

Vision & Values Statements

stjohnsharborne

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St John's Harborne

Vision and Values Statements

Preamble

Trying to capture the heart of any Church community by way of a set of statements is always a potentially risky thing to do. What do we include? How do we give full enough expression of what makes us tick without writing a book? How do we balance the 'now but not yet (i.e. what we are set alongside what we long to become) of our life together? It is a daunting task; but that said it is a very necessary one. This is because such a set of statements (however framed) helps remind us all what God has laid on our hearts – hopefully biblically based, Spirit-led and highly relevant for the world we occupy. From this we seek to live out faithful and fulfilling lives, with these statements as a reminder of who we are, and a helpful compass to steer us on our way.

I. Our Purpose Statement

Our purpose as a church is to love God and love our neighbour. We do this best by producing mature Christians, who, wherever they minister will help produce other mature Christians and churches.

By **maturity** we mean lives that are built on the Bible, are Christ-centred and Spirit-filled; and that express the balanced priorities of Word and Spirit, and God's kingdom.

By **producing** we mean lives that generate other mature Christians and churches. Blessing is not for us alone, it is to be given away. Bringing people to faith in Jesus is the start of the journey towards maturity. Sending out members of church in missional love is a vital expression of that maturity.

Balanced maturity is expressed by the following:

- **Giving glory** to God's Name (Worship)
- **Getting involved** in God's Service (Ministry)
- **Gathering together** as God's Family (Fellowship)
- **Growing up** as God's People (Discipleship)
- **Going out** into God's World (Evangelism, and Mission)

II. Our Priority Statement

What we stress at St John's

Priorities describe how we spend our time, energy and money. They are the things we do. Priorities grow out of the things we value and believe in.

The basis of our priorities

The Bible is the Word of God and is the standard for all that we do at St John's. In other words, nothing that we do should ever be opposed to the Bible's teaching. We aim to do all that the Bible teaches. We desire to understand and interpret the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies, equips and empowers us according to the Bible.

We have a particular approach to the Bible. As we believe that it was given not only to give us insight and understanding, but also to equip us to do God's work, we emphasise training, which is doing the truth, in addition to knowing the truth.

Because we stress doing, our teaching and preaching are intended to be practical and relevant. We aim, through faithful, biblical preaching, to call people to decision and to engage the whole person. All our priorities need to be undergirded by prayer.

Giving glory to God's Name (Worship)

The highest priority of God's people is to worship Him, that is, to give to God the worth that He ought to have in our lives. In the Bible, one meaning of worship is to **draw near**. Thus in worship – whether in the corporate gatherings to which we are committed, in small groups, or personally - we give ourselves to God in love and He comes to us in the fullness and gifting of His Spirit. We believe that an intimate relationship with God is the basis of all that we do as Christians. As such this relationship must be real, allowing us to come to God in our brokenness as well as in times of joy.

Worship is an expression of our love for God. It, therefore, should involve our whole persons - our intellect, our emotions, our spirits, our wills, our bodies and our money. We believe it should be enthusiastic, since our love for God is

passionate. And, as an expression of love, worship is also self-disclosing. As such, it expresses our thoughts and our hearts in simplicity and truth.

Getting involved in God's Service (Ministry)

Ministry at St John's flows from two basic assumptions. First, it is based on the compassion and mercy of God. Jesus was the embodiment of God's compassion and mercy towards those in need. Thus, through the imitation of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to minister out of hearts which are filled with Jesus' mercy and compassion, whilst being open to His promptings for our individual ministries.

Second, Jesus Christ came to establish the Kingdom of God - that is, God's right to rule in the world (Mt. 9:35 - 10:10). This Kingdom rule and reign of God is extended through the world in, among other things, the following ways:

- Preaching the gospel with the aim of making disciples
- Healing the sick
- Teaching believers to follow Christ
- Ministering to the poor and needy
- Counselling those in need of God's wisdom
- Giving to the work of Christ
- Building up families and supporting singles
- Social and political action

Gathering together as God's Family (Fellowship)

St John's exists to care for and to build up people. Fellowship begins with our relationship with Jesus. But fellowship is more than our individual relationship with Jesus. It also involves our commitment to Christ's body, which is expressed corporately as we meet together.

While our Sunday gatherings are a vital part of who we are, we believe that this commitment to Christ's body in terms of fellowship, can best be expressed by Home Groups and small groups. We must know one another in order to love one another and to share one another's burdens. Small groups are the basic structure in St John's for comfort and counsel, service to one another, intimate relationships, healing and prayer. In these groups, we stress such things as honesty, integrity, reality, acceptance and love. Small groups are also a basic structure in the worldwide expansion of the church today. As such we see small groups as being vehicles for God's purposes to grow His Church.

Growing up as God's People (Discipleship)

The New Testament calls Christians to a radical commitment. We believe that we are called to an unconditional surrender of our whole lives to Christ. We do not do this in a legalistic way or to impress or judge one another. Instead, our surrender to God springs from a response of love and thanksgiving to God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

As a church we stimulate one another to discipleship. One meaning of disciple is "pupil" or "learner". It involves binding oneself to another so that the disciple does what the master does. In Christian discipleship our aim is to be bound to Jesus and imitate Him. We believe we are to imitate Jesus in all that He did - preaching, healing, praying, and caring for the poor.

Going out into God's World (Evangelism and Mission)

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). He accomplishes that salvation through the witness of His people accompanied by signs and wonders (Mk. 16:20).

There are millions of unchurched people in the United Kingdom. That means that an enormous mission field exists for churches like St John's here in Birmingham. The urban centres of this country, including ours, are ripe for the harvest. There are also tens of millions of unreached peoples around the world who we are called to reach (Mt. 28:18-20).

We believe that God has called St John's to be a growing church in Birmingham with the ability to impact this city for Jesus.

III. Our Vision Statement

Vision is a clear picture of what we see the church being or doing. Vision is a product of God working in us. He creates the vision and we receive it. It becomes our rallying point; a goal toward which we move as His people. Vision comes to us as a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be.

These are some of the things God has worked into our hearts and is stretching us to become. Our vision as a church is

“to be a faithful Christian community that commits to God in passionate worship, to one another in devoted service, and to the world in sacrificial love.”

To God:

- A church in which people profoundly encounter Jesus Christ in the teaching, worship and prayer ministry.
- A church in which individuals are connected to each other through a small group.
- A church whose every endeavour is marked by excellence, integrity and love.

To One Another:

- A church where everyone is welcomed and loved
- A church which holds in balance Word and Spirit.
- A church which celebrates its inter-generational nature and passes on faith from generation to generation.
- A church that is characterised by individual and corporate prayer.
- A church where the power of God is present to heal people.
- A church where every member ministry is a reality.
- A church where people can easily take off religious masks and find real fellowship at the foot of the cross.
- A church that provides people with training for life, ministry and mission.
- A church that enables people to care for creation as they become vehicles of New Creation.

- A church that loves and devotes a large share of its time, energy and money to serve the needs of children and youth.
- A church that seeks practically to support both single and married people.

To the World:

- A church where things are so clearly and reasonably articulated that they make sense to a thinking follower of Christ as well as to non- Christians.
- A church that cares about and actually does something for the poor and the needy.
- A church that doesn't simply grow by adding existing Christians, but actually brings many people from darkness to light.
- A church that is committed to have a significant impact on the community around us, including young adults and older people.

IV. Our Values Statement

What we think is important

Every house is built upon a foundation. St John's is built upon the foundation of **our theology** - how we think about God - and **our values**, the kinds of ideas and attitudes that we feel are important. Here are some of the things that we value at St John's. In summary:

'We value God: all He is; all He's given us; and all He's helping us to become.'

1. We value being **GOD - HONOURING**. We long to live every aspect of our lives seeking to give glory to our loving faithful Heavenly Father.
2. We value **CHRIST-CENTREDNESS**. We desire Jesus - His person, His love, His mercy and His power to shine through all that we do.
3. We value being **SPIRIT-LED**. We believe that Jesus is our Head and the Holy Spirit our Counsellor. We seek to be responsive to the Holy Spirit in all life and ministry, enabling us to enjoy life, as well as being sustained in challenging times.
4. We value **SCRIPTURE**. We want to be a people who are fully committed to the whole of the Bible, borne out in faithful, obedient and fulfilled lives.
5. We value **PRAYER**. We seek genuine intimacy with God the Father and growth in our communion with Him.
6. We value **PEOPLE**. We want to show love both to those within our fellowship, and those not yet part of it.
7. We value **INTEGRITY**. We seek completely truthful, consistent and open relationships with God, with others and with ourselves.
8. We value **REACHING OUR POTENTIAL**. We desire to do all to the Glory of God, which requires our very best - not in comparison to others, but to reach our personal and corporate potential before God.
9. We value **AUTHENTICITY**. We want every expression of ours, whether speech, music, or manner - to be non-hyped, natural and reality-based. We

seek to be real about our struggles and failings, learning from and growing through them; as well as being able to celebrate life and have fun together.

10. We value being **CULTURALLY RELEVANT**. We want to use music, terminology and outreach methods that are in touch with the needs of our community.
11. We value **LEADERSHIP**. We approach leadership as a team effort with one person, the Vicar, focussing the vision and overseeing the goal-setting.
12. We value **GENEROSITY**. We are committed to freely give away all that we have freely received from God.

V. Our Mission Statement

God has a definite calling for St John's which we call our *mission*. The mission of St John's Harborne is:

1. To reach non-Christians in Birmingham and beyond with the Good News of Jesus in an accessible, contemporary style.
2. To provide a church home which can relate to and meet the needs of believers in the Harborne area, including resourcing them for life and mission.
3. To be a large church in the Harborne area which unites the spiritual and the rational aspects of the gospel while maintaining a small-church family atmosphere.
4. To establish, when appropriate, missional communities sent out from St John's to help reach people with the Good News of Jesus.
5. To pursue and demonstrate unity within ourselves and within the larger body of Christ.

VI. Our Basis of Faith

As a church we are:

Orthodox - being committed to the doctrines of the Anglican Church

Evangelical - being committed to the supreme authority of the Scriptures

Charismatic – being committed to the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit

While there are aspects of our faith that can be legitimately debated by those who are orthodox evangelical charismatic Christians, we acknowledge that there are some non- negotiable beliefs that we adhere to. We do this by aligning ourselves with the Basis of Faith agreed on by the Evangelical Alliance.

We believe in:

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
10. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers — given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
11. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

VII. Our Strapline

While it is virtually impossible to summarize all that has proceeded in a single statement, it is still helpful to have a short strapline that at least attempts to encapsulate the essence of what we're about as a Christian community longing to live faithfully for God. Ours is:

'St John's Harborne: a heart for God, our city and the nations.'

Summary of our Statements

Our Purpose

To love God and neighbour by producing mature Christians

Our Priorities

Worship, Ministry, Fellowship, Discipleship, Evangelism & Mission

Our Vision

To be a faithful community committed to God in passionate worship; to one another in devoted service; and to the world in sacrificial love

Our Values

We value God: all He is; all He's given us; and all He's helping us to become

Our Mission

To reach non – Christians with the Good News of Jesus

To provide a church home for Christians in the Harborne area

To unite the spiritual and rational aspects of the gospel

To establish missional communities to reach people with the Gospel

To pursue and demonstrate unity within and beyond St John's

Our Strapline

A heart for God, our City and the Nations