

Vision and Strategy

July 2019

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 13th 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. Today there are five principal areas for ministry: i) Civic; ii) Business; iii) Maritime and Military; iv) Visitor Economy; v) Residents/congregation.

In some of these areas the ministry is an action of the whole Church (for example, ministry to residents/congregation or to the Visitor Economy); in other areas the ministry is done by a few (often the clergy) on behalf of the whole Church. The clergy sit on a large number of boards of trustees or directors, many of which are directly connected to the five principle areas for ministry.

The most significant act of ministry which we offer is keeping the Church open to visitors every day, providing them with space to pray and reflect, and the opportunity to light candles, share in worship, and listen for God.

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”

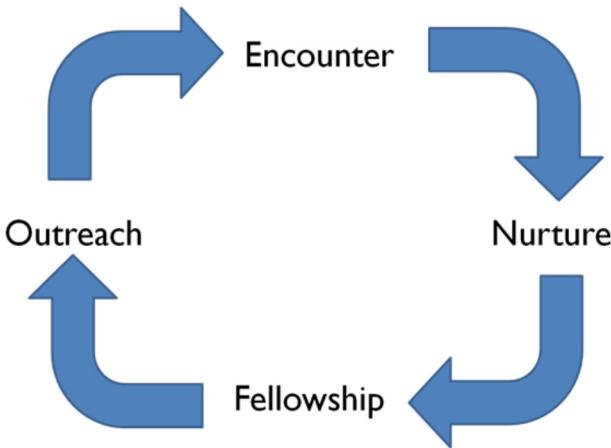
Matthew 28.19

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. We also believe that God’s grace is reflected in the lives of all people, irrespective of gender or sexuality, and we believe that all people should receive an equal welcome.

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, the Lent Programme, 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; visual arts/sculpture
- 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. From our giving, we also support the ministry of the wider church through the Parish Share, which we commit to paying in full every year, and we also give to charity from our shared resources.

The Parochial Church Council commits itself to prudent use of the financial resources we have, knowing that we have a responsibility to use wisely gifts which have been generously given.

A Fair Church in a Fair City

As the City of Liverpool aims to become a Fair City, acknowledging the contract between society and business in promoting equality and justice whilst working for the prosperity of all, we associate ourselves along with the City with the Five Principles of a Purpose Driven Business as articulated by the charity “A Blueprint for Better Business.”

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 a small group of 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.

1. Growing/Nurturing the faith community

What do we want to achieve?

An increase in numbers in our core Sunday congregation, and wider participation in midweek services. A development of congregational life in faith and fellowship.

Current achievements

We offer a good range of services over a full week, and the Church is open every day of the year. The congregation is welcoming and inclusive and we are proud of our 'distinct flavour', both in the style of worship and the style of preaching. Communication with the faith community is strong through the e-bulletin, as well as verbal/printed messages.

Areas for development

Welcoming. Can we train and resource our welcomers/sidespeople more effectively? How do we continue to involve the whole congregation in welcoming people into worship? How can we use refreshments after the service and other social events to encourage congregational fellowship?

Pastoral Offices. Whilst we have strategies for the pastoral offices, can we promote our work in this area as being core to the worship of the Church? How do long-standing members of the congregation relate to our work in this field?

Children's Ministry. How do we develop our Sunday School provision to meet the needs of our young people and to help them grow in their faith? What is the correct balance between a separate group and everyone worshipping together? Young people are admitted to Communion at a young age, and Confirmation is encouraged at 12/13.

Teaching/Spirituality. We hold an annual 'Christian Basics' course (often linked to Confirmation), but how do we help existing church members to grow in faith and knowledge? How can we use external contacts/people/resources more effectively? How can we encourage the use of retreats and Quiet Days?

Fellowship. Although this primarily takes place in the Narthex on Sundays after the Parish Eucharist or Evensong, how can we provide a regular programme of social events which both for everyone, and also targeted at particular groups within the congregation? How can we develop people's engagement with the pastoral team?

Communication. The website is a primary source of information for visitors and congregation looking for detailed information. Our Facebook page (when used) is largely focused within the congregation, but Twitter is aimed outside the congregation at the City/Parish. The weekly e-bulletin gives more immediate notices. In what way are people *not* hearing the messages of the Church?

Measuring Results

We can evaluate:

1. Our outputs against the 'Areas for development'
2. A numerical increase in worshippers
3. An increase in engagement with activities outside regular acts of worship.

Vision Leaders: Pauline Lewis; Guy Barker; Sarah Doyle; Nick Ledingham

2. Visible Ministry in the City

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.

Current achievements

A broad range of groups make use of our church, from self-help groups through to choirs and an orchestra. We have expertise and a good reputation for the visual arts, music, events, regular groups, civic-related services. With two acts of worship every day and a policy of having the church open to visitors daily, we are nourishing the spiritual life of the city.

Areas for development

Events Can we sustain a regular programme of events throughout the year instead of focusing on Lent? What is the balance between hosting organizations or producing our own events? Can we expand the scope of our existing regular events/activities, either through doing them more or doing them in a more ambitious way?

Publicity Can we use printed material, social media and on-line resources, print and broadcast media more effectively to promote both individual events and on-going ministry?

People Can we get more people from the church community involved to help with this kind of visible ministry activity?

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, and many of these links are through the clergy and other individuals. How can we develop these links with institutions? How can we offer explicitly Christian teaching and/or worship within the Commercial District?

Finance How can we encourage more individuals and businesses in the City to contribute financially to the Parish Church through the annual Voluntary Rate appeal, and special appeals at other times?

Art, Exhibitions and displays How can we develop our programme of exhibitions and displays to meet the needs of the community around us. How can we use them to engage with faith and spirituality?

Measuring Results

We can evaluate:

1. Our outputs against the 'Areas for development'
2. Attendance by the business community at services and other events
3. Reaction by honest internal and external appraisal.

Vision Leaders: Peter Summerfield, Louis Johnson, Fr Bill Addy

3. Heritage/Tourism

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.

Current achievements

We have a permanent History Exhibition in the Narthex. There are leaflets for visitors to the church, and throughout the building there are interpretation panels describing the Christian use of the building. The leaflets are available in a selection of languages. A team of Tour Guides from the congregation are available and we take bookings for outside groups. Heritage and Tourism have a representative at Liverpool Information Network Meetings. Donation boxes are available.

Areas for development

Animation There is a continual need for fresh displays and exhibitions within the Church aimed at the visitor economy as well as repeat visits from a local audience.

Interpretation and Guides Although there is a general Church leaflet, there is the potential for other print literature to describe the Church and its heritage. We should continually review the languages and format of these. External 'advertising' can be distributed to partner organizations across the City. Contact with and training for Blue Badge guides and other similar groups could be developed.

Partners We should develop our partnerships or links with other City organizations which attract visitors with similar interests. As well as National Museums Liverpool, we share interests with organizations such as Western Approaches, Marketing Liverpool, Tourist Information etc. A database of partners and a system of distribution of print material is needed.

Family History We receive frequent enquiries about family history, either about the registers we hold (or are deposited in the Central Library) or about the context of people's family events in the past. We need to have a coherent system for responding to enquiries.

Donations We have good facilities for cash donations, but we need to develop electronic and digital donation points.

Measuring Results

1. We can develop ways to count visitor numbers.
2. We can measure the number of leaflets taken from distribution centres.
3. We can measure traffic on our website and interactions on social media.

Vision Leaders: Christine Hill (not PCC); Peter Woods; John Mason

4. Community Outreach

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.

Current achievements

Hosting/subsidising other organizations (especially AA and GA), and supporting the Micah Foodbank (both with donations and volunteer time). We host or run groups aimed at non-Church members, including the Community Choir, an orchestra, and a Shared Reading Group. Our Church & World Action Group leads us in occasional projects to support charities.

Areas for development

Congregational engagement On-going and short-term projects need to be promoted in the congregation. How do we continue to invite donations to the Foodbank? How do we encourage volunteering?

Educational Charity How do we use the (modest) funds available from our educational charity? Can we connect more effectively with those in need in education in the Parish?

Church & World Action Group This group acts on behalf of the PCC in allocating grants to charity, emergency financial collections, and initiating charitable ‘projects’. How can this work be more prominent within the congregation and also to visitors and those on the fringes of church life?

Practical help Our location and open door policy means that we have daily encounters with those in need. In what ways are we responding to the need which presents itself at our doors every day? What partnerships are we maintaining to help us do this?

Measuring Results

We can evaluate:

1. Our outputs against the ‘Areas for development’
2. The number of members of the regular congregation involved in Community Outreach on behalf of the Parish
3. The number of activities taking place.

Vision Leaders: Elaine Price; Sarah Wrightson; Eva Cookey; Mark Lewis

5. Ministry to residents

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.

Current achievements

We have a growing regular group of worshippers among the residents for Sunday morning and Choral Evensong. Our on-line presence is maintained to reach out to the city community. We have many events which appeal to residents, including Summer at St Nick's, music, theatre, and speakers. Targeted seasonal services attract good numbers.

Areas for development

First Contact How can we effectively gather contact information and then follow up from the multiple ways residents encounter us?

Gated/entryphone developments How can we develop effective ways of reaching into residential buildings? As more flats are built, including in Liverpool Waters, what strategies can extend our reach? How can we engage partners to assist?

Students We often have one or two students in the regular congregation. How can we extend our reach into student communities? What do we provide for the students in our congregation (worship/hospitality/friendship)?

Children and young people How can we build on our contacts through baptism so that young families stay in touch with the Church?

Events What networks are most effective in promoting our events to residents? Where is the gap in the provision of events and facilities for city dwellers.

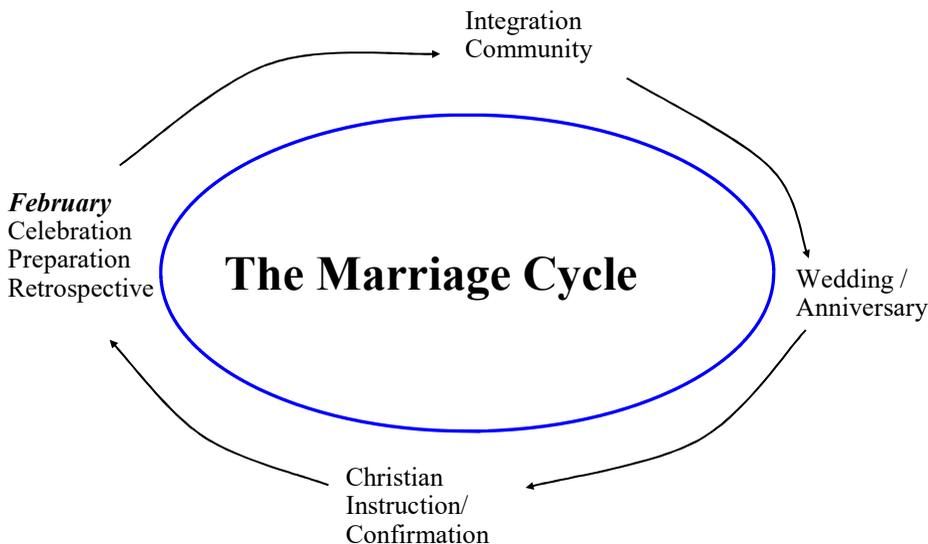
Measuring Results

We can evaluate:

1. Our outputs against the 'Areas for development'
2. The number of Parish residents in our congregation as a proportion of the whole
3. The spread of contacts we have across residential buildings in the Parish.

Vision Leaders: Sarah Cull; Martyn Cull; Rebecca Selman

Wedding Strategy (launched in February 2015)



February

- The regular monthly choral service 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.

