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CELEBRATE AS VISIONS UNVEILED

IT will be the moment when we mark a new phase in the life of our parishes.

Our Kairos celebration service next month will be the point at which we ask God to bless a collection of ambitious new visions for mission and ministry in this diocese, and then start to implement them.

The service will be the culmination of months of hard work on Kairos theology, intensive research and detailed planning to help us meet the physical, spiritual and social needs of those living in our local communities.

The five-year deanery Kairos plans will be laid on the altar of our cathedral during a Eucharist at 6pm on July 17.

The service will include a sermon by the Rev Tom Stuckey – chairman of the Southampton Methodist District and president of the Methodist Church conference for 2005-06 – to emphasise the ecumenical principles behind Kairos thinking.

A band will lead informal worship before the service, and it will end with the congregation pro-



cessing out of the cathedral's west doors, symbolising our commitment to the world outside the church walls.

Kairos plans already agreed by PCCs, clusters of parishes and deanery synods include radical proposals to re-shape church buildings for community use; to launch groups to help meet the needs of children, young people, the bereaved and the lonely; and to employ new youth workers, administrators and community workers. These are just a handful of the specific ideas:

- parishes in Gosport want to work with local authorities to make church halls available for agencies working with prolific young offenders;

- the Havant deanery wants to employ a specialist to plant new churches in both Wecock and the new housing development west of Waterlooville, as well as employing community liaison officers for the Wecock estate;

- worshippers in Bembridge are reaching out to villagers by meeting people regularly in local pubs;

- the Petersfield deanery wants to identify and foster five full-time ministers, five non-stipendiary ministers and five Readers by 2010;

- and Paulsgrove, Cosham and Farlington parishes want to prepare and deliver a parenting skills course this autumn.

All the plans will go to the Bishop's Council for discussion and approval during June, before being presented at next month's service which will be led by the bishop.

Bishop Kenneth said: "I am greatly excited by what I have seen of the deanery Kairos plans. They show imagination, innovation and a deep appreciation of the Kairos aims of building a Church that has a broader base in its local community, a deeper spiritual life and leaner structures.

"I'm pleased that Tom Stuckey can preach at our Kairos service. He has been a good friend of the diocese and his presence will emphasise the ecumenical nature of many of our ideas."



Church hall manager John Honeychurch, vicar the Rev Andy Yorke and churchwarden Tony Walton outside the current 1930s-style hall

Partnership is key to ambitious plans

KAIROS thinking emphasises that churches can do more in partnership with their local communities - and this is a classic example of that.

Worshippers at Christ Church, Totland Bay, can't afford the £500,000 it would cost to transform their two shabby church halls into modern community facilities. But the need is definitely there.

Instead, they are working with the civic authorities to create a new village trust, which could lease the site from the church and create a new village community centre. The most likely result is that the current corrugated iron scout hut and 1930s-style hall will be demolished to make way for a modern building.

The ambitious project is part of the cluster's Kairos plan to help regenerate the centre of the seaside village and find a better meeting place for community groups.

Church hall manager John Honeychurch, who is also vice-chairman of the civic parish council, said: "Our halls are in terminal decay and we haven't got the funds to rebuild them. But they are still used extensively by the local community and are located at the heart of the village. So the

pragmatic solution is to lease the site at a peppercorn rent to a village trust, but retain some use of it ourselves.

"At the moment, income from the activities just about keeps the halls going, but the main hall is affected by subsidence, the flat roof is prone to vandalism and, as a result, the dressing rooms and kitchen are damp and decaying. I suspect the problems would only be solved by clearing the site and creating a new, modern building."

Preliminary architects' plans suggest the solution could be one modern building with a cafeteria, theatre space for 80 people, proper dressing rooms and a lighting box, another smaller hall for 60, a meetings room for 20, offices and a new kitchen.

The church would probably want to agree with any new trust about the use of any new building, although a church annexe means its Sunday children's groups are already catered for. It would also retain ownership of the land.

Churchwarden Tony Walton said: "A village trust could access certain funding, such as lottery funding, that the church couldn't. The other advantage is that it will pass the running and maintenance of the building into the hands of those who use it most."

Next month: we detail every Kairos plan from every cluster