



**MISSION
ACTION PLAN
2016-2020**

**with agreed Priorities for
2018/2020**

Introduction

In recent years St Stephen's Church has experienced growth and renewal. We have planted new Sunday services, seen attendance increase and more than doubled our planned giving. A number of mid-week groups have been established and prayer ministry is available at all main services.

The worship at St Stephen's embraces a range of styles. The 9am Sunday morning service has a traditional feel and uses standard Common Worship liturgy with organ and hymns. The 10.30am service is intentionally informal, is liturgy light with contemporary worship songs led by a band. Other services reflect this diversity with liturgical Morning Prayer (Mon – Fri) and Evening Prayer on a Sunday. A single mid-week Communion service uses Common Worship liturgy but is held informally with an open discussion based on the Bible readings. Occasional evening celebrations are held which allow more opportunities for extended sung worship and prayer ministry.

The teaching and sermons at St Stephen's are biblically based and usually follow a theme relevant to Church life. The Church of England lectionary is used for the main seasons of the Church year. The use of Spiritual Gifts is encouraged – a prayer time before the Sunday morning services allows space for people to share prophetic words and pictures that the Spirit may be saying to us. Sunday evening celebrations, prayer meetings and small groups also often encourage the use of spiritual gifts. A number of mid-week Connect Groups have been established, Alpha is run every autumn and other mid-week courses are held when appropriate.

Over the past few years we have invested in our building, replacing the Church boiler, repairing the roof, renovating the Reception area, installing a new sound and data projection system. We now have plans to refurbish the toilet area, refurbish the former choir vestry to enable use as a comfortable office/meeting room and possibly build a first floor extension. This is now known as the West Wing Project. 30 years after the move from the 'old' church in the roundabout further maintenance work will be needed in the near future.

We are keen to make a deeper connection with the wider community and to see more people come to faith in Jesus. However, this is increasingly challenging in an area which is changing as house prices continue to rise, reducing the number of young adults and families who can afford to live near to the church. An annual Community Fete has attempted to reach out to all parts of the Parish by providing a free event which blesses the community and provides opportunities for us to share our faith. We also seek to use natural opportunities in church life and the wider community life for outreach.

Less affluent areas are located at the furthest western boundaries of the Parish. Over many years the Church has attempted to make stronger connections with these areas and attempted to run different expressions of community engagement. In order to engage fully with the whole Parish we wish to undertake a community audit to help direct our future actions.

As part of the Diocese of London....

We share a vision of a Church for London that is Christ-centred and outward looking. We seek to be more **confident** in speaking and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, more **compassionate** in serving communities with the love of God the Father and more **creative** in reaching new people and places in the power of the Spirit.

How are we doing at the moment?

We believe that there are a number of things that we do well and in the coming years we wish to build on them. These include:

- inspiring worship and high quality teaching
- having a generous heart towards others
- being a welcoming, loving and caring community

The areas where we need to improve include:

- better engagement with our community (inc those who use our building during the week)
- developing initiatives to spread the good news of Jesus
- developing our youth and children's work
- equipping every member for mission and ministry
- reaching out to the least and the lost
- being more open to the work of the Holy Spirit
- doing more of the things that Jesus did when he lived on earth

Our future plans

As we look towards 2020 our ambition is to sustain and continue the growth of recent years. We want to see growth in numbers, passion, depth of spirituality and finances. We are also keen to change the balance of usage of our church facilities during the week to enable more activities run directly by the St Stephen's community whilst ensuring that the wider community are able to rent the building at other times. Taking into account our desire for continued growth and the analysis above, our ambitions for the next few years are as follows:

Children and Young People

We will encourage children and young people to know Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him:

- Consult with children and young people and their families
- Encourage young people to serve
- Engage an overseer, paid or voluntary but passionate about this ministry
- Hold more events to attract non church young people such as football, music, drama and dance
- Create a place to go on a regular basis
- Develop links with schools where doors are open
- 3G. Linked generations mentoring
- Run a summer Holiday Club
- Run a Parenting Course

Discipleship

We want every member of our church to deepen their relationship with Jesus and affect every aspect of their lives:

- **Equipping every member for mission and ministry**
 - Ensure that the vision of the Church is understood by all members through teaching and explanation and integrate into everyday life so that it becomes part of our DNA
 - Help people to grow and become passionate Christians
 - Encourage and equip individuals to lead and run regular groups or programmes, or one off events, including:
 - raising up, empowering and supporting new leaders of all ages
 - 'small groups' to run Alpha etc
 - special services such as 'Messy Church' and seasonal events
 - one off events such as concerts, social, courses and breakfasts
 - develop a mentoring framework to support individuals on their discipleship journey
- **Generosity of heart**
 - Encourage all members to reach out to the least and lost through social action and fighting injustice involvement in local mission
- **Integration of New People**
 - Develop our systems to ensure that new people continue to receive a warm welcome to the building but also receive appropriate follow-up to help them integrate

- Develop and extend the number of Connect Groups and be more intentional to enable all members to be a part of a group

Outreach

We seek to follow Jesus' mandate to go and serve our community, make disciples and give others the opportunity to respond to Him in faith.

- **Engaging with our community (inc Hall Users)**
 - Conduct a community audit to identify needs and priorities especially in the less affluent parts of the Parish
 - Find appropriate ways to engage with both the wealthy and less affluent areas of the parish
 - Provide welcome information/invitation to new residents especially in areas of new build
 - Work with other 'people of peace'
 - Set up more St Stephen's owned and run initiatives e.g. CAP Job Club
 - Encourage uniformed organisations who are connected to St Stephen's
 - Find creative ways to engage with Hall Users and their families
 - Use our catering facilities for mission and outreach
 - Establish a 'Get Together' type event - opening the church for single people
- **Evangelism**
 - Encourage and develop more opportunities to share our faith in Jesus. These may be on a large scale whole Church basis (such as our Community Fete), equipping individuals on their Frontlines, or fresh initiatives
 - Seek to work with local schools to engage with pupils and families
 - Seek opportunities to engage with growing student population in Ealing

Worship and Prayer

We want to be people who are committed to seeking the presence of God in prayer, worship and our community life.

- **Continuing to provide inspiring worship**
 - Create more opportunities for people to come together to worship
 - Ensure that all worship services have space to be open to the leading of the Spirit and to encourage the use of Spiritual Gifts where appropriate
 - Recognise our different styles of worship by celebrating and developing the distinctiveness of each of our main services
 - Encourage more personal testimonies in worship
 - Encourage every member to play their part in the ministry of St Stephen's
- **Continuing to ensure good quality teaching**
 - Ensure that sermon series are topical and relate to everyday life
 - Include a 'God questions' slot in some services
 - Develop discipleship routes for those new to faith, or going deeper

Other

- **Developing our buildings**
 - Complete plans and works on the West Wing project – upgrading our toilets and creating new meeting rooms/offices to enable more effective mission
 - Increase contact with hall users...leaflets, posters etc
- **Growing in activity to promote environmental awareness**
 - Seeking to become an 'eco-church', ensure that the building is as eco-friendly as budgets/needs permit
 - Encourage individual members to become more active in pursuing environmental friendly actions
- **Communication**
 - Develop further our website, and other new media to support our mission
 - Develop applications to allow the sharing of information by those in church roles
- **Celebrating together**
 - Provide opportunities for the church community to celebrate together
 - Aim to celebrate in 2017 the 150th anniversary of the St Stephen's Church Community

Agreed Priorities for 2018/2020

Discovering and serving our community

We seek to follow Jesus' mandate to go and serve our community, make disciples and give others the opportunity to respond to Him in faith.

- Encourage and develop opportunities for people to share their faith in Jesus
- Explore possibility of starting a regular session for people whose first language is not English
- Develop further links with local schools
- Develop literature about St Stephen's to distribute to new homes in the area
- Help new people to be integrated into church life after their initial welcome

Deepening our Faith

We want every member of our church to deepen their relationship with Jesus and so that it affects every aspect of their lives:

- Develop and promote Bible in a Year and other models for personal Bible study
- Develop and promote more Connect Groups including a post Alpha Group
- Develop more themed sermon series
- Grow the number of Prayer partnerships/accountability relationships
- Develop our provision for older people esp. those who are lonely
- Renew our Men's and Women's Ministries

We want to be people who are committed to seeking the presence of God in prayer, worship and our community life.

- Ensure that all worship services have space to be open to the leading of the Spirit and to encourage the use of Spiritual Gifts where appropriate
- Create more opportunities for quiet reflection especially with specific Quiet Mornings
- Allow appropriate opportunities for services to be more interactive
- Discern and encourage new 'leaders'
- Enable people to develop their creative gifts

Developing Work with Children and Families and Young People

We will encourage children and young people to know Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him:

- Increase opportunities to pray specifically with and for children and young people
- Create opportunities for young people to lead Sunday services and preach
- Develop All Age Services
- Develop a new 'Messy Church' style of service
- Develop more links with main Sunday morning teaching and what happens in children's groups
- Develop more support for families to help them all to grow in their faith
- Create mid-week youth activities
- Encourage people to 'babysit' to enable parents to attend events that will grow their faith

Other

- Review our publicity materials and house style
- Complete plans and works to upgrade our toilets and create a new meeting room
- Develop the external areas of the Church grounds in line with Eco-Church guidelines
- Find ways to open the Church building more (recognising personal safety and security issues)
- Improve our 'eco-church' rating including ensuring that the building is as eco-friendly as possible

Our Vision Statement

Our Vision is

Worshipping Jesus – Growing Together – Reaching Others

We aim to achieve our Vision through:

Children and Young People

We will encourage children and young people to know Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him.

- We will provide opportunities for teaching and nurture of our young people both as part of our Sunday teaching programme and also during the week
- We plan to direct additional resources towards our work with young people through our own work and in conjunction with other Christian partners

Discipleship

We want every member of our church to deepen their relationship with Jesus and affect every aspect of their lives

- We will develop a structure of mid-sized and small groups to enable all members to find a place of welcome
- We will seek to equip members to live as passionate followers of Jesus
- We will provide ongoing leadership, Biblical teaching, prayer and practical support

Outreach

We seek to follow Jesus' mandate to go and serve our community, make disciples and give others the opportunity to respond to Him in faith.

- We recognise that we need to live out our faith day by day in the places where we find ourselves
- We are committed to serving and engaging with the local community both by ourselves and in partnership with others
- We will be intentional in finding ways to present the good news of the Gospel in ways that are accessible to those outside the Church community
- We are also committed to working with others to share the love of Christ in other parts of the world

Worship and Prayer

We want to be people who are committed to seeking the presence of God in prayer, worship and our community life.

- We will regularly review our worship services to ensure that they facilitate a genuine encounter with God
- We will seek to develop patterns of worship and a community life that equip Church members to live in such a way that others are drawn to faith
- We want to provide a variety of worship styles including traditional and informal
- We will develop opportunities for prayer gatherings both in smaller groups and in a wider Church context
- We will offer personal prayer support for healing or any other need through the provision of a trained Prayer Ministry Team

Our Values Statement

The Values that we strive to demonstrate in fulfilling our Vision are:

- Ensuring that **worship and prayer** are at the centre of all we do; whilst we are aware of our traditions we seek to be open to the fresh leading of the Holy Spirit
- Seeking guidance from the **authority of the Bible** and the **presence of the Holy Spirit**, to inform and direct our life, witness and service
- Reaching out in **mission**, sharing the love of Jesus, and providing practical support to the community that we are called to serve
- Representing and celebrating the **diversity** of our local community
- Supporting **social justice** and a concern for the **environment**
- Being **generous** with our money, our time and our gifts
- Creating an **atmosphere** that is relaxed, hospitable and respectful and in which all members and visitors feel welcome
- Caring for young and old alike so that people feel part of a **church family** that seeks unity, provides mutual support, and values each individual

