

## Overview of Parish Needs and Church Development Plan PCC Meeting June 12 2023

At the Talkabout I got a sense that we need to revisit our vision and evaluate whether it still works or whether it needs a refresh for the next season.

Essentially our vision is of faithfulness to God and His promises, rooted and grounded in Christ who offers life in all its fullness.

We have a strapline "*Christ Church as a Living Well and Christ Church living well*" which indicates a twofold emphasis on both place and people.

We have journeyed with this vision for nearly 10 years hence it might need a refresh that speaks to our current situation post pandemic, experiencing war in Europe with diminished confidence in institutions.

The vision comes from the Bible particularly the transformational conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. It is about recognising who Jesus is and receiving the acceptance and wholeness that he offers which cannot be contained and must be shared.

Hence the Mission of '**Knowing**, (who God is) **Growing** (In our discipleship and likeness of Jesus) and **Going**' (out in love and service empowered by the Spirit). We have 3 main ministry strands in which we do this – **Spirituality** (prayer and worship), **Discipleship** (teaching and learning), **Mission** (outreach initiatives) and we have related them to living well with God, (Spirituality) with others (Mission) and ourselves (Discipleship).

In parallel the C of E has been evolving its overall strategy underpinned by the values of '*Humbler, simpler and bolder*' which we found very attractive and have sought to apply to our vision too. That we might be humbler, acknowledging we are not the only show in town and building partnerships, ecumenically and with other like-minded organisations e.g., schools, uniforms etc. Not over complicating things doing less but doing it well and seeking to be brave in taking risks to see the growth of God's kingdom.

Guildford Diocese has also been refreshing its vision of '*Transforming Church, Transforming Lives*' with less emphasis on 12 goals but 3 strategic areas, **Growing Disciples, Growing Diversity and Growing Community**. Alongside the 3 priorities they also created a set of imagine statements

- Imagine a Church that is rooted in prayer, daily recognising our dependence on the God who saves, guides, strengthens and grows the Kingdom.
- Imagine a Church where people of all ages reach their full potential as disciples and leaders, cheering one another on in the adventure of following Jesus.
- Imagine a Church that worships in many ways and places, building diverse, holy, attractive communities of faith that are nourished through word and sacrament, alive in the Spirit, and accessible in every way.
- Imagine a Church at the heart of the communities we serve, reaching out to the poor and marginalised with compassion and purpose, challenging injustice, and bearing gospel fruit around the world.

These speak to us at CC through our living well vision as we develop our mission and ministry in these areas. Currently the PCC has prioritised,

1. **Evangelism and outreach** seeking 10% annual growth, celebrating new people coming to faith in Jesus.
2. **Discipleship and Growing leaders** being more strategic in our learning programs, establishing a new home group and identifying new vocations.
3. **Children and young people** – encouraging greater ownership of this ministry across the congregation and building on links with schools, uniforms and CCUFC.
4. **Buildings fit for purpose** – hence the upgrade of 278 The Greenway, plans for redeveloping the hall and reviewing the church heating system.

#### Where do I see the future?

I was greatly inspired by Ray Simpsons 'villages of God' where he imagines churches as new monastic communities providing for all types of need. **Spiritual** - spaces for prayer, sanctuary and quiet; **educational** – spaces for stimulation and challenge through courses and activities; **hospitable** providing food and shelter; **recreational** – creative and fun through workshops, exhibitions and events. **Sustainable** perhaps with a community garden or fridge.

As a Living Well I imagine CC as a church that is a lively resource for all, where both young and old can work together on community projects that address the social needs of loneliness and isolation. Physically in a place that is a community hub that offers a range of activities at any given time, not restricted due to space or security, but also prophetically through its people who are engaged in a variety of local initiatives e.g. Spinnaker, Engage, Street Pastors, Hope into Action, CAP, Teracycle etc. anything that demonstrates the love of God in action.

As a community hub I imagine a place that is open for prayer, fellowship, and support.

- No security worries because it is staffed daily with volunteers.
- No safeguarding worries because we have built a culture of everyone is responsible, and we have multiple toilet facilities.
- No accessibility worries because people can use the safe, warm spaces.

A place that could offer employment and shelter to those disadvantaged or in need as well one that strives for the highest possible standards in sustainability both ecologically and financially.

I already belong to a church that takes faith and witness seriously. I see daily deeply committed people who shine with the light of Christ. I desire to see more people added to our fellowship because what we have is good and we want to share it.

#### For the PCC to discuss

1. Do we still want to use the strapline of living well?
2. If not, how do we discern something new?
3. How best might we communicate the vision?

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