



# VISION 22



ST GEORGE'S CHURCH  
LOVING GOD LOVING OTHERS

## MINISTRY NEEDS

A needs assessment was recently carried out by the PCC and this local authority sourced data, together with our own observations and local knowledge, leads us to the following conclusions when it comes to the Ministry opportunities and priorities for our Parish:

- 🕒 **Children and families work** - This is both to support young families in the area as well as helping towards tackling the mental health issues which arise in later childhood and adolescence.
- 🕒 **Child mental health** - This is a key issue locally and one where local services struggle to keep pace with need. Waiting times for services are longer than would be wished for and those services are then largely CBT which whilst useful is not a panacea. More in depth therapeutic counselling services would be most useful to the community.
- 🕒 **Community cohesion** - The provision of spaces which can be opened up to the community as a hub for gathering socially would be of value. This would involve an assessment of the accessibility and suitability of our buildings for meeting the needs of the community.
- 🕒 **Senior citizens services** - Primarily focussed on the provision of opportunities for socialising the church is well placed to provide opportunities for people to interact and thrive into old age thus battling isolation and loneliness.
- 🕒 **Health & wellbeing** - Weight loss and fitness networks would seem to be a great area of need where these are not driven by profit (Weight Watchers & Slimming World) but rather based on relationship and socialising.
- 🕒 **Ecological responsibility** - Running through all of our mission and ministry should be an attempt to act responsibly when it comes to the environmental impact of our shared life. So many in our community, especially among the young, would greet the church being seen to take a lead in this crisis with enthusiasm and this would create opportunities for engagement.
- 🕒 **Art and expression** - The dearth of local spaces for showcasing the creative arts creates a ministry opportunity where a social hub spaces is envisaged.
- 🕒 **Other opportunities** - There will be other needs which we should consider and this is not an exhaustive list but should be considered organic - that is that it will grow over time. These might include; Loneliness & Isolation in all age groups, Debt & Finance...

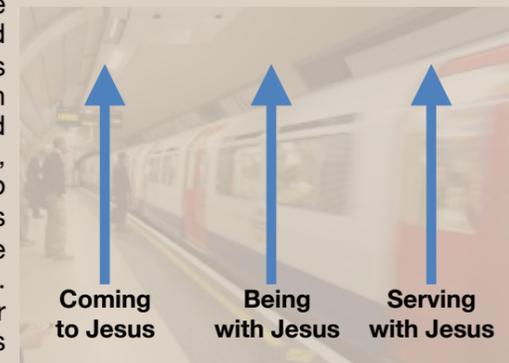
### St George's Church (New Thundersley)

Rushbottom Lane - South Benfleet - Essex - SS7 4DN  
01268 754561 parish.office.stgeorges@gmail.com www.stgeorges-church.org.uk

## The heart of Vision 22 is the desire to see God's kingdom come in our community.

We pray that, as the Community of the King, we would then in turn see St George's flourish in this context. This growth we would hope would be numerical but just as important as growing in number is our desire to see the church grow in depth of spiritual maturity. Our Vision is not just "**what we are going to do**", that is any projects or initiatives which emerge but just as importantly, as a church, "**what we are going to be**". That is to say, how we will express our family life together.

Any growth will involve three parallel tracks which cannot be separated or prioritised. Together these form the foundation or framework of the Vision for St George's. Just as with the London Underground where the power comes from the central rail is our **being with Jesus** in worship, prayer and in the individually. In our worship refreshed and empowered to whom we are sent in ministry of the vision are **servicing** and impact our community. Alongside this is the desire to themselves and entering into will involve some actions course for example, we see people **coming to Jesus** for relationship with Him. Although this from us, such as running an Alpha would anticipate this coming to Jesus happening as a result of people encountering the church through our service to and engagement with the wider community.



## Behave, believe, belong vs Belong, believe behave

It has been observed that an older model of outreach and evangelism sought to see changes in the behaviour of people before they were then expected to believe and only at that point would we allow them to belong to the church family.

However, modern assessments of successful evangelism strategies have observed that the more usual pattern of coming to faith sees people develop a sense of belonging to the church first, perhaps through attendance at events, participation as a helper in activities etc. That is their opportunity to come to a place of believing for themselves and coming to follow Jesus. Only after that encounter might their behaviour begin to change as the work of transformation through the Spirit begins.

In any Vision where growth through seeing new people come to faith, as opposed to gathering existing believers from other places is prioritised, this understanding of the journey to faith should be held in mind. Strategies for growth should be designed to give people opportunities to participate before any expectation of encounter with Jesus and subsequent transformation of behaviour is realised. To do otherwise is a recipe for failure.

