

St Stephen's, Canonbury

Exploring Faith – Sharing Hope – Growing in Love

Mission Action Plan 2016-2021

Re-draft January 2019

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 3 years
Since the first draft of the MAP in 2016 we have achieved many of our
aims and objectives and discerned new ones on the way/.***

- A programme of social events and concerts
- A church weekend at High Leigh in October 2018
- Appointed a preschool childrens worker and developed this work including exploring 'child in the midst' theology, improving the crèche and facilities, offering community parent and baby support, starting 'Messy Church' and an early years Sunday ministry.
- Relocated the church office; Installed a new sound and video system; Rebuilt the Church steps; Installed a fire alarm; Completed quinquennial repairs..
- Established an environmental responsibility group and developed and started a carbon reduction programme of work for our building, including LED lighting, solar panels and insulation.
- Created and distributed 'Season of invitation' fliers.
- Run discipleship and nurture courses.
- Launched a 'Praying Together' initiative.

Our Mission Action Plan 2016-2021 – revised January 2019

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.

Over the next 2 years 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..
- Foster a spirit of friendship and pastoral care across the church and build the pastoral care group.
- Continue to run bi-annual church weekends away.

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 2 years we will:

- Continue to support Manna as a core St Stephen's ministry.
- Support the development of 'Canonbury Responds' and seek to develop partnerships with other organisations and churches that work for community cohesion and social justice.
- Support Canonbury Responds 'Street Association' initiatives.
- 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.

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 2 years we will:

- Continue to support Urban Hope as a core St Stephen's ministry.
- Evaluate the pre-school ministry project and explore how we can continue to develop our provision for and welcome of families with younger children.
- 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.

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.

Over the next 2 years we will:

- Work on cultivating a 'culture of invitation' amongst the congregation.
- Run regular discipleship and nurture courses.
- Include opportunities for personal prayer and ministry in morning services.
- Explore running occasional short courses aimed at spiritual development including using evening services for this.
- Encourage the formation of small groups as places of fellowship, exploration and spiritual growth
- Explore using social media to create networks for spiritual development and growth.
- Continue to encourage people to use the 'Praying Together' initiative.

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.

Over the next 2 years we will:

- Investigate potential issues with the tower.
- Develop a project to redecorate and improve facilities in the Church.
- Install Solar panels and LED lighting with Cloudesley Sustainable Churches funding.
- Explore replacing the boiler and improving the heating system.

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 2 years we will

- Explore how we can best ensure that creative and imaginative systems for communication are in place.
- Work to connect administration across the organisation.
- Improve our web, social media and physical publicity and presence.