



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

St Mark's
Leamington Spa

Vision

for 2011–2014

Why set out a Vision?

- provide our church with a focus for development
- help to prioritise resources and energy
- ensure balanced and healthy growth
- recognise and address weaknesses
- respond to God's love and guidance

It does not

- displace existing activities
- exclude existing activities
- diminish existing activities

Two areas have been highlighted:

- **Worship**

'passionate spirituality' identified as a weakness in the 'healthy churches' survey of 2009

- **Children & Families**

we have fewer young families in church now than five or more years ago

This focus runs alongside our continued valuing of all people in the church community.

- We will continue to maintain and promote our current activities with all other groups, and in the wider community.

To help us turn this Vision into reality, we have laid out some detail, in the form of

- what we want to be like
- how we can encourage that to happen
- how we can tell if we have made progress.

We may not achieve all of the individual points, but together they paint a picture of the progress which with God's help, we hope to make.

We would welcome your comments as we move forward together.

WORSHIP

To deepen the worship life of the church, individually and corporately, recognizing our dependence on God and the radical challenge of the Christian message as revealed in Scripture – to be apprentices and ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

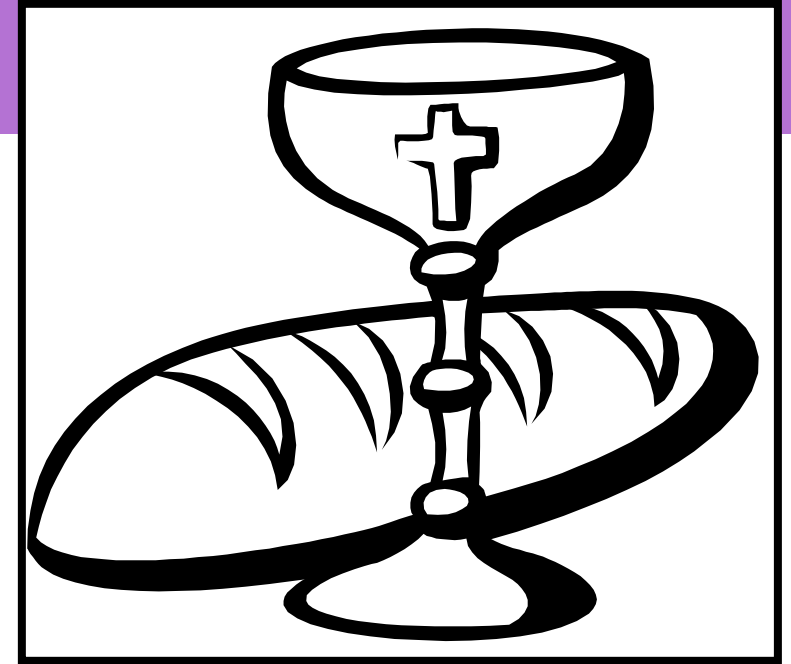
Corporate worship can only flow out of committed personal worship; therefore our focus will be on deepening our personal faith in Jesus Christ, recognizing a personal call to all Christians to be disciples of Jesus.

This will include Biblical teaching and modelling growth in the use of spiritual gifts and disciplines, especially in the small group setting.

We will aim to increase a sense of expectancy and greater spontaneity in corporate worship, with an understanding that all church services are to be potentially life changing experiences.

We will make better use of music and song to encourage a celebrative and contemplative atmosphere during our services.

The practical outworking of Christian teaching will be encouraged further, with an emphasis on serving others (inside and outside the church), relying on each other and transforming our community.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

To increase the number of children and young families who become part of our church community.

The number of young children (up to 10 years old) and young families at St Mark's has reduced in recent years, despite our hall and rooms being used intensively throughout the week. *San Marco's* cafe and the Friday morning toddler group indicate that there are ways of reconnecting with young families.

We want to focus on the reality and importance of the spiritual development of children and to be willing to learn from them.

The presence of children in our services is always to be acknowledged and their participation is welcomed. Our children's groups are to be encouraged and developed and all age worship to be supported and advocated by the whole church.

Parents are to be supported as they raise their children in the family of the church, recognizing Christian parenting as a great responsibility and privilege.

Our parish is characterized by its schools.

There are also several pre-schools and nurseries nearby; *Bright Sparks* meets in our own church hall. There are active uniformed groups with good links with the church through all age services.

Our focus over the next three years will therefore be to build up the links we already have with local schools, finding new ways of engaging with them in the nurturing of children, to provide a focus for family life at St. Mark's and to emphasise the vital need to develop the faith of children within our congregation.



Worship - Praising together

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
<p>Our corporate worship will be more inspiring with greater expectancy and spontaneity</p>	<p>More freedom for leaders preachers and congregation in forms and styles of worship, to engage our minds, emotions and senses.</p> <p>We will encourage and support on-going learning and equipping of all those involved in leading worship.</p> <p>Use music, song and appropriate silence to deepen our encounter with God in worship</p> <p>We will change our worship space to make it easier to worship – visibility, lighting & sound</p> <p>We will encourage the congregation to be more compact, by encouraging side-aisle seating for children’s groups only, & blocking rear pews</p>	<p>Shared perception of improvement</p> <p>We will have spent money on this.</p> <p>Shared perception and congregation survey</p> <p>Screen moved & floor raised AV/lighting</p> <p>Record how spread out or closely seated the congregation is.</p>
<p>We will have more open prayer, testimony and the ministry of spiritual gifts within public worship</p>	<p>We will explain our attitude & method for use of spiritual gifts/specific revelations</p> <p>We will include a testimony per service per month</p>	<p>No. of services where individuals contribute.</p> <p>No. of weeks it happens</p>
<p>We will increase prayerful engagement in corporate worship</p>	<p>We will schedule events such as 24/7 prayer days, & fast days and church weekends with specific focus.</p> <p>We will include appropriate prayers for the service in our pre-service PowerPoint loop</p>	<p>No. of events offered & participants.</p> <p>No. of weeks it happens</p>

Worship - Encouragement

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
More of us will establish a habit of setting aside time daily to meet with God	Promoting available bible notes books & on-line resources, including links from the St Mark's website	Congregation survey each March
We will have mentoring partnerships and prayer partners and/or triplets throughout our congregations	We will identify and train volunteer mentors We will explain and offer mentoring to everyone We will encourage Small Groups to form triplets and/or prayer partnerships	No. of active partnerships Happens or not No. in triplets and partnerships
We will have more people meeting in midweek Small Groups, thinking though how God wants us to grow	Refocus Small Groups, including one 'virtual' on-line group.	No. of people in groups and Congregation survey each March

Worship – Serving

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
Children	Run gifting course & jobs 'exchange'. We will explain opportunities for different roles via Small Groups We will offer resources to other local churches	More different people on roles rota No. serving elsewhere
More of us will give time to practical community support and sharing God's love with the wider community	Re-emphasise all HOPE Leamington activities, CAP, Nightlight, LCM, schools' support, etc. Create register of opportunities & volunteers	No. of participating volunteers Happened or not

Children & Young Families – Recognition

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
Reflection by the church on the importance of children & families for us.	Workshop and/or teaching to help us consider our role in relation to the children and families of the parish	We will have developed a shared vision, supported by most of the congregation
Each person, of whatever age is valued, especially our children & young people (C&YP)	<p>Whole congregation teaching about the role of children in God’s kingdom & family</p> <p>C&YP are asked to feed likes & dislikes into our service planning</p> <p>Training for our C&YP volunteers</p> <p>Review of communion arrangement for children</p>	<p>Congregation survey each March</p> <p>No .comments received</p> <p>No. of participants</p> <p>Completed or not</p>
We will expect children and young people to minister to the church in visible & non-visible ways	<p>Young people are ‘apprenticed’ in areas of ministry</p> <p>Parts of services (welcome, prayers, readings, etc) are regularly lead by young people</p> <p>Run more active and creative all age services, such as 3WW style</p> <p>In-house residentials and holiday camps widely promoted & encouraged</p> <p>Including young people (11+) in mentoring</p>	<p>No. of C&YP in ‘apprenticeships’</p> <p>No. of services where C& YP contribute.</p> <p>No. of services run</p> <p>% of our C&YP attending</p> <p>% of our C&YP involved</p>

Children & Young Families - Resourcing & outreach

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
Full time worker in place	Appointing a paid Children & Families worker	Happened or not
We will support schools by leading assemblies, RE lessons, specific church services, as well as providing practical help (see Serving)	Deployment of our paid Children & Families worker Re-emphasise all HOPE Leamington activities	% of C&F worker time spent on work with schools No. of participants
We will help parents of children using our rooms, and young parents using our rooms, be comfortable here & meet St Mark's members	We will encourage church members to form good, close relationships with those leading activities in our rooms. Creating a community space which can be used as a permanent cafe (San Marco's), for informal meetings and as a resource area.	No of church members involved in community groups using the rooms. Cafe in permanent operation & increasing use
We will have multiple ways for non-church family children to be exposed to God's love & church community	Uniformed Groups operating successfully Toddler Group operating successfully Holiday Club, Homework club and/or Young Carers group operating	Ages & no. of members, level of church involvement, No. of participants & days Happens or not

Children & Young Families – Supporting families

...which looks like	... is encouraged by	we will know we have progressed because...
We will remove barriers which stop parents or children taking part in church activities	We will facilitate baby-sitting, including training young people appropriately.	No. of participants
	We will facilitate lift sharing & provision	Matching system in place
The challenge of parenting will be taken seriously, and supported by the whole church	We will offer marriage preparation and enrichment courses	No. of participants
	We will offer a parenting training course	No. of participants
	We will offer 'living as a Christian family' training	No. of participants

What do you think?

Overall, how do you feel about this Vision for St Mark's?

Would you like to comment on any specific detail of WORSHIP ?

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Encouragement

Serving

Would you like to comment on any specific detail of CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES ?

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Resourcing & outreach

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It might be helpful to be able to talk with you about your comments.
If you would be happy to do that, please sign your name here.

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