

Re-ordering for worship: some guidelines

- 1) Re-ordering should proceed from **theological principles** not parochial expediency.
- 2) Theological principles should be expressed with **clarity** as a means of teaching the Christian faith.
- 3) Any re-ordering scheme for worship should emerge from a lengthy period of **exploration** by the whole worshipping community. This should be designed to help the community identify its nature and role as the pilgrim people of God operating in a missionary context. The re-ordered building is a sacrament of the re-ordered community.
- 4) This initial period of exploration should involve:
 - ✚ Exploratory worship: doing new things, or old things in new ways, involving greater movement and participation.
 - ✚ Exploratory visits to other worshipping communities experiencing the benefits of re-ordered buildings.
- 5) **Duplication** should be avoided, with a single and permanent liturgical feature for each of the three essential elements of Anglican worship:
 - ✚ A font for baptism/sprinkling the community.
 - ✚ An ambo (lectern/pulpit) for reading and proclaiming the Word.
 - ✚ An altar table for the Eucharist.
- 6) The **seating plan** of the community is also a crucial element in the liturgical plan, and requires careful thought following a period of theological reflection on the nature of the Christian community.
- 7) Re-ordering will require a strategic decision by the PCC as to the optimum size of the congregation to be seated. Maintaining a large number of empty seats should be avoided. However careful consideration should also be given to accommodating future numerical growth, and special occasions or festivals when large numbers may attend.
- 8) In designing and furnishing liturgical space, emphasis should be placed on quality rather than quantity, and maximum beauty and dignity. Craftsmen with appropriate skills should be used wherever possible, and mass-produced catalogue items avoided.
- 9) In nearly every case, a radical and bold approach will be required in order to remove unused or surplus furniture (including memorial gifts) dating from previous generations of Christian thought and worship and to clear space within buildings.
- 10) Parishes with a Music Group/equipment should consider the space and extra electrical wiring required, and consider the visual impact of that equipment.
- 11) Re-ordering is process rather than event, and requires a carefully planned strategy of consultation and the development of ideas. Phases might include:
 - ✚ A period of theological and practical development.
 - ✚ Consultation by the PCC with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, their architect, the Archdeacon and Fire Safety Officer. In many cases consultation with Amenity Societies (for example, English Heritage) and with local conservation officers and others may be a legal obligation. A request for an early visit by the DAC to talk over what is being considered is usually a good plan.
 - ✚ Wide consultation within the worshipping community and (later) giving the wider community opportunity to comment.