

Understanding the leadership roles of PCC, Co-Leaders and Huddle Leaders at St. John The Evangelist

2022. AA May

1. Introduction

Being a state church the inherited form of C of E leadership is well known; with a single leader (vicar), supported (if present) by other ordained members, along with wardens and PCC. This formula has been established over centuries. In the last thirty years, with mission becoming increasingly significant (alongside more familiar 'maintenance' of ministry), fresh forms of leadership have emerged. This document attempts to describe how leadership is developing here at St. John the Evangelist.

2. The inherited form of leadership in the C of E.

Taken from "Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance"

3.1. Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Incumbent

(<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance.pdf>)

"The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. Its powers and duties are defined by legislation and can principally be found in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

It has the responsibility, along with the incumbent to promote the mission of God in its parish.

Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight. It has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

All PCCs are charities, most do not the need to register with the Charity Commission, except those with an annual income of more than £100,000. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee. If a PCC is a charity it must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

The incumbent's role is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to promote a safer church."

Additionally, church wardens are officers of the bishop, connecting us to the diocese. This general overview gives a helpful and clear picture of PCC as 'Leadership'; having responsibility for decisions relating to a range of matters, including pre-eminently the promotion of God's mission in the parish. Additionally it has practical responsibilities for finance, safeguarding, and several other practical matters. (see Appendix for 2022 plans without a warden)

3. PCC:

Governance and deaconing

The role of PCC is incredibly important, functioning as the 'critical friend' of the incumbent; making sure that our call to live out the vision given to us (The Mission of God) actually happens in practice. In this respect the PCC acts in a similar fashion to a school governing body; providing oversight of the church with the vicar, holding headteacher and staff to their responsibilities, supporting through tough times and providing wise stability along the way. They are also responsible for several practical and financial matters.

The biblical equivalent for this practical role is that of 'deacon' - a word which means 'servant', first emerging in practice in Acts 6, where practical matters were delegated by the Apostles to chosen people; to free up the Apostles for ministry in prayer and preaching. Deacons are described in 1 Tim.3 - people of trusted integrity who help serve the church in tangible ways.

Therefore the PCC carries this dual emphasis; where they are to help steward the general trajectory of the church (vision) and also carry a 'deacon-like' responsibility for the practical running of church life.

4. Biblical leadership

Unlike the inherited mode of single ordained leadership (one vicar), the picture of church leadership in scripture is plural (Acts 14:23, 1 Tim. 4:14, 1 Tim 5:17, Titus 1:5). The term and role of 'Elder' is not defined tightly in scripture, but it is certainly shown to be plural. This chimes in with the more general idea of 'body ministry' (based on Eph. 4:11-13 and 1 Cor 12), where several church members function together, providing a broader range of qualities and gifts than any single person could.

I am not inclined to talk of 'Elders' at St. John the Evangelist at this time, as this word comes with loaded and unhelpful misunderstandings about the role. However, I am persuaded that accessing a range of suitable people who can help the vicar with week-on-week, month by month leadership is a necessary biblical step.

5. Co-Leaders and Huddle Leaders at St. John the Evangelist: "Modelling the vision personally"

The nature of day-to-day leadership here has changed in the last decade for practical and missional reasons. I have been blessed over the years with lay staff and a curate, which by default gave me a team of people to relate and refer to on a regular basis. However, as the vision began to evolve, it became increasingly important to find people who both understood and were committed to the vision, so I had others to confer with closely; to help me better discern where church was going. Wardens have thus far been a happy feature of this process.

Remembering that PCC are the ultimate decision-makers, dialogue with PCC concerning doctrine and missional direction has been essential throughout the last few years in particular. This has ensured that PCC leadership remains an established fact in our processes. However, PCC usually only meets once every two months. This is clearly inadequate when considering the nature of church leadership. A more general oversight of direction and practical matters can be done at these intervals, but this is not the picture we have of Jesus with the Twelve or Early churches responding to the missional and pastoral leading of the Spirit. Something more regular, where key people can talk, pray, minister together, and run with emerging possibilities, is a better, more adaptive picture of leadership.

If the vision of the church (in practice) is to *become like Jesus, make disciples, bringing real change*, then the nature of leadership should model this. Over recent years I have been looking for those who are seriously open-hearted to Jesus and his call to make disciples. For both wisdom in shaping church direction and shaping others for disciple-making, I have raised up these two groups; 'Co-leaders' - who help me discern whole church direction towards the vision, and 'Huddle Leaders' - who are modelling the life in practice, for others to imitate. These people are exemplary members; not perfect by any means, but seriously committed to where God is leading us. They are already aiming to make disciples personally. Both groups have personnel overlap and are directly accountable to myself as vicar as the senior leader.

This form of Co-leadership is in effect an explicit modelling of vision: where (like Jesus) a core group are taught to catch Jesus' ways, so that together (around Jesus) we all become more like him and do mission as he did it. Naturally, this form of leadership raises up individuals who can be increasingly released into the call of God. Such people may begin by watching, helping and some doing. But over time they get to grow, develop and innovate - doing things different to and beyond my own leadership, but with the same core values of our shared vision. This models a

Christlike 'releasing' picture of leadership, which goes far beyond what the vicar can imagine alone.

Additionally, there is a collegiate and relational dimension that I have found to be essential in confident and wise leadership. Jesus said of the Twelve that he no longer called them servants, but friends (John 15:15). In practice I have found that alongside 'capable, gifted and committed' people, I need people with whom I can be 'friends'. Over the last few years I have hugely benefitted from people who can both support **and** challenge me; and if such people are those I relate well to, it makes it easier to receive support and challenge.

So the Co-leaders and Huddle leaders are (to me as vicar), like brothers and sisters gathered around Jesus, as we learn to follow and change, hopefully as examples of mission and ministry to the church. As a team we get to show a wide range of qualities and abilities; which is more effective in positively influencing church than any solo leadership. (See Appendix for current names of Co-Leaders and Huddle Leaders)

I have personally and prayerfully selected these people (as Jesus selected The Twelve), and continue to look out for others who would bring the same vital qualities to our leadership. The group's make-up may change over time, but the principles remain the same.

(One more emerging layer of leadership will include Missional Community leaders: these head up a 'core team' which shapes the life of the MC. One or two from each core team will belong to a huddle - where they receive support, share experience and best practice. These leaders may become involved in huddle leadership or co-leadership if God develops ministry in that way.)

6. Overlaps and differences

So, PCC, Co-leaders and Huddle Leaders have some overlapping similarities, but also some key differences.

OVERLAPPING SIMILARITIES:

Both groups are called (above all) to be committed to promoting the mission of God in the parish. Both groups need to be people of good character and appropriate ability. Both groups should be supportive yet critical friends to the vicar.

DIFFERENCES:

PCC are called to function as responsible deacons - making sure that all necessary practical/financial matters are in hand and functioning.

PCC meet less frequently to govern in a more general sense.

Co-Leaders and Huddle Leaders are heartfelt modellers of the vision, and are focussed on emerging ministry/mission; where the actual activity of the vision is happening with real people. Co-leaders and Huddle Leaders can meet more frequently as a team of friends, to pray, talk, and plan as immediate matters arise.

7. Regular dialogue:

For healthy leadership, the PCC and Co-Leaders (with input from Huddle Leaders) need regular dialogue - at occasional PCC meetings, Away Days or more informally. This will ensure that the vision of the church and all its perspectives are broadly understood across these groups.

8. Conclusion

Hopefully this description shows what PCC, Co-Leaders and Huddle Leaders are all about, and how they overlap. We are still forming and experimenting with this arrangement, so the shape of leadership is likely to continue to emerge over time.

APPENDIX:

Co-Leaders 2022

vicar: Andrew Attwood

Jane Garsed, Michelle Harris, Roger Homes, Simone Royale, Lindsey Attwood, Mary Rai.

Huddle Leaders 2022

Led by vicar

Rosie Lee, Heather Homes, Lindsey Attwood, Michelle Harris, Simone Royale, Vikki Anderson

When we have no Wardens:

in 2022 there were no people willing to take up the role of wardens.

In anticipation of this, we have delegated many aspects of the wardens role to PCC members. PCC members can be contacted accordingly for these different aspects.

Meanwhile Standing Committee is meeting every three weeks to review and make decisions. This is presently comprised of

Phil Swards (PCC Secretary)
Peter Jackson (finance/treasurer)
Roger Homes
Andrew Attwood.

So we have a system in place to manage all the usual/practical aspects of wardening, while we look for replacement wardens in the future.