

Wednesfield Team Ministry

Artist Brief

“This is Our Story, This is Our Song”

The Wednesfield Team Ministry is seeking proposals for the production of a lasting artwork / artworks from artists with an interest in or a practice that focuses on participation and engagement to respond to the vibrant yet dispersed nature of its worshipping community. There is a total budget of £10,000 available to cover all costs, including artist’s fees, for this opportunity.

Introduction

Wednesfield Team Ministry comprises three church districts in the town of Wednesfield, Wolverhampton. Together the churches of the parish, St Thomas, St Alban’s and St Chad’s, serve a total of 26,000 people living in what can be described as an urban and socially deprived part of the Black Country region.



St Thomas' Church



St Chad's Church



St Alban's Church

The St Thomas’ district is the most diverse in relation to ethnic and social mix and given the traditional nature of the St Thomas’ building (the church was first built in 1750 and rebuilt after fire in 1903 to much the same design), has a significant ministry across the parish – for example, the vast majority of weddings and funerals at which clergy from the team preside take place at St Thomas’, St Thomas’ hosts the annual Civic Service and finds itself at the centre of the town on Remembrance Sunday.

The St Chad’s congregation is currently housed in a 1950’s church building but due to the deterioration of the fabric of the building is seeking to relocate into a school in the near future. Originally built as a Mission Chapel to further the evangelistic work of St Thomas’, St Chad’s opened its doors in 1957.

It was the development of what was to become the Ashmore Park Estate in the late 1950s / early 1960s that motivated the parish's decision to plant a church in the North East of the parish. Since opening in 1967, St Alban's Church has continued to serve this distinct estate, one with significant issues relating to deprivation and unemployment.

In addition to the particular character of each district and the associated church building, the history, tradition and style of worship within the three churches varies considerably. Of the three churches, St Thomas' is perhaps the most traditional with the majority of its services following the structured pattern of a Holy Communion or Eucharistic service during which bread and wine are consecrated and shared amongst those present.

Whilst Sunday services at St Chad's are also predominantly Eucharistic, it is fair to say that the services are less formal and reflect the familial size and nature of the congregation. Children remain in the main service, undertaking creative activities at the side of the worship space as opposed to leaving for Junior Church and Tots Church as is the case at St Thomas'.

The style of worship at St Alban's is the least structured of the three churches. Most Sunday services do include the Eucharist but the music, style of preaching and response from the congregation can often be informal. In recent history, the style of worship at St Alban's was what might be termed 'charismatic' and the current use of more contemporary music reflects this history.

However, even though each church reflects a different way of responding to God in worship there is a significant commitment across the parish to work together. The clergy team comprising a Team Rector based at St Thomas', Interim Minister based at St Chad's, Team Vicar based at St Alban's and Assistant Curate licensed across the parish meet regularly and the lay (non-ordained) members of the relevant leadership teams and church councils speak openly of their desire to collaborate as one parish. Needless to say, this has not always been the case. Within recent history the congregations experienced periods of time during which they were less keen to support each other than one might expect of a Christian community. However, as has been noted, there is now a renewed sense of collaboration and mutual support for the ministry in each church and it is with this restored sense of collaboration and shared ministry in mind that this brief has been put together.

This shared understanding is reflected in the title of this commission, ***This is Our Story, This is Our Song***. A repeated phrase that occurs in one of the Church of England's authorised Eucharistic prayers (see appendix A), the words evoke the shared and corporate nature of Christian tradition and the belief that our relationship with one another and with God contributes to the on-going story of God's initial creative act. It also references our desire to tell the story of this parish and the Wednesfield Team Ministry's role within it.

Context

It can be said that the Wednesfield community is indicative of many found in the Black Country. Informed perhaps by the pride taken in its industrial past, people in the Black

Country are known for the pride with which they state where they are from. Local residents express a sense of belonging to this place and often describe their family history and relationships as being directly related to the town, its heritage and its relationship to neighbouring areas. Whilst officially Wednesfield is part of the City of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton it is not. Known locally as ‘the village’ Wednesfield has its own character and distinctive nature. Many families have lived in the town for generations and have no plans to change that in the near future – this is their home, part of their story and they belong here.

The Wednesfield Team Ministry seeks to serve the whole parish and is as concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of the whole community as it is that of the regular worshipping congregations. As churches and as individuals, we (the lay and ordained members of the respective leadership teams) are involved in community activities, supporting such initiatives and projects such as: the Ashmore Park Community Together Diamond Jubilee Fun Day; local Neighbourhood Partnership and PACT (Police and Community Together) forums; the Board of Governors at four local Primary Schools; local fundraising efforts for charities such as Christian Aid, MacMillan, Compton Hospice; support for and work with hyper-local site wv11.co.uk.

As churches, we exist to serve God by serving all who live in Wednesfield - every second Tuesday at St Alban’s a team of volunteers run a "Pop In" morning providing cheap clothes, books, toys and household items, with a cooked breakfast, plenty of cups of tea and the chance for a chat. St Thomas’ is open every morning except Mondays, serving coffee three days a week and St Chad’s runs the hugely popular ‘Let’s all Clap Hands’ Toddler Church every week at Perry Hall Primary School, providing not only Christian crafts and activities but an opportunity for parents and carers to chat and support one another.



The Ashmore Park Community Together Diamond Jubilee Fun Day



2011 Christmas Lights switch-on and preceding carol service at St Thomas’ Church



'Let's All Clap Hands' Toddler Church at Perry Hall Primary School

Background

Wednesfield is an historic town that became part of Wolverhampton in 1966. Wodnesfelde appears in the Domesday book (1085) and the name makes reference to the Anglo-Saxon god Woden. Wednesfield also gives its name to the 10th century Battle of Wodnesfeld where the Anglo-Saxon forces of Mercia and Wessex were victorious in battle against a Viking army. Wednesfield remained an agricultural settlement of mainly small-scale holdings into the 18th century but small metalworking trades grew up in the town through the 1700s, especially locksmithing and trapmaking. These industries expanded rapidly after 1800 and the trapmakers of Wednesfield were unrivalled across the country. The growing canal and railway network increased the scope of local industry and after 1900 Wednesfield saw the establishment of bigger firms and factories especially metal fabricators like Weldless Steel Tube Co. and Wolverhampton Metal Company. The Wyrley and Essington Canal first came to Wednesfield in 1794 and remains open today for canalboats and walks along the towpath. Many firms grew during the Second World War and manufacturing continued to expand in the 1950s and 60s during which time many new housing estates were established.

In common with much of the region, Wednesfield's manufacturing industries have declined in the later 20th century presenting a major challenge to its close-knit and proud community. Today the area is wrestling with the challenges posed by high unemployment and many associated issues of social and economic disadvantage including poor health, low educational attainment, and low social mobility. However Wednesfield remains a close-knit community with a strong and independent identity.

Project Aims

The Wednesfield Team Ministry is seeking proposals for the production of a lasting artwork / artworks from artists with an interest in or a practice that focuses on participation and engagement to respond to the vibrant yet dispersed nature of its worshipping community.

Given the parish's focus on and commitment to the community that it seeks to serve ***This is Our Story, This is Our Song*** aims to,

- Provide new ways of revealing and celebrating existing links between the three churches and the residents that live within their districts by collecting, documenting and representing the stories of those who live within with parish
- Respond to the dispersed nature of the worshipping community that makes up the Wednesfield Team Ministry, drawing together that which previously has been disparate yet celebrating the distinctive nature of each congregation
- Produce a lasting artwork / artworks that can either be sited across the three churches or that can be moved easily and cheaply between the three churches. Given the scale of this project, it is not anticipated that this artwork / artworks will require structural changes to the buildings

Approach

In order to achieve the aims listed above, the Wednesfield Team Ministry is seeking proposals from artists working in any medium whose practice can be described as socially engaged and / or collaborative. Proposals should include some kind of participatory or collaborative element that engages both the congregations and the wider community in the development of the artwork / artworks. The Wednesfield Team Ministry understand that this does not mean residents will necessarily be involved in producing the final artwork / artworks. It is anticipated that the successful submission will include some or all of the following:

- A reference to the use of creative mapping as a tool to record and reveal connections and relationships both physical and otherwise
- A description of the ways in which the recording of activity will constitute the final artwork. For example, a proposal from an artist whose practice results in the production of artists' books, photographic series' or text based installation
- A statement of commitment that explains how the artist will work with us as opposed to for us
- An explanation as to how consultation is both a creative process and integral to her / his practice
- Comments as to how ***This is Our Story, This is Our Song*** might be effected by / impact on St Chad's forthcoming move from an increasingly unusable building into a shared space at a local school
- An indication that the artist is sensitive towards the Christian faith of those with whom they will be working

Budget

There is a total budget of £10,000 available for the completion of this project. This must include:

- Artist's Fee
- Artist's expenses
- Materials
- Production Costs
- Costs associated with the facilitation of collaborative processes

Petrol costs should be included within the budget at 45p a mile and where public transport is used, the cheapest travel option should always be sought.

Whilst there is no additional budget available for accommodation, there are members of the congregation that have indicated a willingness to house an artist for between £10 and £15 a night.

With regards to publicity, basic marketing activities (for example, photocopying, liaison with local press and use of the parish's existing social media presence) fall outside of this budget and do not need to be listed within the budget breakdown. However, if the artist anticipates having flyers / posters professionally printed, such costs must be included within the budget.

Timescale

The Wednesfield Team are happy to negotiate with the successful artist as to the precise timescale of the project. However, it is anticipated that the artist will want to engage with the congregations and wider community either intermittently over a period of months or for a more intensive period of weeks during the development of the project. We would also expect artists to consider the pattern of the church year whilst preparing their proposal, taking note of major festivals such as Easter.

The final artwork / artworks must be produced by December 2013

Contract Terms

The copyright of any artwork produced will remain with the artist who will also retain permission to use images of the artwork. If local residents are directly involved in the specific production of elements of the artwork, they must be credited by the artist in any future use of such images. On the condition that the artist is always credited as author or co-author of the artworks, the artist will grant the Wednesfield Team Ministry and the project funders non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty free, perpetual rights to use, reproduce, display and publish at any time the artworks and the Intellectual Property Rights within the artworks for non-commercial purposes.

In commissioning the artwork, the Wednesfield Team Ministry will take ownership of the completed artwork at the end of the project and will subsequently take responsibility for its maintenance / preservation.

The artist will be responsible to collecting image release forms from anyone whose image they capture during the course of the project, unless images are captured at public events.

The artist must hold or be willing to apply for an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau certificate.

How to Apply

Please apply by submitting the following documents:

- A proposal demonstrating how you will meet the project aims and respond to the approach listed in this brief
- A current CV including two references
- Examples of up to 6 previous artworks / completed projects. These can be submitted on CD, as hard copy photographs or by directing the commissioning panel to a functioning and up-to-date website.
- A budget outline demonstrating how you will make efficient use of the £10,000 budget
- A proposed project timescale indicating when you will start project activity and when you would anticipate to deliver / install the final artwork / artworks

Applications should be sent to,

Rev'd Claire Turner
Wednesfield Team Ministry
6 Yale Drive
Wednesfield
WV11 3UA

To discuss this opportunity further, please contact Rev'd Claire Turner on 01902 238485

The deadline for the receipt of applications is 5pm on Wednesday 19th December 2012. Shortlisted artists will be informed that they have been shortlisted during the week commencing 7th January 2013 and interviews for these artists will be held on either 22nd or 26th January 2013.

Appendix A

The Eucharistic Prayer (version D)

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

Almighty God, good Father to us all,
your face is turned towards your world.
In love you gave us Jesus your Son
to rescue us from sin and death.
Your Word goes out to call us home
to the city where angels sing your praise.
We join with them in heaven's song:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Father of all, we give you thanks
for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
With signs of faith and words of hope
he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean.

All This is his story.
**This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

The crowds came out to see your Son,
yet at the end they turned on him.
On the night he was betrayed
he came to table with his friends
to celebrate the freedom of your people.

All This is his story.
**This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

This is our story.

All **This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross
on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again
and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

This is our story.

All **This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

Send your Spirit on us now
that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

May we and all who share this food
offer ourselves to live for you
and be welcomed at your feast in heaven
where all creation worships you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

All **Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**