



Vision Document

Why We Exist

We believe that, in Jesus, God has revealed the most compelling way to be fully human and fully alive. God is calling us to be devoted to Him, flourishing as a community practising the way of Jesus, filled with his Spirit and rooted in the Bible. Our passion is to draw others to His gift of eternal life, and to see individuals, our town, neighbourhoods and networks transformed.

We therefore seek to grow as disciples of Jesus by being a church family that prioritises being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and living for Jesus

Values

We long that all we do is for God's glory. Therefore the core values which we seek to underpin all that we do are:

It's Christ's church

Jesus is the head of our church. We seek to honour Jesus in all things, keep Jesus at the centre, and find our unity in Christ. Our heart is to become Christ-like - contemplative, compassionate and courageous.

Compelled by love

All we do is rooted in God's love for us, our love for God, for one another and for our neighbour.

Gospel centred and kingdom focused

We believe everyone is made in the image of God and everyone is a sinner in need of salvation. We celebrate and proclaim the good news of Christ crucified, risen and ascended; God calls people to repentance and faith in Jesus. We seek first the Kingdom of God, becoming a community which is a beacon of light and a foretaste of heaven!

Rooted in the Word and led by the Spirit

We are a Bible-based church, believing the scriptures to be the divinely inspired written Word of God. And we seek to be reliant on the power, gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Welcoming to all

We want everyone to feel welcomed, respected and included in Christ Church. We seek to break down barriers, strive for reconciliation, and rejoice in diversity not uniformity. We want to be open and transparent, authentic in relationships, encouraging and safe. We recognise the brokenness, pain and suffering we face, and we seek to be a place of refuge and healing for everyone.

Called to holiness

We acknowledge we are all sinners but made holy in Christ. We commit to continually coming back to the Lord in repentance, seeking his forgiveness. We seek to live lives that are pleasing to God, characterised by biblical holiness.

Faithful in prayer

We recognise our utter reliance on God and seek to build on a foundation of individual and corporate prayer, praising and joyful, thankful and interceding, listening and obeying.

United across the generations, congregations and sites

We continually look for ways to express our unity in Christ, bridging the gap between the generations, and finding creative ways for the congregations across Northcourt Road and Long Furlong to serve each other and be one church.

Generous in all things

We recognise everything we have comes from God and therefore want to be good stewards and generous with our time, money and resources.

Valuing every member ministry

We believe everyone has gifts and talents given to them by God and we want to encourage and affirm everyone to serve God joyfully with these.

Passionate about justice

We seek to demonstrate that the Lord is a God of justice, and we want to support social justice ministries.

Committed to caring for creation

We strive to live out the practical implication of 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it', and act as responsible stewards of creation as a church and as individuals.

Actions

In seeking to turn this vision into reality, we seek to be a church which reflects Jesus calling on the disciples to *be with him and to be sent out by him (Mark 3:14)*. We want to have a healthy range of actions across these areas:

Being with Jesus (Breathing In)

God is honoured through our deep, passionate, whole-life worship

We want to wholly give our lives to God, cultivating our first love of Him in response to all he has done for us. We aim to offer a range of expressions of reverent and joyful worship, including song, scripture, prayer, listening, stillness, and communion. As we worship we long to be transformed into Christ's image.

Everyone is welcomed and finds a place to belong and be loved

Small groups are a core means of our method of belonging, and we will seek to ensure these are fresh, relevant and actively promoted.

We have adequate time for Sabbath rest

We take seriously the call of God that 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength', Isaiah 30:15.

Each member of the church community is known and cared for

We seek to build fellowship across the generations, congregations and sites, and to ensure that each age group is adequately provided for. We want to extend pastoral care to all, and offer prayer for healing, including emotional healing, where appropriate.

New believers are nurtured and strengthened in the faith

We believe that Jesus looks for life-long followers, not just converts! We will be honest about the cost of discipleship.

All believers grow into maturity in Christ and are equipped to serve Him

We want to grow deeper in our relationship with God, with restful dependence and obedience. A key role of leaders across the church is equipping God's people for works of service, so we reach unity in the faith and become mature (Ephesians 4:11-13). We seek to help every age group hunger for growth, and to discover and use their gifts; we seek to meet the desire of church members to be trained in areas of service including evangelism, and we seek to grow and encourage leadership.

Being Sent Out by Jesus (Breathing Out)

We acknowledge and support individuals on their 'frontlines'

We recognise most church members spend much of their time at work, school, university, home, leisure and in the community. We aim to affirm and encourage them to see these as places of serving God.

We meet local needs through loving service offered in Jesus' name

We seek to be aware of the needs of the local community, and serve and meet those needs as we feel God calls us. In particular we recognise God's heart for the poor and marginalised. Whenever possible we want to serve in partnership with the local community and other churches.

We prioritise evangelism, calling all to repentance, faith and new life in Christ

We believe God so loved the world that he sent his only Son; in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension and glorious reign he offers salvation to all who respond in repentance and faith. We want to be bold and creative in offering multiple opportunities for those around us to hear and explore the gospel and respond in repentance and faith to Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

We send and support Mission Partners locally and globally

We seek to give 15% of our income each year to support mission beyond our parish, supporting medium and long-term mission partners, and encouraging members of the church to go on short-term mission and students to be involved with school, college and university missions.

We plant and nurture new congregations

We recognise the opportunities to plant fresh expressions of the gospel in the proposed new housing development in North Abingdon and elsewhere in the parish. We will be open to invitations to support church planting elsewhere in partnership with other churches.

We maintain a global outlook, caring for God's world

In particular we want to stand up and speak out for justice, support social justice ministries, and care for God's creation.

In everything we seek to use the **resources** God gives to us wisely; we will **keep listening, seeking God, and pruning** where necessary, to become more fruitful.

Note: This captures what the PCC believes God is saying to Christ Church following the whole church listening to God during Autumn 2018. It's aimed at the church, so we are all 'on the same page'. We intend it to be a 'good enough' document which we use to plan next steps and the use of resources. Our intention is to keep it under review and update it as God leads us. The PCC reviewed and reaffirmed the vision on 3 October 2022.

Parish of North Abingdon PCC,
28 April 2019, reformatted layout August 2024