

Church of the Good Shepherd

Our Vision for Ministry

January 2018



“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the
wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

(Isaiah 43:19)

Seeking to serve the Lord

‘What are we here for?’ and *‘What does the Lord require of us?’* are important questions to ponder at the start of any new year. Following a week of focussed prayer in the autumn of 2016 and the ‘Leading Your Church into Growth’ course (LYCIG) in Spring 2017, CoGS PCC have been trying to discern answers to these questions and put together a set of ministry priorities for the next few years.

Who and where we are

The population of Crookhorn parish is just under 3,000 people, with a deprivation score that ranks in the top 25% nationally. Our current average weekly attendance on Sundays is 108 people (95 adults and 13 children) with two-thirds of the church membership not living in the parish. Attendance has fallen in the last three years by 20% but the electoral role has seen only a slight decrease. Whilst the number of baptisms in the church has fallen, our funeral ministry has seen significant increase.

Challenges

The LYCIG process and week of prayer have revealed four key challenges facing CoGS:

1. We have a large proportion of regular Sunday worshipers who are not actively involved in any regular ministry based at CoGS. However, others are sensing a call to become more involved, but may find it hard to identify opportunities where they can serve. This represents a real opportunity for growth if it is addressed.
2. We are uncertain as to what the *actual* needs of our community are, beyond our own perceived ideas. We could be working more with the local authorities to help us understand the needs of our parish.
3. There was a perception that we have become 'risk-averse' or in a rut. We may be able to create more opportunities by developing a culture where it is 'safe to fail', to try things and see if they work.
4. While many of our ministries are clearly meeting needs in the community, they are not explicitly sharing the Good News of Jesus with people. There is an opportunity to review our ministries to ensure that they are proclaiming the Good News in an appropriate way.

Vision Priorities

Your PCC has weighed all the words, pictures, opinions and desires regarding the broad range of our church's mission and worship, and recognising that we cannot realistically do everything we would like to do, we have identified three priorities for this season of CoGS' life. These are: **Welcome, Outreach and Discipleship**, which we are calling 'In', 'Out', and 'Up'.

*Ultimately, the purpose of these priorities and actions is for our church to **grow**.*

- **Spiritually** by growing disciples for Jesus
- **Numerically** by sharing the love of Jesus
- **In servant-heartedness** by following more closely the example of Jesus.

Because we believe these priorities are an earnest response to what we have heard the Lord say, we know that anything we do from here must be **rooted in prayer**; but more of that later.

This booklet is a summary of the vision priorities, but if you would like to know more about them and the timescale for their completion, the full Vision Strategy document is available on request from the Parish Office.

In – Welcome

While we always aim to give a warm welcome to newcomers, we will seek to welcome people beyond that initial meeting. Our desire is to provide a welcome that enables people to quickly feel at home, form meaningful friendships, and find their place in CoGS ministry.

- We will develop and provide welcome packs for newcomers.
- We will appoint a team with specific responsibility for following up on the initial welcome to newcomers, and for contacting people who may have been absent from church for a significant period.
- We will develop a culture of befriending, where church members naturally look beyond their established friendships to develop relationships with newcomers. This will involve:
 - Emphasising the spiritual gift of hospitality.
 - Encouraging church members to take responsibility for showing hospitality to the people seated near them. (something each of us can easily act upon).
 - Regular “Newcomers’ Lunch” and regular lunches held in the Church after a Sunday service.
 - Making the culture of befriending a prayer focus for the Church.

Out – Outreach

We will serve our community's needs before our own preferences, ensuring that as we do, we share the Good News of Jesus with Crookhorn.

- We will review all of our advertising and our online presence to ensure that it clearly explains who we are and what we are doing.
- We will ensure that there is a regular programme of events, including 'seeker' courses, prayer activities, social and 'proclamation' events.
- We will consider how we might develop an appropriate regular presence in the Crookhorn precinct.
- We will review how new and existing activities are sharing a Christian message.
- We will review our building's 'witness', and develop it in a manner which improves its welcome, communicates our faith and makes our worship accessible to all.



Up – Discipleship

We will develop a culture of discipleship, where people at all stages of their faith are drawing nearer to God. Specifically, we will create a culture of servant-heartedness, where people currently sitting on the fringe of the church are encouraged and enabled to take the next step in their faith as committed church members.

- We will review the structure, support, membership, purpose and function of the house groups.
- We will review our internal communications to ensure we are giving all members the best access to church news, opportunities and events.
- We will seek to actively encourage and enable members to take part in ministries and ‘find their place’. This will involve:
 - Holding an annual “Ministry Fayre”.
 - Developing an accessible ministry directory.
 - Providing opportunities for church members to discern their callings and spiritual gifts and how they might use them.
 - Providing other opportunities for individual ministries to publicise their activities and engage with church members.

- We will provide regular discipleship courses for smaller groups or individuals.
- We will establish nurture (or newcomer) groups as a place for new members.
- We will establish a culture where we honour one another, but feel safe to challenge one another. The church will be a place where it is safe to fail, and grace is easy to come by. This will involve:
 - A teaching series and a study programme for house groups.
 - Exploring how we can provide safe places for this culture to develop, with particular emphasis on enabling and encouraging all church members to be part of a house group.

These priorities provide a broad framework to focus the activity of the church but although it refers to specific ministries, where they have a clear role in acting upon a priority, *it does not cover all*. It is anticipated that individual ministries may have their own vision statements, setting out how they will specifically seek to follow these priorities, where they are appropriate.

Reviewing our Progress

The PCC will establish working groups for each of the priorities and will hold a special meeting in 6 months' time to review how things are going, and to ensure that the Vision is still in line with what we understand God to be saying to us at that time.



Rooted in Prayer

Prayer will be woven through all that we do, as we seek to be in-tune with the Holy Spirit's activity in CoGS and in our community. So, in addition to a regular programme of prayer events and weekly prayer meetings:

- We will develop a prayer calendar to support all church events and activities taking place, and make it available to the congregation.
- We will provide a post-box on our land, close to the bus stop, where the community is invited to post prayer-requests or requests for practical help.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish:
but blessed is the one who heeds
wisdom’s instruction.”

(Proverbs 29:18)