

# **St Stephen's, Canonbury**

## **Exploring Faith – Sharing Hope – Growing in Love**

### **Mission Action Plan 2016-2021**

#### **Re-draft November 2017**

St Stephen's is a diverse and eclectic Christian community in the heart of Islington. We welcome people from across the world with many different life experiences. We seek to grow together in Christ through worship, fellowship, scripture and service. We recognise Christ's call to us to follow him and to strive to build his kingdom in the church, the communities in which we live, the parish and our lives. We seek to follow the example of 'servant ministry' given to us by Christ and 'wash the feet' of the poor and marginalised. We want to be an open community that is prepared to welcome all people. We strive to live out our mission statement – 'Exploring Faith – Sharing Hope – Growing in Love' – with humility and commitment through both the joys and sorrows, successes and failures, wholeness and brokenness of our lives as individuals and as a church family.

We want to be:

A place in which people are invited into the mystery of God in Christ.

A place where our life and worship respond to local circumstances, culture and experience.

These are the core values we aspire to

- Diversity and inclusion
- Theological and liturgical breadth
- Practically demonstrated love
- Risk taking and an openness to new ideas
- Commitment to learning and growing as followers of Jesus
- Engagement with the local community
- Speaking out for justice
- Working in partnership with churches and other local organisations
- Modelling and encouraging environmental responsibility

These are our key priorities

- Prayer and worship - we see this as the heart of all that we are
- Diversity and inclusion – we are a church for all
- Communication - we seek to be open and collaborative
- Ministry – we are all part of 'the body of Christ'
- Safeguarding and Health and Safety – we want to be a 'safe place'

## ***What we have achieved – some highlights from the past 18 months***

- A programme of social events and a growing concert programme
- Made plans for a church weekend in October 2018
- Explored the principles of mapping
- Established an Environmental Responsibility Group; marked 'Creationtide'
- Recruited a preschool childrens worker and begun this project
- Started 'Messy Church' and an early years Sunday ministry
- Run several 'What's God got to do with it' series'
- Relocated the church office
- Installed a new sound and video system
- Completed the Quinquennial Inspection

## **Our Mission Action Plan 2016-2021 – revised November 2017**

### **Church family and social life**

We recognise the need to foster a culture of family and community within the church that is welcoming and open to fringe members and newcomers. We recognise that there can often be entrenched 'sub-communities' within a church and see the need to encourage the building of friendships and relationships across the church family.

#### *Within the next 18 months we will:*

- Develop and make available welcome information for newcomers.
- Continue to hold regular social events attractive to church members, friends and family and others.
- Further develop the place of art and music within the life of the church, attracting artists and performers and realising the gifts that are already amongst us and making our facilities (sound system, space, setting) available for this..
- Implement the 'Pastoral Assistants' strategy approved by the PCC in 2017
- Continue to run bi-annual church weekends away.

#### *During 2019-20121 we will:*

- Work to sustain and develop further all the above.

### **Social and community engagement and involvement**

We recognise that we are a Parish Church and exist to serve the diverse community around us. We also recognise that many church members live outside of the parish and engage with the communities in which they live and work. We recognise our responsibility to model environmental responsibility.

*Over the next 18 months we will:*

- Undertake a 'mapping' exercise to discern how we can best place our ministry and resources and use the results to consider new mission initiatives.
- Continue to support Manna as a core St Stephen's ministry.
- Support the development of 'CanonburyResponds' and seek to develop partnerships with other organisations and churches that work for community cohesion and social justice.
- Work to support and facilitate a 'Street Association' pilot project
- Continue to support our 'Environmental Responsibility Group' and work to reduce our carbon footprint and waste as an organisation and promote environmental responsibility to the congregation and more widely.
- Encourage church members to take up local community roles.

*During 2019-2021 we will:*

- Build on new mission initiatives.
- Continue to strengthen local networks and partnership working.
- Grow 'Street Associations' if the pilot proves fruitful.
- Keep environmental responsibility as an important part of our action and message.

## **Working with Children and young people**

We recognise that it is vital that we nurture and support children and young people within St Stephen's. We want to offer a route to spiritual growth and maturity for all from a very young age and support parents as they nurture their children in the Christian faith. We believe that it is vital to begin this at as young an age as possible.

*Over the next 18 months we will:*

- Support the new preschool childrens worker and their ministry.
- Continue to support Urban Hope as a core St Stephen's ministry.
- Resource and support our Sunday School and work with 5-11s
- Work to offer engaging and challenging discipleship and nurture opportunities for teenagers and young adults.
- Work to connect together our ministries to children and young people across all ages to create a continuous pathway of involvement
- Continue to build relationships with local primary schools. Developing this to offer not just assemblies but RE and curriculum input as well.

*During 2019 – 2021 we will:*

- Continue to develop all the above.
- Work towards the sustainability of our ministry to preschool children.

## **Spiritual development and nurture**

We want to deepen our faith and grow together. We also want to invite others into a community that nurtures faith and is not afraid of asking difficult questions. We recognise that opportunities to meet (other than our regular services) are necessary to encourage personal growth and discipleship.

*Within the next 18 months we will:*

- Re-evaluate how we offer spiritual nurture and growth opportunities.
- Work to establish a new network of small groups with a 'spiritual' dimension but a variety of reasons and opportunities for gathering.
- Work on cultivating a 'culture of invitation' amongst the congregation.

*During 2019 – 2021 we will:*

- Aim to see a significant number of people belonging to a small group.
- Ensure that discipleship and nurture courses are easy to access.

## **Church buildings**

We want our buildings to be welcoming and well equipped and a centre for the community. We want the Church to reflect the importance of worship in our lives and a space where we can celebrate creativity in different ways.

*Within the next 18 months we will:*

- Complete the 'Church Steps' project.
- Install a new fire alarm and fire safety measures.
- Complete all repairs highlighted in the quinquennial inspection report.
- Install new storage cupboards in the Church
- Develop a project to redecorate and improve facilities in the Church.
- Explore installation of Solar panels and LED lighting with Cloudesley Sustainable Churches funding.

## **Administration and Communication**

We recognise that efficient administration and communication enhance the life of the church and increase the effectiveness of all aspects of ministry. We also recognise that it is easy to let administrative tasks fall on the vicar's desk and not notice how much of a burden these have become.

Over the next 18 months we will

- Seek to form a group of volunteers who will work to improve all aspects of communication – physical and digital.
- Work to connect administration across the organisation.,
- Undertake a financial systems audit and establish the most efficient, accurate and compliant method of financial management and record keeping that we can.