

# St Luke's Gamston & Bridgford

## Mark's Review of the Vision APCM 10 March 2018

### Celebrating God's Faithfulness

***"Looking back with gratitude, looking forward with confidence"***

This is the basic posture of the Christian – we look back over our lives, through history, to the Cross and celebrate the evidence of God's grace in our lives and in our world. And we face the future with great confidence because our eternal destiny is already assured – there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God – and because God who has been faithful will continue to be faithful - he will complete the work in our lives and in our world that he has begun.

2017 was certainly a year of surprises and challenges. When we were here in February, I don't think we expected to lose almost the entire staff team over the course of one fortnight in October – very careless of us! And I certainly didn't expect all that the Autumn would bring for us personally as a family. I wonder what caught you by surprise, for better or worse?

### **A REVIEWING OUR VISION**

The Annual Report details many of the highlights from all that we enjoyed together. As I was preparing these thoughts, I received a letter from someone in the congregation which I found so very encouraging:

*"I was looking at the very rough notes I made during the 2017 AGM. We had a real sense that God was 'on the move' and as I think about this year, I feel that many of the hopes you had in the picture you painted for us have indeed moved forward. You said you hoped there would be new Christians, and there have been. You hoped there would be groups making a difference in people's lives – I see this in the Parenting Course and in the Debt Centre. I am encouraged by the links made with Pierrepont Gamston Primary School and with Holy Rood Edwalton, and I can see the potential for New Worshipping Communities. I feel there is greater expectation in prayer, and a desire to pray. You asked us to consider our part; to pray for three to five people; and to learn the names of children and to pray for them - I have enjoyed getting to know them!*

*I think 2017 has been a great year in the church's life and have felt invigorated and part of God being at work. I am praying for you and the PCC as you prepare for the next AGM."*

### **1 WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT GROWS DISCIPLES WHO GROW DISCIPLES**

Since launching the Vision in 2017 we have seen people:

- Exploring faith on the Alpha Course
- Growing in their discipleship – eg six people getting confirmed at the Minster in April, and our first post-Alpha group passing through all three modules of *Believing & Belonging*
- Wanting to learn how to share their faith – 30 people attended the Contagious Christian Course (with a possible impact on Alpha, which seemed to contain a higher than normal proportion of "invited people")
- Seeking to be more intentional in our outreach to 'fringe' – this has led to a repeat of *Wonderfully Made* at Toddlers, a daytime Alpha Course at Oasis on Wednesday

mornings, and more new families attending All Age – some months we have the “problem” of not enough space on Second Sundays.

But we have not managed to do everything we planned. For example we did say we would renew our **small group** life – that now needs to be a focus. I am looking to have two evenings in church, with an open invitation to people willing to lead/facilitate and host small groups. The aim of these small groups will be to build us up and equip us to be salt and light – so we can grow as disciples ourselves and make new disciples.

If you feel a call to oversee our Small Groups – to support and encourage the leaders – to research and suggest appropriate resources – to see people deepening their faith and growing increasingly effective in their witness...we need to hear from you!

## 2 WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT PLANTS CHURCHES

When PCC went away in May we discussed potential areas for new worshipping communities – and the most obvious possibilities appeared to be:

1. Young families – based around Pierrepont Gamston Primary School (PGPS)
2. Older people in the immediate vicinity of the church.

### 2.1 PGPS

Building on the foundations that Dud laid in his work at PGPS:

- we have prayed at the school and for the school and its community
- we are running Messy Church there three times a year (started Dec 2017)
- we intentionally chose PGPS as the venue for our Parenting Course (an amazing team led by an amazing Sarah!)

The question we now need to pray into: “Is there an opportunity to develop a young (but not exclusively so) family-focused congregation at PGPS?”

- 2.2 Older people** – we had an invitation from Hilton Grange to hold worship in their lounge
- **First Sunday** of the month – three visits so far – this is really encouraging (youngsters from our Elevate group took part in the most recent one) – when I suggested that Christians living there might start an embryonic small prayer group, I was told one had already started.
  - **Leadership** - the plan is to give the leadership away to the residents of Hilton Grange – we will support them, encourage them, work alongside them – but the plan is that it be owned by them, and directed by them, not imposed from outside.

**2.3 Edwalton** – last AGM we didn’t know that John Blakeley would be training at St Mellitus College in London and serving the church at Holy Rood, Edwalton on a contextual placement. We joined in their Christingle – great to see people from here making that happen there – we have held a joint PCC meeting – and are looking to pray and meet together as we continue to discern opportunities for supporting each other in mission opportunities, particularly with new housing being occupied at Sharp Hill.

**All Age** - it has been great to see new people involved in leading at **All Age** worship – some of our teenagers are attending the leadership course as part of the Younger Leadership

College and so on – but we haven't put enough energy into intentionally identifying and encouraging people to explore their gifts, and release them to fulfil their leadership potential.  
**Is that your call – if so we need you!**

### **3 WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT IS PRAYING EXPECTANTLY, PASSIONATELY, REGULARLY TOGETHER**

We have made good progress on being an Engine Room of Prayer (but more to go!) Sarah Sharpe, Lynda Blakeley and Catherine Fraser have all worked really hard on the different dimensions:

Termly week of prayer – we'd like to see more people making a commitment to get involved. Next one is 14-20 May to coincide with *Thy Kingdom Come* running from Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday

Weekly Prayer briefings on the back of the Notice Sheet and by email – we hope these are helpful to you as you pray for the church's mission and ministry in an informed and directed way

Feedback - mechanisms are in place and we are receiving feedback and have tried to feed back through Engage and the emails.

Praying for three to five friends as Archbishop Justin encouraged us to do – remember being asked to tie 3-5 knots on a woven string worn round your wrist - how many are still going?

Prayer Survey leaflet being handed out tonight – this is supposed to help us think about how we do prayer – your responses will direct what we do next - how we teach, how we give feedback, how we encourage etc... Please do fill it in.

### **4 WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT SERVES OUR NEIGHBOURS**

So exciting after our long relationship with CAP running their money course to see a local **CAP Debt Centre** starting to get going, with Chris Blainey leading it and many of you involved as prayer partners, supportive friends and so on.

I know many of you are involved personally in compassion ministries of different kinds and it is so encouraging to hear how you sense God at work through you. One retired member of our church started working as a **Street Pastor** last year – that is so inspiring.

Regular ministries – Ron and Gillian Turner-Smith have been faithfully leading worship in **Leawood Manor**, and they are always looking for people to join them...

**Prime Time** meets here twice a month with a programme of outside speakers organised by Christine Hague. But there must be many people in the church who could offer an interesting topic but speaking from a Christian perspective, gently weaving our faith story into the narrative. If you could do that, please speak to Christine.

Then there's **Tinies & Toddlers**, the **Parenting Courses**, the midweek and Saturday **coffee mornings**, all attended by people from our local community.

## **5 WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT IS OPEN AND HOSPITABLE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE**

The church building is incredibly well used Monday to Saturday. Colleagues who visit frequently comment on it. It was a deliberate and intentional plan to increase our lettings – both to host and bless our community and to increase income that we can then plough back into mission and ministry.

But simply looking after this space is a huge task – and wardens, PCC members and others have all done an amazing job.

Mary has to juggle her shifts to find the few moments when the building is not in use to keep it clean.

This past year we have spent £12,000 on having both our boilers replaced, and we are now engaging the Allen Joyce Architects to draw up plans for the further developments that are required.

## **B IMPLEMENTING THE VISION**

### **What do we need to do to fulfil this five-fold Vision?**

#### **1 WE NEED TO REBUILD THE STAFF TEAM**

After Dud retired and then Andy and Tristan and Jean all moved away, the PCC commissioned Maureen Cole to produce a Staffing Review and make recommendations.

**Operations Manager** – even without our ambition to plant two new worshipping communities by 2022, we are in an era of ever-increasing statutory responsibility and administrative and managerial load. There are new demands around Data Protection, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Hygiene; we need support to get the best out of our IT – network, hardware, software, training etc. Our Website needs constant attention, our communications need improving. And the list goes on.

The PCC have carefully considered Maureen's advice and decided the church would be best served by appointing a full-time Operations Manager. The aim is to release some of the very capable but overworked individuals who voluntarily carry much of these responsibilities now. This would both fill Jean Guest's role and expand it, working alongside Joanne.

This will involve a significant extra spend - Jean was part-time - but we believe that we need to staff appropriately for a future which will have multi-site, multi-congregational complexities.

**Families:** It has been a joy having Sarah Sharpe back on staff since September. I hope all of you will be aware of her contribution. PCC wants to develop a permanent role for Sarah with an outward focus on mission to families – building on what she has been doing and is developing further.

**Youthwork:** we are currently partnering with Andy Wright, the Youth Leader at St Giles', over a joint Friday evening youth group. I shall be meeting their vicar Lee Proudlove in the next fortnight to explore how we will take that forward. One possibility is the use of Youth Interns from the diocese's Younger Leadership College.

**Curate:** Bishop Paul is trying to find us a Curate to start in the summer.

## **2 WE NEED TO SPEND MONEY ON OUR BUILDING**

Each year we have the normal maintenance costs of running our building, but we have now reached the point where we need to spend some larger sums to update and improve our fabric and facilities. Making the building fit for purpose involves some big one-off spends this year and next.

**Toilets** – we are waiting to find out how much it will cost to refurbish all four toilets (ladies, gents, disabled and children) – it could be around £40,000 plus VAT. We have that money on one side.

**AV and PA** – we have received some initial recommendations and rough costings – the cost could be anywhere between £25,000 and £45,000 depending on the equipment purchased and fitted possibly £25k just for church and overflow – more for a loop system and screens in the Lounge and Meeting Room and Hall. But we do need new kit to get the basics right – we all need to be able to see and hear!!!

**Other things** – there will be other things you might want to see such as better lighting, different chairs, kitchen improvements.

### **REBUILDING THE STAFF TEAM AND IMPROVING OUR BUILDING WILL BOTH COST MONEY. THIS IS A HUGE CHALLENGE FOR US, BUT THERE ARE HUGE OPPORTUNITIES**

When God calls, it's up to us to respond. The fields are white and ready for harvest – but we need not just to release the workers but also to equip them properly. We need to pray for God to generously provide – as He has done in the past at St Luke's - and then be obedient in however He asks us to answer our own prayers.

**Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith  
Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful  
Let us not give up meeting together, but let us encourage each other  
let us consider how we may spur each other on towards love and good deeds  
*Hebrews 10:22-25***

***God of mission,  
Who alone brings growth to your Church  
Send your Holy Spirit to bring:***

- vision to our planning***
- wisdom to our actions***
- faith to our lives***
- hope to our communities and***
- love to our hearts,***

***Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

**Mark Fraser  
10.3.2018**