

## Parish Mission Statement

*To have Christ at the centre of our lives, enabling us to grow in faith as a community where all feel welcomed, loved and valued.*

### St Joseph The Worker, Hutton and Brentwood Cathedral Parish Partnership

Representatives from St Joseph's Parish Pastoral Team and the Cathedral Parish Pastoral Council met in St Joseph's Parish Hall on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

This new partnership was formed in February 2024 and Fathers Leslie, John and Gary met on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February to discuss how they wished the two parish communities to begin our journey together. The conclusion was that the best first step was to hold this first gathering so we get to know each other and move forward together based on trust and friendship.

We discussed St Joseph's previous experience in the partnership with Stock, Ingatestone and Ongar parishes which was supported by Bishop Emeritus Thomas McMahon. A lot of progress had been made by the partnership when the Covid pandemic hit us, resulting in changes to some aspects of our partnership vision. The Laity is the Church's Treasure, and we know that we can do some things better together.

Partnerships have experienced a varied degree of success; our experience, with Fr Dominic's assistance, achieved a lot compared with other parishes.

Parishes have been asked by the bishop to select two strands from the diocesan vision document 'Shaping our Future' and the Cathedral PPC chose two strands to focus on - Strand 2: Christian Life and Worship - including music and family mass – and Strand 12: Young People - including a youth programme from baby to 18. We discussed adding or incorporating Strand 5: Formation into these two strands as the St Joseph's team saw this as important to the parish.

It was noted during the meeting that Deanery boundaries are changing – more details will follow.

The Cathedral is not just parochial, it is unique, being the diocesan hub, with resources available to all parishes in the diocese.

There was agreement that the recent Lenten talks held in the Cathedral were both interesting and inspirational – they are available on the Cathedral website, including videos of the talks: <https://brentwoodcathedral.org.uk/lenten-talks-2024/>

There is a deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> May for submission of the two Strands to Bishop Alan (plus one additional, mandatory Strand 8: Material Assets) and the teams agreed that we should consider forming a steering group to coordinate the submission on behalf of the partnership.

The St Joseph's team considers bringing more people to the parish as a priority and we could work together as a partnership, for example on:

- First communion
- Baptisms
- Marriage
- RCIA
- Confirmation

We noted that Confirmation at St Josephs is available from 14 years of age, whilst at the Cathedral it is from age 16.

This year there is a small group of 8 candidates at St Josephs and it was felt this would increase if we joined with the Cathedral. One idea could be to form a 'Young adult' group following confirmation, from both parishes.

The Sycamore course has been successful in encouraging parishioners and children to learn more about their faith and is now available with video chat to help to meet other people, share ideas and explore our faith.

The teams felt that social justice is another way to attract younger parishioners to the church.

Our next meeting was pencilled in for four weeks from this meeting, meaning Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> April. The two chairs will be in touch to confirm the date and agree the agenda for this first more formal meeting which will take place in St Joseph's Parish Hall.

Finally, we talked about options to take forward the Strands, concluding we would either form two subgroups or discuss as one team, with the results going to Fr Gary who will liaise with Bishop Alan.

Further communications will be provided following the Parish Partnership meetings regarding the Diocesan Vision strands.

Chris Brooks                      and                      Jon Avery  
Chair, St Joseph's PPT                      Chair, Cathedral PPC