

Not The Vicar's Letter

St. James Church Vision 2017-2023

Growing disciples; wider, younger and deeper

Earlier in the year there was a questionnaire issued and the replies from these were used to influence the 7 year plan that the PCC was formulating. This vision was given out at the APCM.

As we are in vacancy I thought that it would be a good time to hold this vision in our thoughts and prayers as we think about the person that we would like to come to St James to help us in our journey.

Sarah Clark, our Archdeacon came along to talk to us about our way forward. The first thing to be done is to create our Parish Profile, which will include information about us as a church, a community and also about the kind of person we are looking for in a new vicar. She stated that we were very good as a church in creating contacts. "Opening doors", then asked us a set of questions and the PCC would like to hear from members of St James their response to them.

The 3 main questions are:

1. Within the context of open doors, why do you think average Sunday attendances have declined and average age of congregation has got older?
2. What do you think needs to happen to reach people of the parish who live further away from the church site?
3. What **help** are you looking for in our new incumbent to turn contacts in to enquirers and enquirers in to disciples?

If you have any feed back on these questions or on the vision please pass it on to either of the church wardens or any member of the PCC.

A. What are we aiming/praying for?

Wider

Significantly more people joining the church (across all the different services) including more men, those in business, socially disadvantaged.

Significantly more people joining the church from the local area

Significantly more people in the **total** number in the congregations – everyone matters not just new people! [Back door closed as well as front door open!]

New worshipping community that is disability and dementia-friendly.

Significant number of adults being baptised and confirmed

Younger

Significant increase and retention of young people 10+ - 18

Significantly more younger adults aged 18-30

Significantly more younger families

Deeper

Significantly more people participating in dedicated prayer.

Significantly more people joining nurture courses

Higher proportion of the congregations engaging with discipleship initiatives – e.g. home/study groups, short courses, study days

Significantly more people involved in social justice issues or projects

B. What are our general and specific priorities to achieve these;

General priorities

Loving God & each other!

Prayer

Appreciating what we do well & what it means to be an all age & all stage community

More confidence in explaining what it means to be a whole-life disciple of Christ

Everyone knowing their baptismal calling – how do I play my part as a disciple of Jesus to turn the vision into a reality?

Specific Priorities

Clarifying children & families' ministry priorities

Identifying men's ministry team

Creating clarity about the stages we offer from visitor to enquirer to disciple

Balancing finances

Investing in the church buildings – long-term solutions to heating

Using social media so it becomes a natural part of how we communicate

Establishing new initiatives – e.g. muddy church, dementia & disability-friendly congregation.