

*Church Life,
Mission &
Ministry
Review*

A pack for local Churches



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Wessex Synod

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Introduction

In 2006 General Assembly resolved to introduce a tool for allowing churches to review their life and work alongside the existing scheme for Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal. This Local Ministry & Mission Review (LMMR) is intended to be of help to churches to ensure that their life and mission are regularly reviewed to highlight areas where change and development need considering. As this review document would be sent to the Synod Pastoral Committee (SPC) it meant that any requests for help from them could be made in a formal and timely manner. This helps the SPC to be of assistance to the local church in their Life and Mission as one way that it exercises pastoral oversight of the churches.

The reality of the task meant that many Synods, including ours, found it almost impossible to identify and release people to accompany churches through what was a large and time-consuming exercise. This meant that very few churches have taken the opportunity to use the LMMR process as envisaged when it was introduced. LMMR has been reviewed at the various levels of the church and the Ministries and Learning (M&L) Committee of Wessex Synod has now attempted to simplify the scheme for wider use within our Synod. The hope is that an increased number of local churches can use this pack to complete their own review. None of our churches will be perfect at every aspect of church life, and each congregation will be better at some things than others. The LMMR process enables a focus on how to increase activity that is successful whilst also giving consideration to improving important areas that are identified by the church as being weak. The whole purpose of the LMMR is to support development of church life and witness in each congregation and community.

The pack contains the document "Church Life, Ministry & Mission Review" which is to be completed, and several other papers that form a structure for its completion. Whilst many churches will be able to complete this process "in house", help is available where needed.

The proposal remains unchanged: that the pack is used for a full review every four years. After the intervening 2 years an intermediate "refresher LMMR" can be completed to assess progress. *Some suggestions for these have been added in the Appendix for that intermediate refresher which should take up a shorter meeting of the church/pastorate members.*

Ministers Accompanied Self-Appraisal (MASA) will continue to be an integral part of the LMMR Process so that the discussed and agreed local role of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers can be used to compliment and develop alongside the gifts of the Eldership and wider church.

It is hoped that the pack will be self-explanatory and suitable for use in most of our church settings. However, if your church feels that you could use extra outside help with this process, please do contact your DSO in the first instance.

The LMMR Process : a Step-By-Step Guide

Once a church or pastorate has decided that it is time for a review of their mission and ministry priorities, then these are the basic steps

Preparation for the process

This begins with the Leadership deciding on the process that is to be followed.

(Leadership in churches vary. It could be a minister plus elders. Or minister, lay preachers and elders. Some churches may use other names for their leadership due to being united with other denominations. You can decide who is in leadership in your church/pastorate.)

Assuming the churches are in a shared/group pastorate.

Questions to be asked – do we want each church individually to review its mission and where they want their leadership to place their energy and time?

Or Does the Pastorate as a whole want to do this together as a group of churches?

Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of both. Plan accordingly.

STEP 1

Look at the document 'Church life, Mission and Ministry Review' 2016.

At the end of this process you, as a team, will have a complete document. In order for this to happen –

Decide who will research/update your information for the report under numbers 1, 2 and 3. (4,5,6 &7 will come from your whole church review discussions)

The Leadership Team then builds a timeline of how to carry out the review. This will ideally be done through a meeting of the whole church/es at a time that is most suitable for the church's/pastorate's pattern using the 'Exploring the life and mission of the church' papers.

STEP 2

The Leadership Team appoints 1 or 2 people to be the facilitator/s of that meeting. You need to think of who has the appropriate skills and is willing to encourage/ facilitate others rather than 'lead' the day with their own ideas, *(usually these will come from within the church, or others known locally).*

STEP 3

The Leadership Team then works with this/these facilitators to work out what approach to use to draw out people's thinking in that meeting – you are the ones who know what works best to help generate conversations in your church/es.

STEP 4

Communicate the date and time for that meeting well in advance. Publicity of the meeting and the purpose is key – you need everyone to understand what will happen and that they will all be involved in the conversations. Reinforce the aims of the review and ask people to come with **their** ideas about the present and future mission and ministry in the church/es.

(Appendix contains just some passages that might be useful as preaching themes leading up to the discussion meeting/s)

STEP 5

Hold the meeting. *(Appendix 'Suggested Icebreakers' may be useful to start the meeting)*

For each heading under part 3, complete boxes b) and c) as a group/in groups. At this stage there are no wrong or right answers, only ideas for discussion. If you have split into separate groups to look at the 5 areas of exploration, each group presents their results to the whole group and record the agreed or accepted result on a flip chart for all to see. Make use of the overall 'Action Plan' sheet if this would be useful.

If you have chosen one of the alternative methods of review from Appendix 1-4, your outcomes can also be recorded on an 'Action Plan' sheet.

STEP 6

Follow up with a Leadership meeting. Analyse the results and then use these to complete the 'Church life, Mission and Ministry Review' document.

STEP 7

Alongside the above and in conversation with the minister, (informed by the parallel MASA process) decide how best to adjust the Mission Priorities and Minister's role description. A wider discussion may look at how to set priorities for the minister's role, whilst releasing the gifts of the Eldership/ wider leadership and church members. You might like to invite your Development and Support Officer to this meeting.

(It is important to bear in mind the heading 'Resources' on the Church life, Mission and Ministry Review form. When the report is sent in to Pastoral Committee it can be for them to discern how best to help in supplying what is identified or to recommend how the needs can be met in other ways.)

STEP 8

Share with the church(es) at their next meeting/s and obtain their approval of the document. Once the report is accepted, it should be sent to the convenor of your Synod Pastoral Committee who will respond to the church(es) in due course.

Please remember that if you need help or advice at any stage of this process, your DSO can be available to you for support.