people in place until adulthood'. The evidence, however, is that this effort does not produce faith that sticks and there is a more fundamental reason for the lack of adhesion.

A critical factor that is frequently overlooked is the role of the family in nurturing faith. For example, research suggests that around 49% of those brought up by parents who belong to the Church of England follow their parents' faith in adulthood. In comparison, 94% of those who are brought up by parents where there is no religion will follow their parents. In essence if you are brought up outside of faith you are almost guaranteed to stay outside. Ignoring the role of the 'family' means that the Church is often trying to nurture faith in children and young people when, in the majority of cases, the impression that they get from their parents is that God is something, or someone, you grow out of. No wonder the faith of primary aged children struggles to make the transition to secondary. Ignoring the 'family' also ignores much of what Scripture presents about discipleship and the importance of family life. 'Messy Church' is one of the recent initiatives that seeks to engage with this.

This is the territory that we have explored over the last two years as we have thought about how we might become more missional and more effective. It has been encouraging to discover similar thinking: '*A general recognition is held that working with children or young people in isolation is not the most effective way of enabling a lifelong relationship with God to develop. Nurturing spirituality needs to involve parents and the wider 'family' ...*' (from the 2015 report 'We are Family - The Changing Face of Family Ministry' commissioned by the Consultative Group on Ministry among Children and The Methodist Church in Britain). The appointment of Children's and Families' Missioners by the Diocese of Birmingham, as a key element of their 'Growing Younger in Every Parish' initiative, is another example.

Our discussions have led us to 'The Churches in Lunesdale Family Project'. The vision is for our churches to be more outward looking and a blessing to the families in our communities, helping them discover God, and nurturing faith that is rooted in their everyday lives and lasts a lifetime. **For this to succeed we need someone with the necessary experience and skills to lead the project and who will also be able to inspire, train and develop the volunteers who will work with them to help to make it happen in a sustainable way.**



Project Vision

- To help families with children in our communities, particularly those with whom the local church currently has little or no contact, discover more of God and God's purpose for their lives.
- To be 'strategic' – it will develop our understanding of the barriers to people understanding the Gospel and its relevance to their lives.
- To be 'practical' - it will involve initiatives that will directly engage with families and their children in a way that is meaningful to them and ultimately leads them to faith and worship.

Principles and Values

- The project is specifically aimed at families with children (0-13). This focus is so that the work can be targeted to a reasonably homogeneous group which has the best opportunity to build 'faith through life'. Our other existing Christian work with individuals and groups will be continued.
- This work must be seen as part of developing faith and discipleship.
- We should have no preconceptions about what 'church' for families with children may look like in the future.
- The initial phase is for 4 years but **we want to see the project continue after that period.**
- The project aims to be wholly funded by the Christian community in the Christians Together in Lunesdale (CTiL) area.

Objectives

We do not have a prescriptive view of what success will look like but on the other hand we recognise that 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound) objectives will help to drive the project forward.

The following themes have been identified around which we will develop the objectives:

- Increased involvement in church activities (existing and/or 'fresh expressions') by new people (ie not existing members or regular attenders). In particular, there is no expectation that any 'fresh expression' will align with an existing inherited model of church.
- Increased confidence in all our churches in undertaking mission.
- Support and training developed for all involved in outreach to enable flexibility in managing, leading, helping, and support roles.
- Increase in the variety of experimental activities being undertaken in church and the wider community.
- Budget requirements met.



Approach

A key element in the success of the project will be the appointment of a project leader who has the appropriate personal attributes and experience. They will need a spiritual maturity and both strategic and tactical skills. Strategic thinking will be essential in the early years of the project to develop an understanding of our local context and to establish direction.

The Project Leader will need to be a strong thinker as well as a doer. It will also be important for the project to be *experimental* and to develop creative and imaginative responses to opportunities without fear of failure. As a result the scope of the role is more than that of a family or youth worker.

It is recognised that the role is challenging and complex, so will take time to develop.

The first year will include a mission audit of church and community, identifying the gaps and how we can fill them. We also expect to see some short term wins to enable the stakeholders to begin to develop confidence in the programme.

The second year will include developing your team and other resources and beginning to implement the plan.

The remaining years will see further development of the plan in order to build culture change and sustainable and effective ministry to families

The Project Leader will be supported and managed by a line manager and management group which is already in place.

A role description is attached at Appendix II.

A draft person specification is attached in Appendix III.

Terms and Conditions

- Full time 4 year contract (subject to the successful completion of a 6 month probationary period, and continuing satisfactory performance).
- Salary £23 - £30k pa depending upon experience.
- 33 days annual holiday (inclusive of Bank Holidays).
- Due to the nature of the work you will be expected to work some evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays.
- Defined contribution pension scheme, 6% contributions from employer and 6% from employee.
- All reasonable office and travel expenses will be reimbursed.
- Start date in 2017 to be agreed.
- Provision for continuing professional development will be agreed with the Management Group.
- Appointment will be subject to satisfactory references.



- The successful applicant will be expected to go through our Safer Recruitment procedure including an enhanced DBS check.
- There is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) that the holder of this post is a Christian.
- The successful applicant must hold the necessary documentation to enable them to legally work in the UK.



Appendix I – GOD FOR ALL

Over the last few years churches across Cumbria have been talking, praying and planning together. The result is ‘God for All’ – a fresh way to help everyone in Cumbria discover more of God and God’s purpose for their lives, and a fresh way to encourage churches to be vibrant and loving communities serving and worshipping God. It brings together the different facets of the commitment of each denomination to grow disciples of Jesus Christ.



GOD FOR ALL

God for All helps Cumbria residents and visitors explore the reality of God and respond to his love and truth. It strengthens and encourages each Christian person to live for Christ, and make their faith known through words and actions.

God for All calls for change

Traditional models of church are still important but together we are exploring new styles and expressions of church. We are committed to strengthening the ways those people not involved with church can connect with the reality of God.

God for All has purpose

We want everyone in Cumbria to have the opportunity to discover more of God and God’s purpose for their lives, with Christians active in witness, service and mission and churches invigorated as communities of worship, care and outreach.

God for All looks long term

We are introducing new and exciting forms of ministry and outreach and we are exploring how best to use our buildings for worship, mission and community life. We are encouraging and nurturing new growth in church leadership, with each church having its own local leaders.

God for All has direction

A new Steering Group is ensuring all this happens over the next five years and makes a difference. It includes lay and ordained people from the three denominations.

For further information see WWW.GODFORALL.ORG.UK



Appendix II - Role Description for the Project Leader

The Project Leader will:

- Help the families and their children in our communities, and particularly those with whom the local church currently has little or no contact, discover more of God and God's purpose for their lives.
- Help our churches develop a strategy for outreach amongst families and their children (0-13) and to lead the churches in implementing it.
- Develop and model a culture whereby children of all ages are valued and their gifts are encouraged and utilised in ministry and mission.
- Recruit, train, develop, support and co-ordinate new and existing volunteers, encouraging 'every member' ministry, and building confidence in our mission to families and their children.
- Develop and resource creative ways of engaging with and 'discipling' families and children seeking to grow in faith and create appropriate worship opportunities.
- Initiate new and expand existing links and networks with schools, charities, agencies and local services.
- Contribute to the development of a more missional ethos in the churches.
- Report regularly to the Management Group and support the Management Group in its communications with the church councils and church communities.
- Become part of the broad worshipping community, developing mutually sustaining relationships.
- Be a bridge builder, maintaining current links whilst developing new opportunities with individuals and groups.
- Keep adequate records of contacts and of work undertaken.
- Appraise and review initiatives set up and activities undertaken, and change where necessary the action and focus of work after discussion with, and agreement from, the Management Group.
- Work within and support the defined systems for health and safety and safeguarding.



Appendix III - Person Specification for the Project Leader

- The core skills of evangelism, 'culture change' and ability to train others will be required together with outstanding communication skills for the modern era. There is an occupational requirement for the person to be a practicing Christian. The post will require an enhanced DBS clearance.
- Continuing professional development will be offered through a regular high level training program which may include occasional residential courses. Regular supervision will be provided by a Line Manager who will be a designated member of the project management team. It is also anticipated that the services of a personal mentor will be made available.
- These are the essential (E) and desirable (D) qualities we are looking for:

	Essential/ desirable?
Relevant tertiary educational qualification or equivalent experience.	E
A demonstrable love of Christ.	E
Experience of working with families and children.	E
Experience of organising and running activities and developing creative resources.	E
Experience of bringing about culture change.	D
Experience of leading and managing volunteers.	D
Working as part of a team.	E
Experience of work with schools/community/church.	D
An ability to think strategically.	E
Excellent communication skills, written, verbal, all ages, social media, AV.	E
Knowledge and experience of Safeguarding procedures.	E
Self-awareness/motivation and ability to reflect on practice.	E
Accepts the principles and practices of the Church of England and Methodist churches and the 'God for All' ecumenical initiatives.	E
Full UK Driving license and use of a vehicle.	E

