

PRAY

Today is our annual meeting
and so I am going to talk about **our vision** – about our direction of travel
and there **are four parts** to our vision

1 Worship = which is all about **being with Jesus**

Now you will not be surprised that our vision comes from Jesus

And in **Matthew 22.37,38**

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

So What are our goals for Worship?**1**

I would like to see - **our Usual Sunday Attendance ~ 320 adults**
which is about 7% of the population

AND

2

I would like to see **members coming to church ~45 weeks per year**
Everyone needs holidays
If people only come to church 26 weeks of the year
they will learn and grow half as much as if they come every week

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So How are we doing?

The church is open 9 – 5 seven days a week

and about 350 people come into church each week

Digital church is our largest congregation

Our best attended service 250 people watched online

But only about 60 – 80 ever watched live

And about 2/3rds of our audience watches on catch up

Before lockdown at 10.00am we were getting ~70 people a week

Currently we are getting 40 – 50

and my hope is that in a year's time we will be double what we are now
and for that to happen we simply need
each household to bring another household

Before lockdown 4.00pm was ~25 people

And so it is our second largest face to face congregation

But singing together is such an important part of this service

That it has not yet restarted

8.00am communion is typically 12 people

And so long as there are 12 people present it will continue

Because after all Jesus only had 12

6.30pm restarted last week and there were 15 people

And like the 8,00

if we continue to get 12 or more then this service will continue

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So What do I want each of us to do about worship?

I want to suggest we do 2 spiritual practices which are

1 Weekly worship

If you are in Hungerford please come to worship

And if you are away for half of the Sundays in the year

Please consider reducing the number of weekends away

For the sake of your spiritual health

2 Daily Devotions

The spiritual practice which will help you grow in your faith

more than any other

is to read a short passage from the bible each day

and to write down what you think God is saying to you

Ali and I do this every day and I would encourage you to do the same

1 Worship which is all about being with Jesus

2 Discipleship = which is all about **becoming like Jesus**

Just like **Henry Jefferies is a master baker**
And **his apprentices** are **learning to do what he can do**

Jesus is the leader of the church and we are Jesus **apprentices**
Learning to **BE like him in character** in love and joy and peace
To DO what he did and **to SAY what he would say**

and a bible verse which encapsulates this is **Romans 12.2**
which says

² **Do not conform to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is
– his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

And **What are our goals for discipleship?**

I would like to see **50% of our members Learning in home groups**
Jesus preached to the crowd + then explained his sermon to the 12
And that is what the home groups do for about 30 weeks of the year
The passage we preach about at 10.00 and 4.00
Is the same passage that we discuss in the home groups

So How are we doing?

Currently **we have 4 home groups with about 40 members**
Out of a total membership of 143
so I would give us 5/10 = we are about half way there
a new home group is starting this term led by Mike and Charlie
it will be on Thursday at 8.00pm on Zoom
and I would strongly encourage you to join
I have been a vicar for 30 years and in my experience
everyone who goes to a home group **LEARNS** about the faith

What do I want each of us to do about Discipleship?

Four things all of which come from Luke 10

1 Speak Peace

I would like us to talk about one another with love and joy and peace

2 To Eat and drink together

Ali and I have taken to inviting a family from church
to eat with us once a week

Why don't you do the same?

3 To Serve the church

This could be as simple as joining one of the Sunday service teams
Who usually serve tea and coffee at the end of church
Who provide the bible readers and the people who lead the prayers
And if you would like to join a team

Please see Sandra or Jane Pike, Alison or Julie

4 Share what God is doing

And the easiest way to do this is to join a home group
And if you would like to join a group

Please speak to Mike or Charlie Morecroft

2 Discipleship means becoming like Jesus

3 Mission = which is all about **doing what Jesus did**

And the way Jesus described this in **Matthew 22.39** is

³⁹ **And the second commandment is like it:**

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

So what are our goals for our mission in Hungerford?

I think this is the most difficult part of our vision

Bishop Steven, has made a great suggestion to help us to do this and his suggestion is to have an **Annual Rhythm of Mission**

So the **Autumn Term** is about **SOWING**

When we **pray for, invite and bring** our neighbours to church

And I suggest we **pray for, invite and bring** our 8 nearest households

The **Spring Term** is about **LEARNING**

And I plan to run **Alpha** each January

Alpha is a course to debate the gospel

And idea is **invite everyone who comes to a Christmas service**

And the **Summer Term** is about **SERVING**

Which is all about **MAKING CONTACT** with new people

Through the Toddlers group, Coffee corner and Friends events

How are we doing?

During Lockdown this area of church life has struggled

There has been was no Toddlers, no Coffee Corner + no Friends events

BUT my hope and prayer is that by Easter next year

we will have had a vaccination

and our new normal will include **being kind to our neighbours**

and **praying for them and inviting them and bringing them**

to Toddlers, and the Coffee Corner and the Friends events

What do I want each of us to do about Mission?

I want to suggest the same four spiritual practices from Luke 10

1 Speak Peace

Talk about our neighbours with love and joy and peace

2 Eat and drink with your neighbours

So during lock down two households have been allowed to meet

And so we have had two neighbouring households round

and we have another one booked in for next week

3 Serve the community

I know many of you have been shopping for those who are self isolating

OR you could join us to help Keep Britain Tidy

Meeting at the church on Thursday at 9.00

OR a bit further ahead - you could join us on Thursday 26 November

We have 420 trees to plant on the hill above Marsh lock

4 Share what God is doing with your neighbours

Such as for example

our tree planting was on the national news last Wednesday evening

3 Mission is all about doing what Jesus did

And by no means least
4 Children and Youth

I am sure that you know Jesus said - Matthew 19.14
¹⁴**Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'**

So what are our goals for our children and youth?
And I have been enormously challenged in this area during lockdown
1

I came across a quote from Nelson Mandela who said
There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.
How do we treat the children of Hungerford?
What does that reveal about the soul of the church?

2
I was reminded of Archbishop Henry Orombi, Archbishop of Uganda
Who led a weeks mission with us in Eversley
He said - **"40% of the churches effort should be spent on children and youth"**

I would like **7% of the children and youth involved in the church**
Which is 5 in each school year + and that means
20 children at ABC our toddlers group
35 children in Sunday school
3 young people in Time 4 YOUth

And I would like to see **40% of our church members becoming Children or youth leaders and helpers**
I am aware that this is a massive change from where we have been
But the reality is we are all getting older
And the long term future of St Lawrence's church
Depends upon us including children and youth and their parents
I think this area of church life needs a lot more time and effort

So How are we doing?

Before lockdown **ABC was about 12 children and 15 adults**
But ABC was closed during lockdown

Robin Sharples is leading the Sunday school
Before lockdown **Sunday School had about 15 children on books**
And about 5 leaders and helpers
But during lockdown
despite the Sunday school leaders making some great videos
and putting them online
But as far as we know only about 6 children have watched them

James McMahon is leading Time 4 YOUth
And we have continued on zoom during lockdown
We have 4 young people and 3 leaders
And James has found some great content in prayer course + bible course
both of which have subsequently been offered to the adults

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What do I want each of us to do about Mission?
I would like us to do the same 4 spiritual practices from Luke 10

1 Speak Peace
I want us to all **speak positively about children all of the time**

2 Eat and Drink with children and youth
And after lockdown
that could be as simple as eating a biscuit with a child at the end of church

3 Serve our children and youth
I want to see many more of us leading and helping
with the ABC with the Sunday school and with Time 4 YOUth

4 Sharing what God is doing with our children and youth

4th Priority = Children and Youth

And finally – by way of conclusion – I have one last image

I have read this book **Heromaker by Dave Ferguson**

Which is about some research about the church done in the states
this research is summarised by this diagram
and this research shows

80% of churches are declining or plateauing

16% of churches are growing

4% of churches are reproducing or multiplying

Which means have started a new daughter church

And the church of England has decided
to stop subsidising the 80% who are declining or plateauing
and instead to give grants to the 4% who are multiplying

I don't want to be a Hero

Who burns themselves out leading a growing church
which collapses when I retire in 8 years time

Instead - I want to be a Hero Maker

Who enables YOU to lead a great church
Which plants new churches
And which thrives when I retire

Lets PRAY