

Discovering the heart of God in the heart of the city:

Our vision and strategy for 2016-2020

Introduction

*The throne of God and of the lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him.
(Revelation 22v3)*

One description of St Martin in the Bull Ring is 'the church that has to give more than its got'. It reminds us all that we are dependent on God for all that we want to do. When we depend on God we discover He can do far more than we have the resources for. His heart is for the lost and His love is never ending in that desire. We are called to discover this for ourselves, individually, as a community and throughout this city.

Since 2006 we have stated that our mission is 'Discovering the Heart of God in the heart of the City.' This is a big mission. But then the God we worship and long to know better and more deeply has a big mission. He is redeeming the universe, the world and us through His grace, love and mercy. This is called the Kingdom of God. His call on us as the community of St Martin's is to seek, receive and by the power of His Spirit live out in love and openness to Him the reality of this Kingdom in our lives. But this is never just for us. It is always lived out with open hearts and hands to one another, our neighbours in this city and the whole world. We do this by proclaiming the person of Jesus Christ, his cross and his resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the heartbeat of our mission statement.

This document represents our fourth version of that statement and within this booklet you will find what we are committing to aim at in

the next three years. As you read what we have said you might be tempted to say it's the same as before. That is partly true. We will continue to work on three main areas:

- Welcome
- Care
- Discipleship

But please look again. There are differences as we seek to respond to the changing world around us and to build on what we have already achieved.

The God we worship and serve never stands still. He is always calling us to new heights, new possibilities and new wonders. It is why we worship Him knowing that as we worship and serve He is already ahead of us, leading us deeper into the greatest adventure of all; discovering more of Him and His love, mercy and grace. He invites us all to take part. He encourages us all to join in. He wants everyone to experience His forgiveness and love. Because He longs to see everyone in this city have a living relationship with Him, we do too.

Be part of it not apart from it.

Read and pray about what is in this vision document and seek ways to serve. It will not be boring or disappointing for we are part of a church that gives more than we have because we rely on the one who has more to give than we can ever imagine.

Come with us in discovering more of God's heart in the heart of this city.

Stewart Jones **Mike Branscombe** **Clive Bevan & Jo Murgatroyd** **Ian Baker**
Rector **Director of Care & Discipleship** **Church Wardens** **Lay Vice Chair of PCC**

Getting to here

Our previous vision document began in 2013 and was reviewed at the Annual Church Meeting in April 2016. This was followed up by a short questionnaire to the church community in June 16 to find out what people know about what we are doing and what they would like to see us do in the future. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) spent a day in July 16 reviewing the responses received and began to seek God's heart through prayer and bible study as to where He is leading us now and into the future.

A draft of this document was then discussed further at the PCC meeting in Sept 16 with the official launch taking place within St Martin's in the week beginning 23rd October 2016.

Where we stand

Our prayer and our aim is that every part of St Martin's community is built on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ. Our faith in Him is expressed in what we believe and the values that matter to us. We believe God is calling us to discover His heart in the heart of this city. Appendices 2 and 3 record a dream and a story which reflect our vision and values.

What we believe

We are a Christian community gathered around the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus we meet the living God in all his fullness. We believe that Jesus came from the Father, was born into our world, to show God's love, mercy and grace to all people, offering everyone a choice to live in the Kingdom of God. This is only possible because he died on the cross for everyone and defeated sin and death through his physical resurrection. Because Jesus is alive we can know him and through him God our Father by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Bible is the word of God, revealing to us the ways in which God relates to us and His world.

We believe that prayer changes things and that miracles do happen.

We believe in the Church as the hope for the world and that through the Church we can see this world at this time be transformed into what God always intended.

Our Values

- *Christ Centred*
- *Inclusive*
- *Compassionate*
- *Innovative*
- *Community*
- *Inspirational*
- *Celebration*

(For definitions of these values please see Appendice 1)

Prayer and Worship

***They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.***

(Acts 2v42)

Prayer, worship, the Bible and fellowship are the very heartbeat of our community. We aim to ensure our values are always expressed through them. This does not mean that our vision values and how we express them cannot be reviewed and/or changed but rather it means they are our core activity, the reason we exist. We will always pray, worship, study the bible and build community but how we do these things might change.

Prayer and Worship within St Martin's

Aim: To keep prayer and worship as the very heart of our community

How?

- Establishing extended prayer times for the community as part of our church's year.
- Seeking to improve the quality of what we offer in worship.
- Committing more resources to children, young people and their families.

Prayer and Worship outside St Martin's

Aim: To ensure our worship is welcoming and accessible to the newcomer.

How?

- Reviewing all our current services to ensure they are open to the newcomer and help all who come to grow in their faith.
- Exploring setting up at least one new expression of church.
- Exploring ways for us to open the church for longer to allow for more prayer and ministry to those who visit us and to the wider city.

Out of our prayer and worship we want to seek ways to fulfil God's mission for St Martin's. To do this we remain committed to discovering the heart of God in the heart of the city through welcome, care and discipleship. How we will work in these priority areas is detailed in the following pages.



Discovering the Heart of God in the heart of the city through
WELCOME

But the Father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this child of mine was dead and is alive again; they were lost and are found.' So they began to celebrate.

(Luke 15v22-23)

Welcome within St Martin's

Aim: To ensure everyone receives a consistent welcome to the church community no matter how they come into the community.

How?

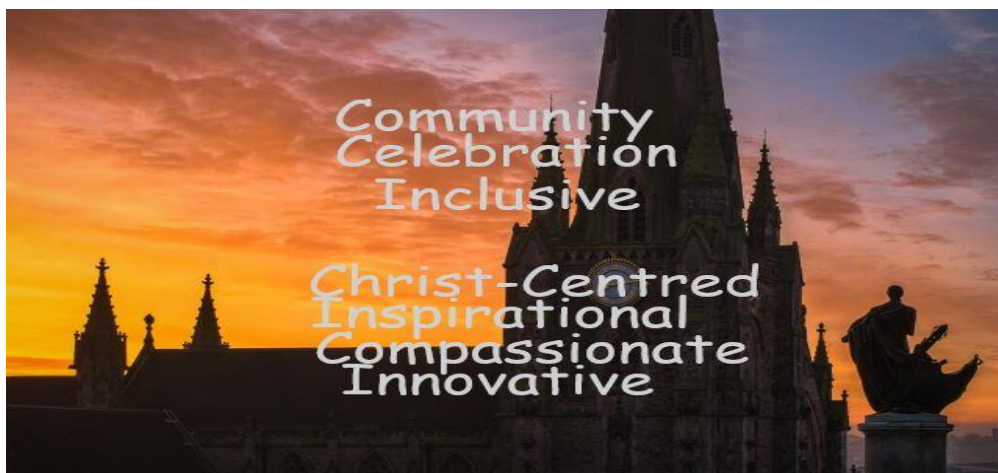
- Continuing to create a culture of welcome involving everyone in our community.
- Creating teams of trained welcomers for every day we are open.
- Extending the opportunities for prayer and listening ministries during the week.

Welcome outside St Martin's

Aim: To provide attractive ways to explain who we are and to model Christ to all outside the church community.

How?

- Creating opportunities for people to engage with the Christian faith especially children, young people and their families.
- Explore how we can extend our hospitality through increased opening times.
- Developing closer partnerships with other agencies, organisations and institutions.



Discovering the Heart of God in the heart of the city through
CARE

***'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ'
(Galatians 6v2)***

Care within St Martin's

Aim: To ensure everyone who is a member of the church community is appropriately cared for.

How?

- Continuing to create a culture of care within the community.
- Encouraging everyone who is part of the church to be part of a small group that provides care and discipleship.
- Organising regular social events that build community.

Care outside St Martin's

Aim: To provide appropriate support for those in need.

How?

- Developing a coordinated approach to those who come seeking help.
- Working with St Martin's Centre for Health and Healing to provide money advice, and signposting to other agencies.
- Building volunteer capacity.



Discovering the Heart of God in the heart of the city through
DISCIPLESHIP

'I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.'
(John 16v5)

Discipleship within St Martin's

Aim: To provide opportunities for everyone to grow in their faith.

How?

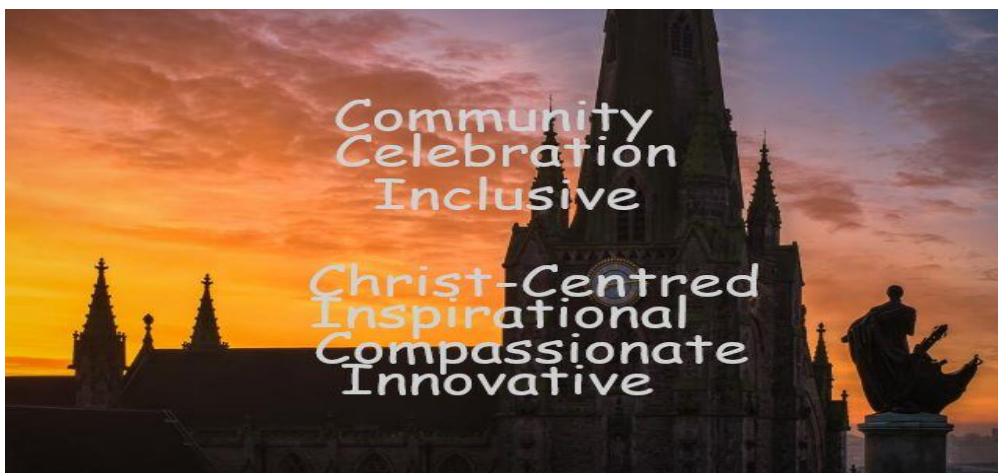
- Create a culture of disciples making disciples.
- Hold regular teaching groups throughout the year.
- Develop a culture of stewardship encouraging everyone to find ways to serve and support God's ministry in and through this place.

Discipleship outside St Martin's

Aim: To provide opportunities for people to discover more about the Christian faith.

How?

- Provide regular enquirers groups where people can learn about the Christian faith.
- Use our building and heritage to proclaim our faith.
- Seek ways to be a community that speaks into the public square for those who are marginalised.



So are you in?

What we are hoping to achieve in the next three years needs three things. Prayer, commitment and you!

God is calling us all to be part of His amazing mission.

We can do nothing without God's help.

We will see little happen without everyone committing to this vision.

We need each person to offer themselves to this call of God on our church.

So please pray about all of this, find ways to be involved and make the commitment to be active. Together we can achieve all of this and so much more.

So, are you in?

To show that you want to do this please complete the card that is with this document and return it to a member of staff or put it in the collection plate during a service or place it in the box provided at the back of church.

Thank you.



Appendix 1: Core Value Definitions

- ***Christ Centred***

We are a Christian community and he is the one we proclaim; the one we live for and the one we serve. All that Jesus is we are striving to become. We long to be people who can be as close to the Father as he is; to treat others as he does and to live a fully human life as he did.

- ***Inclusive***

St Martin's is a place where we welcome everyone no matter who they are, what their lifestyle is or what they have done. We welcome people just as they are but like all who come to Jesus Christ we long to help everyone who comes to have their lives transformed more and more into his likeness.

- ***Compassionate***

Our first motive when meeting people is to show mercy for we are trying to live in a way that reflects what God has done for us namely shown us mercy. We strive to be a forgiving and compassionate community of acceptance and love.

- ***Innovative***

St Martin's has always endeavoured to find new ways of being church and of expressing the mission of the church in ways that meet people where they are rather than where we would like them to be. New ideas and taking risks are at the heart of what we do and how we live.

- ***Community***

We do not believe that being a Christian is a private affair but requires us to live in relationship with other people. The church is the hope for the world. We are stronger when we act together and the church is the place where we can find support, be held accountable and reach our full potential as human beings.

- ***Inspirational***

The world can be a tough place and we can often be crushed by what life throws at us. We want to be a community that has our expectations raised higher than we could ever have imagined and to be inspired by what God can achieve through us and for us and for His world.

- ***Celebration***

Jesus said that he came to bring life in all its fullness and that includes a celebration of the life we live and the wonderful world we experience. We want to be people that celebrate the greatness of God, the good in other people, the good in ourselves and the richness of this world.

Appendice 2: From the 2006-09 and 2010-2013 versions: A
Dream

*I walked the streets of a city that I knew but didn't.
Recognised buildings with a light and energy never experienced
before.*

*As I wandered around the strange familiar streets I came to
The Heart of the City.*

*There was a truly holy place
alive with people and prayer.
I watched as the old and young
The able and the sick,
The rich and the poor,
The local and the visitor,
The resident and the foreigner,
The happy and the sad
The hopeful and the helpless
entered the busy stillness.*

*I watched children and others
learning from screens and welcomers
about the one to whom the glory is given.
They ate meals and had the chance to create in word and form,
paint and clay their response to this day.*

*People were praying some alone others with helpers,
listeners to the cries of the heart,
lighting candles, seeking.
The needs of the world brought to its creator through shabby scraps
of snatched thoughts and pleas.
Laughter and smiles mixed with silent tears as people gathered to
share and greet.*

*A broken group waited for their chance of wholeness through dance
and art as the work continued around them.*

If hope and love could be a colour or a taste or a fragrance or a place...

*I sought an explanation from someone at the door.
‘What is this place?’ I asked, hopeful for a simple answer.
‘This is the place where we
discover the heart of God in the heart of the city.
Come and join the celebration.*

(Stewart Jones)

Appendice 3: From our 2013-16 version: A Story

Raja didn't really know why she had ended up in this city. It was unknown to her, far from her real home and very different to what she knew. They said she would be safe here. But although she was unlikely to be dragged out of her bed in the middle of the night to be beaten with clubs, she didn't feel that safe. In her isolation and loneliness she felt lost and when you are lost you feel frightened. And when you are afraid you feel unsafe.

The sign outside the church told her things she didn't really understand but one phrase on the board stood out; 'All Welcome.' So she entered through the doors, not sure what would happen next but hoping that in this place she might feel safe again.

As she stepped into the building a man smiled at her, greeted her and told her his name. He looked like he meant what he said not like some of the other men she had met. They smiled but it wasn't a smile of truth. She smiled back and said her name, 'Raja.' Her voice was very quiet as she spoke. The man asked her if he could help her and introduced her to a woman. She looked so friendly and caring that Raja immediately began to feel safer. And so she went with the woman who gave her a hot drink and sat and listened. On that first day inside the church that is all she did. She listened, really listened to Raja's story. No one had ever really listened to her before. People had asked for information but they didn't listen.

So later that week Raja came back to the church to find out if they would still listen. It was a Sunday and there were lots more people. But again as she entered a woman smiled and said hello, explained what was happening and invited Raja to sit with her for the time of worship. So she did and she felt safe. The people were so different, from all over the world and Raja felt safe. Raja started to come to the

church every week. And every week someone always smiled, listened and made her feel welcome. But she began to listen too. The leaders and the people she met each week would often talk about Jesus and they talked about him in such a way that Raja felt welcomed by Him and safe with Him. So she joined the group that met each week to learn about Jesus and she met others with whom she could learn and laugh. And it wasn't long before she was a volunteer in the church, helping with the refreshments, the cleaning and being part of a small group that knew her, cared for her and looked out for her. They met to learn more about how Jesus can help them live their lives.

Once when she had been ill for a number of days, someone from the church contacted her to see if she was alright and they listened to what she had to say and they prayed with her. Raja had never felt so welcomed and safe. Jesus became real to her and she was baptised.

Raja knew why she had been brought to this city. She knew why she had found this church. It was in this place that she had discovered the heart of God. His love for her and his desire for her to grow in faith was now more real than anything else in the whole of her life. Her name means hope and now she had found the best hope of all. And all because a man smiled and said you are welcome.