

St Peter's, Harborne – Our Vision, Our Objectives

- 1.1 At St Peter's, we believe in Parish ministry – our **vision** is to make Christ present to all the people of our parish, not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).
 - 1.2 We are guided by 1 John 4:16: “God is love and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them”. If we are truly a community of **love**, people will find God in our work.
 - 1.3 We see ourselves as **inclusive** and **explicit**; inclusive in our welcome and our vision, because Christ draws “all people” to him (John 12:32); explicit in our identity and proclamation, because we should always be prepared to give an account of the faith that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).
 - 1.4 This vision was set out in the Vicar's address to the APCM 2014, and in subsequent discussions at PCC, with unanimous support.
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- 2.1 Our **objectives** start from where we are: we don't strive to reinvent the wheel, or to undervalue our current strengths.
 - 2.2 We want to grow individually into a deeper faith, so that individually we are more informed, confident and prayerful.
 - 2.3 We want to grow spiritually as a community, so that our collective worship is more enriching and nourishing for more people, and so that our strong life within the church takes us to action outside it.
 - 2.4 We want to grow in numbers, drawing more people from our parish into full commitment to the life of our church.
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- 3.1 We are not complacent about the task we face. We used the Transforming Church programme, and a series of PCC away-days, to investigate our parish thoroughly and to know our area through fact and statistics, and not just anecdote.
 - 3.2 Since Fr Graeme's arrival in April 2014, we have focused on our intentionality. This has involved changing our committee structure, reviewing our outside-giving and looking critically at money and resources. St Peter's is a busy, lively church, and in many ways successful; but we need to sharpen the focus of our work, to make it clear and obvious to all that Christ is at the centre.
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- 4.1 Our general aim is to achieve our objectives by a collective effort of **intentional witness**.
 - 4.2 We have a large ministry of occasional offices – in 2014, 26 funerals (12 in church), 17 weddings or wedding blessings in church, and in total 30 children (all under 12) baptized (26 in the main Sunday morning service). The Vicar's warm welcome and pastoral care on these occasions is supplemented by

those taking part in services, by our Parish Administrators, and by lay people visiting baptism families, helping to plan weddings and caring for the bereaved at funerals. Influenced by the Church of England's Wedding Project, and Gillian Oliver's handbook on the "Seven Pastoral Moments" that matter, we have tried to improve and make more intentional our welcome to marriage couples, and make the Church and its systems more accessible. We have done the same with baptism.

- 4.3 At every event in Church the mindset shared by clergy and congregation at St Peter's is that we proclaim the love of Christ in every welcoming action; we laugh with those who laugh, we weep with those who weep, and we befriend others as Jesus has befriended us (Romans 12:15).
- 4.4 Alongside occasional offices, we have the usual Anglican year of special services: Patronal Festival, Harvest, Remembrance, All Souls, Christingle, Nine Lessons, a Crib Service, and so on. Parade services, involving our uniformed organizations, happen four times a year; school services take place every two weeks at midweek; an annual service takes place for bereaved families in conjunction with the Women's Hospital ("Celebrating Brief Lives"); and we host concerts in church. Within our church community we have a successful Junior Church and a robed choir with boy and girl choristers. We have Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Cubs and Scouts using our Church Hall every week with no let-up in popularity. Perhaps most significant of all, we have a large Church of England Primary School on our doorstep, with families walking past our door every day. We have so many opportunities to witness to the Gospel, and so many access-points for us to meet the members of our parish.
- 5.1 We want our intentional witness to have an impact beyond what is commonly perceived to be the world of the Church of England. We know that Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe, with 40% of the 1.1m population under the age of 25, and the most diverse outside London with over 90 distinct ethnic and social groups, many with Christian traditions.
- 5.2 We know that many areas of Birmingham are seen as "challenging". Occasionally, by contrast, the image of Harborne is "leafy", "quiet", "traditional". To some, we are a prosperous suburb insulated from the rest of the city, perhaps with an older demographic. Statistics show this not to be true of the Parish of St Peter. The largest demographic in our parish is 15-29 year-olds; the second largest age-group is 30-44: these are the people we want to bring to faith. Harborne shares in Birmingham's demographic bias towards youth.
- 5.3 Harborne also shares in Birmingham's **challenges**. Using the Multiple Deprivation Index following the 2011 census, the Church Urban Fund ranks our parish 10811 out of 12660, where 1 is the least deprived. 26% of our

children live in poverty (the lowest figure in the diocese is 3%); 20% of our pensioners live in poverty (the lowest figure in the diocese is 4%). Through our involvement in our school and our work with families, and through our outreach to older people, we want to bring God's influence to bear on the most challenging features of our parish.

- 6.1 Beside these more generalized targets, we have identified SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound) Transforming Church objectives. These objectives are for **growth** in membership, resources and provision.
- 6.2 We want to increase committed membership of the church by 10 new members by the 2015 APCM and annually for 3 years. Committed membership = regular attendance + signed-up involvement in Church life + inclusion on electoral roll. Obviously, if we are successful in our bid to "Growing Younger", that target figure should increase – for now it is intended to be realistic, representing over 5% growth.
- 6.3 To increase numbers of children regularly attending our Junior Church to 50 by 2017. Whilst registration numbers are relatively high at Junior Church, numbers for consistent attendance are not.
- 6.4 To increase regular giving from Sunday worshippers from £11 per adult per week to £17.50 per adult per week - so that we pay our Common Fund contribution from our own giving exclusively. This requires an increase in giving of over 50%; since we began this explicit drive for more giving in September last year, monthly giving has risen – but not yet to the extent required).
- 6.5 To establish and grow at least two out of three of the following entirely new services/activities - an informal service for families once a month involving elements of Messy Church; a drop-in Café for parents parking on or crossing our churchyard to take children to school; and an "Issues" discussion group for teenagers by 2017.
- 7.1 We will try and sustain this vision and achieve these objectives with or without help from the Diocese via "Growing Younger".
- 7.2 Both our vision and our objectives are underpinned by **prayer**, that God will use us to do His will - to His glory.