

Parish of Bishopston and St Andrews St Bartholomew's Church Strategy for Growth

Action Plan

2008

We will:

- establish a worship group to co-ordinate all aspects of worship, e.g. readings, sermons, music etc.
- encourage more people to participate in the musical life of the Church.
- develop and agree a Pastoral Care Policy by September 2008 to better co-ordinate the work that we do and extend it to all those who need and want support.
- organise a youth club for children aged 10-13 years to start in September 2008 and review what is available for this age group on Sunday mornings.
- incorporate issues of social justice at home and across the world into our worship.
- look for volunteers to form a Social Committee and to lead a Men's fellowship group.

2009

We will:

- create a worship space that supports a sense of coming together in worship and provide facilities for regular use of projection and other visual aids.
- invite two young people (13-15 years) to attend the worship group to input their ideas and help with service planning.
- encourage more people to come to the Sunday Lunch Club, broadening the scope without changing the ethos of the group.
- develop a Healing Surgery on a Saturday, when the Church would be open for personal prayer and to be prayed for.
- establish a group to lead on raising awareness of climate change from a Christian perspective and reducing our carbon footprint, both individually and as a Church.

2010

We will:

- make it possible to open the Church for quiet prayer at regular points during the week.
- organise and promote a study group that meets in the Church and is open to all on a 'drop in' basis.
- encourage the congregation not to rush in and rush out again: provide a space where they want to stay for prayer, fellowship, finding out about events, campaigns etc.
- open the Church to the community for meeting community needs.

Our Goals for 2010

We are a Christian community aspiring to be built on the unconditional love of God and of one another, that strives:

- for a life and a Church filled with prayer;
- for a positive and meaningful experience of Christ, through our worship and our actions;
- to teach, learn and challenge so that we each have an opportunity to be changed through Christ;
- to provide a safe place where we can be vulnerable, ask questions and doubt;
- for fellowship where we support, trust and encourage each other;
- to grow, to nurture and develop our spirituality; and
- to become the people and Church that God wants us to be.

We are an important part of the community in St Andrews and the community is an important concern to the Church:

- we reach out to serve, meeting the needs of the young and old, providing friendship, fun and pastoral care;
- we welcome people of all ages and all life experiences, helping them to feel at home;
- we inform people what Christianity is really about, sharing the message that God loves us and can set us free from the sin that messes up our lives; and
- we are politically and socially active, we speak out against and work to stop poverty, violence and injustice at home and throughout the world.

Our goals will be reflected in the life of the Church in the following ways

Prayer

We show that communication with God is crucial

Regular personal prayer is encouraged and people are able to ask for prayer for themselves and other situations, confident then that others in the Church will be praying for them. The church is open for prayer at times outside services and provides a well-appointed space for quiet prayer.

Teaching

We show that personal growth and discipleship is important in the life of Christians

We help all members of the Church grow in their faith by providing: a range of books and other materials; 'preparation classes' prior to baptisms, confirmation and weddings; opportunities to meet in small groups (house groups); courses; and group visits to interesting events. Prayer life is enhanced through teaching on the many ways to pray.

Worship

Giving to God all that we can

The style of church services reflects St Bartholomew's mixed congregation so that each person is helped to worship God. Seating, choice of music and its delivery, readings, sermon themes, facilities and furnishings: all are chosen to enable the congregation in this aim. Each person, young or old, is made to feel welcome.

Pastoral care

Loving God through loving our neighbour

With a pastoral care policy in place, we make sure that everybody who needs help or special care receives it, while nobody is forgotten or ignored. In partnership with specialist counselling and advice group we seek to run 'surgeries' in the Church to extend our care to the whole community. Families are linked together for mutual support, as are individuals. We notice when people have not been in Church for a while and visit them to check they are alright. Baptism families are offered pre- and post-Baptism visits, and invited to an annual event. Funerals are followed up with invitations to lunch clubs and a personal contact. Lunch Club is broadened to include more people. A men's fellowship is established. The Toddlers' Group continues its good work and young families find a special welcome at Early Bird services.

Healing ministry

Providing a channel for God's healing love

Healing services are held to support people by prayer with and for them, respecting their needs and not rushing them. Other times for healing prayer are offered in the church, which is also open for private prayer. Urgent requests for healing are responded to individually.

Youth

Enabling children and young people to play a full part in the church's life and grow in faith

Young people have a voice in the Church that is heard and responded to. They have access to a range of social and spiritual opportunities that are fun and do not patronise. We support the whole parish youth strategy and parish youth worker. Young people can play an active part in planning and leading both their own events and other Church activities. We make sure that every child and young person in our parish has access to a Bible relevant for their age.

Social and political justice

Speaking out against and working to stop poverty, violence and injustice at home and throughout the world

We focus on specific issues through sermons, intercessions and special collections, to raise awareness and encourage the congregation to respond. A display in the church reflects ongoing concerns, which are raised as prayer topics in the leaflet and in services. Young people are invited to choose an issue and lead a Sunday service around it. We pursue a Fairtrade policy and strive to reduce our 'carbon footprint'. The Church becomes a focus in the community for activity on specific social and political justice issues.

Outreach to the local community

Providing opportunities for fellowship and events to attract people to the church community

Events are held regularly to provide entertainment and interest to those in the church and outside it, such as quizzes, dancing, concerts, meals with a speaker. The church participates in community events, like the Arts Trail and Music in the Park. A church fete is organised in the park.