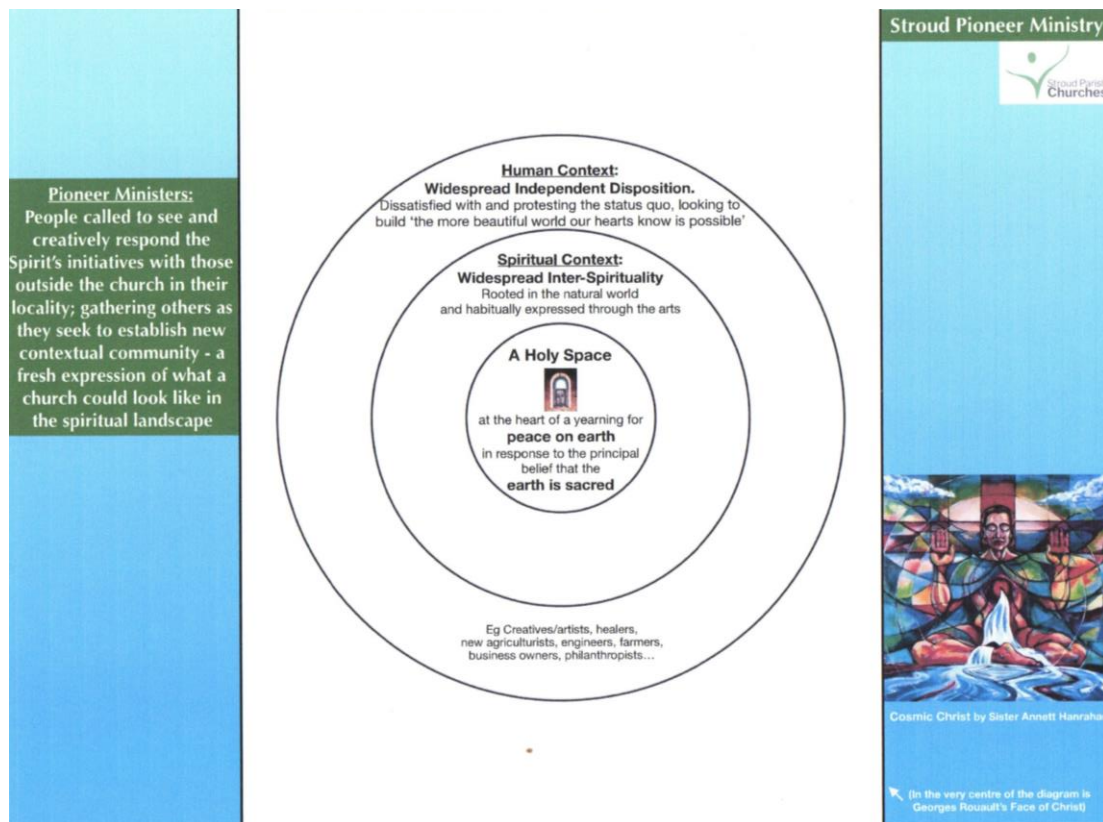




“Seeds and Roots”

Revd Simon Howell, Pioneer Minister, Stroud Team Ministry

I am a Pioneer Minister for the Stroud Team. The purpose of the Pioneer Ministry is to be the ‘yeast in the dough’ (Jesus’ words - Matthew 13:33) of the vibrant spirituality of the town. For instance, the Stroud Sacred Music Festival sprang from that impulse. This was the first step in literally flinging open the church doors to the spiritual explorers of the town and ushering in a new era of hospitality to them at St Laurence.



The above illustration expresses this as a snapshot of the Stroud landscape and, although deliberately not an exhaustive picture, does capture a major facet of the make-up of the town: the facet in which the SCPA is intentionally situated - hopefully with its central ‘Holy Space’ at St Laurence’s (pictured at the centre) at the spiritual heart of the town.

St Laurence was called into being as a church - so who is Christ in this vision of the church as a Holy Space at the heart of the town? The artwork by Sister Annett Hanrahan (‘Cosmic Christ’) at the bottom right is spotlighted: Christ is the Universal Christ - the original divine presence from the very beginning, the universal source of all (John 1:3-5). The vast wooden statue of Christ on the top of the rood screen in St Laurence’s can therefore be seen as depicting his radically inclusive, universal embrace.