

# Vision and Strategy

Updated November 2017

## **Our Vision**

Our vision is of a church which

- proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ
- contributes towards a just and fair society
- promotes the place of the Church serving communities

## **The Ministry of our Church**

Liverpool Parish Church has its origins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and since 1699 has been a parish in its own right. Whilst today's Tower dates from 1815, most of our Church buildings are post-war, following the bombing of the Church in 1941.

Throughout this long history the ministry of the Church has changed and evolved. From the earliest times there was a particular ministry with sailors whose last and first sight of land was the Tower. A century ago dockers associated themselves with the Church, as the main industry of the Pierhead was trading vessels. As Liverpool grew in importance, and after the building of the Town Hall in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the civic links with the City increased: the Rector is chaplain to the Town Hall and the Lord Mayor and takes part in many civic events throughout the year, some of which are held at the Parish Church. And as the business and commercial district has grown, the Parish Church's role has evolved further. Today our new challenges are a growing residential population in the City Centre which is looking for traditional parish ministry, and also the tremendous growth in tourism and the visitor economy at the Pierhead.

## **Theological Context**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

*Matthew 28.19*

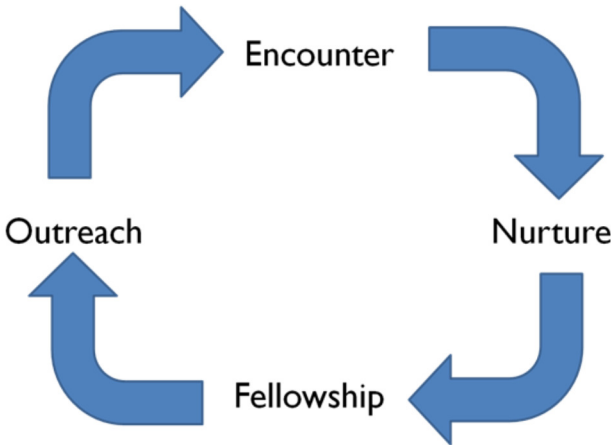
Our ministry is pastoral, educational, spiritual, and above all missional. It is our intention to bring people into a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and into full communion with the Church. We believe that the Church of England is part of the one Catholic Church, and our worship and teaching reflects both the history and the breadth of the

Church. We welcome all people into our building and fellowship.

We believe that God's grace is given to all as a consequence of creation, and that our response to grace is a free choice.

The missionary work of the Church is to encourage the response to grace by drawing people into a relationship with each other and the Church.

At Liverpool Parish Church there are many moments of encounter through the ministry described above. Our intentional approaches to nurture



include open learning events (including regular courses for enquirers and other groups within the City communities), the Lent Talks, worship and study groups within the congregation, times for socializing and fellowship, and our regular acts of public worship.

Through nurture we encourage people to become part of the regular fellowship of the Church. This is primarily focused on the Parish Eucharist on Sunday mornings, but includes regular groups at other times of the week, which extends from Morning Prayer and the Daily Eucharist, through to some of the groups which meet in our building (including the 12-Step groups, which share in our fellowship). Our formal acknowledgement of the fellowship of the Church is celebrated through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and we are brought together as One Body through the Eucharist.

Through the mutual encouragement of our fellowship we gain confidence in our discipleship and are equipped for outreach. It is the duty of all in our fellowship to bring others to an encounter with God through Jesus Christ. As people become confident in their faith, we expect them to draw others into the cycle of Encounter – Nurture – Fellowship – Outreach.

## **Resources**

In order to fulfil our ministry, the Parochial Church Council has identified the following strands of resources which are particular to Liverpool Parish Church.

- People: Clergy; wardens; PCC; Laity (incl paid staff); Congregation; skills and commitment; diversity of background and life experiences; creative skills (e.g. flowers/craft)
- Location: City Centre; waterfront; proximity to iconic buildings; World Heritage Site; growing residential population
- Buildings: Historic site; brand; garden setting; tourist destination; bells/tower; versatile space; refectory and parish centre; flats
- Events: Concerts; fete; tours; civic/military/maritime services; key moments in people's lives (e.g. baptisms etc); toddler group; music; links to civic and business communities
- Reputation: Continuity of worship; stability; historic; open and welcoming; style of worship and ritual; social aspects; hospitality

As part of the renewal of our vision, the Parochial Church Council will use these headings to safeguard and improve our resources.

## **Financial Resources**

Financial resources will always be key to underpinning this work. Finances are often an essential element in maintaining a fully resourced Church. We draw our income from a number of sources, but we encourage regular members of the Church towards realistic planned giving in a tax efficient manner. An annual stewardship appeal to regular members of the congregation expresses gratitude for the giving we have received to resource the mission of the Church, and gives information about the major expenditures of the previous year.

The Parochial Church Council commits itself to prudent use of the finan-

cial resources we have, knowing that we have a responsibility to use wisely gifts which have been generously given.

## **Areas for missionary activity**

The Parochial Church Council has identified five key areas for our energy and resources:

1. Growing the Faith Community
2. Visible Ministry in the City
3. Heritage/Tourism
4. Community Outreach
5. Ministry to residents

The following pages summarize our aspirations and activity in these areas and will be updated as the PCC continues to review progress and to set new challenges.

## **Process**

The PCC will nominate one or two people to be the ‘public face’ of each key area. It will be the task of those people to engage with members of the congregation and to monitor progress of specific targets.

Each of the five areas will form agenda items at successive PCC meetings. PCC will set realistic action points to achieve the aspiration of each area. The PCC will also amend, update and sharpen our approach to each key area so that this becomes an organic rather than a fixed document.

# ***1. Growing/Nurturing the faith community (updated September 2016)***

## ***What do we want to achieve?***

An increase in numbers in our core Sunday congregation, and wider participation in midweek services.

## ***Areas for development***

***Sunday/Weekday Services.*** Our worship is focused on the Parish Eucharist which has a distinct flavour, but must continue to appeal to a broad group. In our current shape we aim to be all age and diverse in one service. Six@Nick's remains a monthly choral service in different forms. We remain committed to Morning Prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist every day. See on p10 for occasional offices. Occasional acts of worship take place outside this pattern.

***Liturgy and Preaching.*** For the sake of both new worshippers and existing ones, we look for a variety of ways to explain and guide people through the liturgy, including through the Sunday 'booklet' and other written resources. Preaching should be of the highest standard and should include home clergy and visiting preachers.

***Welcoming.*** It should not be purely the job of the Clergy, the Church Wardens, and the Sides People. It is everybody's responsibility. We promote the need for everyone to welcome those they do not know.

***Children's Ministry.*** We value a coherent approach to the spirituality and nurture of young people. Since September 2015 a Sunday School has met once a month, but on all Sundays there are suitable toys in the Narthex, where there are also speakers so that the service can be seen and heard. Little Nicks is a way of introducing young families to the Church environment, but we need to continue making the link with Sunday worship. Young people are admitted to Communion at a young age, and Confirmation is encouraged at 12/13.

***Teaching/Spirituality.*** We have a regular pattern of events or courses which always include an annual 'Christian Basics' course, as well as Confirmation preparation (separately for adults and children). We advertise and encourage participation in external events. We organise or take part in Quiet Days and retreats at different times of year.

***Fellowship.*** This primarily takes place in the Narthex on Sundays after the Parish Eucharist or Six@Nick's. There are occasional meals, either in the Refectory or in a restaurant. Simple lunches for charity have been successful. There is the scope for outings.

***Communication.*** We consider that our website is a primary source of information for visitors and congregation looking for detailed information about various aspects of Church life. Our Facebook page is largely focused within the congregation (e.g. lists of requirements for the Food Bank), but Twitter is aimed outside the congregation at the City/Parish. We maintain a database of church members and others who receive a weekly e-bulletin, and there is a separate mailing for parents of children.

## ***Measuring Results***

Increase in numbers attending services; increase in numbers participating in roles within church life; improvement in the diversity of activities.

## **2. Visible Ministry in the City (updated November 2016)**

### ***What do we want to achieve?***

An increase in the number and diversity of people/organizations who engage with the Parish Church, both for Christian worship and teaching, and for receiving our ministry of service.

### ***Areas for development***

*Use of facilities.* We want to offer our facilities – spiritual, pastoral and temporal- to as many groups and organisations within our area that we feel will be beneficial to both them and us. While our principal purpose remains the promotion of Christianity, we are happy to host events with no religious content. However, we retain a bias towards organisations and groups which look to benefit the community. We currently have Op-tions, AA & GA meetings, Choirs and other organisations who use and/or hire our facilities. We continue to improve our facilities (e.g. with AV equipment), and to develop our advertising strategy for room/facility hire.

*Connecting to Christians in professional life.* We have links to a number of professional groups and businesses within the parish, many of whom join us for services at different times of year. We have experience of running events/courses targeted at professionals. The ministry of the Rector has traditionally nurtured many links within the city, but we hope to broaden the relationship to include the whole Church.

*Lent Talks and other events.* ‘Thought leadership’ has a long tradition at St Nick’s. The relaunch of the Lent Talks in 2015 was successful, but there is potential for more events throughout the year to draw in different groups of people. It is important to keep the focus of these events sharp, and for the whole Church to take responsibility for promoting them. Business/City Breakfasts moved ‘off site’ for a number of years, but there is scope for reinventing the brand.

*Finance* We encourage the City to contribute financially to the Parish Church through the annual Voluntary Rate appeal, and special appeals at other times (e.g. the Chair appeal in 2016).

*Exhibitions and displays* These always bring in visitors and we hold a number of exhibitions throughout the year, as well as hosting concert or theatre performances.

### ***Measuring Results***

This can only be gauged by the attendance, and by receiving any repeat business or positive feedback. We should ask people who use the facilities for their honest opinion after the event is over.

### **3. Heritage/Tourism (updated January 2016)**

#### ***What do we want to achieve?***

Making the church's role in the history and current development of faith in Liverpool a more prominent part of the general story of the city both for residents and tourists.

#### ***Areas for development***

*Strategic approach.* We establish a Heritage & Tourism Group, drawn more widely than just from the PCC. The PCC needs to allow the group to operate independently, with reasonable financial expenditure authorized directly by the Rector. The first task should be an audit with the diocesan Heritage Officer.

#### ***Short term goals***

- *Advertising.* We can increase the places where information is given, and look at new ways of reaching the tourist market before they reach the church doors.
- *Welcome Literature.* This needs reviewing and updating urgently.
- *Guided tours.* At the moment we provide tours of the Church at special events (e.g. the Village Fete). Could these be offered more regularly at certain times of year?
- The Church should join the Church Visitor & Tourism Association.
- We should connect with coordinators of the visitor economy in Liverpool, especially Visit Liverpool.

#### ***Long term goals***

- *Narthex.* The Narthex could be made more welcoming. As well as using it for exhibition space, the noticeboards or other display boards could be more informative, especially with history/current ministry.
- *History of the Church.* This might be an expanded version of new welcome literature, but there is scope and material for a more substantial history of the Church.
- *Church Gardens.* The Gardens have recently received some refurbishment, but it might be possible for us to promote a more creative use of the area with events and hospitality.
- *Friends.* It would be useful to start a "Friends of St Nick's" group to keep local and distant friends of the Church (who may not be current members of the congregation) in touch with the work of the Church. The group could have a fundraising role.

#### ***Measuring Results***

An increase in visitors and their financial donations; more dialogue with external groups connected with tourism/heritage; an articulated vision of how we are sharing the Christian faith with visitors.



## 4. Community Outreach (updated July 2017)

### *What do we want to achieve?*

- Engage our church community with practical social outreach.
- Make our church facilities available for use by charitable and other community groups at an affordable cost.
- Reach out to those in need in the City.

### *Existing work*

The more prominent work we are already doing in this area includes:

- Pre-school toddler group (Little Nicks)
- Hosting/subsidising other organizations (especially AA and GA)
- Supporting a Foodbank
- Community Choir
- Shared Reading Group (to be established with The Reader)

### *Future development*

- ⇒ *Available space.* The refurbishment of the Alexandra Room in August 2017 allows us to use a dedicated space for community outreach.
- ⇒ *Community partnership.* We continue to look at groups/organizations within our parish which are already doing similar work and see if we could usefully establish more formal links with them. The resources we can offer are:
- \* Spreading the news. We can use our networks to promote the work of others. For example, we can encourage more firms to donate to the Foodbank via the Church.
  - \* Have more immediate information on A-Boards outside or in the Narthex.
  - \* Encourage volunteers from the congregation to work with partners (as we have done with the Foodbank).
- ⇒ *Worshipping community.* We need to engage more people from St Nick's in our outreach.
- \* **Church & World Action Group.** We have developed good experience in making grants on behalf of PCC, emergency financial collections, planned charity events (e.g. Christian Aid week), and 'hunger lunches', as well as congregational 'projects' (such as the Grove Library Project).
  - \* **PCC Giving.** We hope to be able to maintain a policy of allocating funds for distribution to charities.
  - \* **Educational Charity.** We need to find effective ways of distributing funds from our educational charity.

### *Measuring Results*

We can look for an increase in the number of 'users' (or similar) associated with our outreach, and also for an increase in numbers from the regular congregation participating in this work. We can seek feedback from those involved.

## **5. Ministry to residents (updated November 2017)**

### ***What do we want to achieve?***

We want to increase the opportunities and the effectiveness of those opportunities for city centre residents to engage with St Nick's as their parish church.

### ***Areas for development***

*Worship.* The core of our ministry is in our Parish Eucharist on Sundays where we seek to build a permanent community of Christians in the city centre. An evening choral service continues to be part of our Sunday diet once a month (either Evensong, or a seasonal offering). The daily Eucharist at lunchtime seems less likely to attract residents (depending where they work), but the provision of regular worship at other times may be helpful: e.g. the Thursday Eucharist is now at 6pm. We continue to look to grow our worshipping community (see p6). We need to improve on i) advertising; ii) meeting people where they are (e.g. liturgy or purposeful encounters outside the building); iii) keeping our on-line presence high.

*Occasional Offices.* We now have a Wedding Strategy, launched in February 2015. Very few funerals take place, but in 2014 we began to invite bereaved families back for an All Souls' Service in November. We need to work on a strategy for baptisms, which continue to be reasonably significant in number.

*Groups for residents.* Some of the groups which meet are organized by external users of the building. However, groups such as GA and AA are very much associated with our ministry. In recent years we have started new groups for residents and city workers, and in particular i) Little Nicks, reaching out to young families resident in the city; ii) Shared Reader Group (aimed at residents and workers); iii) Community Choir (also with a mixed target audience). We can look to identify further groups within our parish with whom we might have an active ministry.

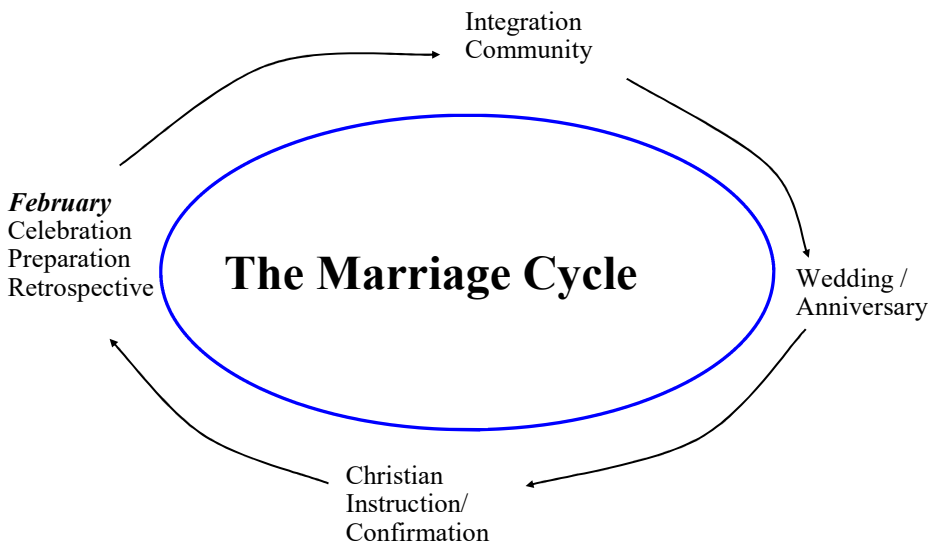
*Events.* Whilst not exclusively aimed at residents of our parish, we identify ourselves as behaving like a 'normal' parish church with events such as 'Summer at St Nick's'. Promoting ourselves as a venue for concerts and exhibitions is also a benefit to residents. We can look for more ways in which individual events might help us serve the resident population.

*Space.* Our internal and external spaces are suitable for a variety of uses. We can explore how we offer the use of this space to those who live around us. For example, residents' groups occasionally use our facilities and this could be promoted further.

### ***Measuring Results***

We look for a growth in numbers. In particular we look to increase the proportion of our regular congregation which lives locally, and the number of people who participate in events.

## *Wedding Strategy (launched in February 2015)*



### **February**

- Six@Nicks has a 'Valentine' theme. Non-Eucharistic. Invitations sent to all those who were married in the previous year (or more?); also to those with weddings booked for the following year.
- Two 'preparation' sessions, focusing on community building, lightweight marriage preparation, basic preparation for life within the church for those attending (i.e. what happens on Sunday mornings and how to be part of it). Sessions could involve some of those married in the previous year.
- Wedding 'menu' morning after Church one Sunday: flowers/organ/bells etc.

### **Integration and Community**

Those attending should begin to integrate and form community in the context of the contacts they made in February. For those in the second year of the cycle they are already feeling a sense of commitment.

### **Wedding and anniversary**

During the year the wedding takes place, or for those in Year 2 the anniversary.

### **Christian Instruction and Confirmation**

All those who were invited to the marriage preparation courses will receive a further letter at Easter inviting them to a summer 'Christian basics' course. For some it will be appropriate to lead on to Confirmation.

