

Having said that one track will not be prioritised over the other clearly our ultimate hope and prayer is that our family, friends and neighbours will **come to know Jesus for themselves**. That they might enjoy an encounter with Him and thereby enter into a personal relationship with Him in the context of their belonging to the church community. However, it is inevitable that most people will only come to know Jesus as a result of their engagement with the life of God's people as we impact upon our community. In order to ensure that it is as easy as possible for people to encounter Jesus we must ensure that a number of factors are in place.

1. **Removing cultural barriers to encounters** - This is about how we improve our communication of the gospel and how we dismantle barriers such as language, styles of behaviour, physical blocks etc. This will include reflection on styles of corporate worship, times of services, serious reflection on "sacred" spaces, buildings infrastructure etc.
2. **Ensuring the best opportunities for communication** - We must ensure that we have all the most effective methods of engagement in place for people to explore the gospel when the time is right for them.
3. **Playing the role of "chaplain" well** - The Church of England is in a unique position among the wider church community to play the role of chaplain to the local community. In things such as occasional offices, "special events" (eg Remembrance, Christmas etc) we need to prioritise the perceptions and felt needs of those in the wider community over our own.

Practical outworking

In practice some of the initiatives we engage in may include:

1. **Guest services** - A regular feature of our Sunday worship will be services specifically aimed at breaking down barriers for people to engage in worship alongside the Christian community in order to encounter the risen Jesus in our worship in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Enquirers courses** - We will aim to run either Alpha or other appropriate enquirer courses for those who may wish to explore what it means to become a disciple of Jesus Christ in the 21st century.
3. **Occasional offices/special events** - It will be important to ensure that services such as Remembrance Sunday, Christmas carol services as well as funerals and weddings are constructed in such a way that they meet the cultural expectations of visitors whilst also challenging the preconceptions and sharing the gospel with both gentleness and clarity.
4. **Work with children and families** - Recognising Messy Church as a tried and tested way of engaging with families we will seek to use the hospitality hub and more strategic planning to make this event more "joined up" with the wider church family. We will also be looking for additional creative ways to develop work with young children and parents or carers to share in ministry and mission with this group.

Among other Anglican churches St George's is unique in our local area as having Evangelical (the priority of Scripture) and Charismatic (ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit) elements to our identity. This, with values which echo those expressed by the New Wine family, means that our own church family has a distinctive flavour. This doesn't make us better than others but these things do express our character. One of the things which expresses these ideas is our **corporate worship and prayer**. Whilst we must ensure that we do not expend energy on "Sunday services" at the expense of the other two tracks we should acknowledge that worship, intimacy with Jesus in the Spirit, is the only source from which we draw strength and passion for engaging in these other two activities. Things we need to keep in balance include:

1. **Accessibility** - We must always be mindful that we come to worship in the context of an increasingly secular society with limited experience of worship. We should therefore ensure that our expressions of worship ensure ease of access by not-yet-believers taking into account such things as styles of music, content, length of services and the language we use.
2. **Quality** - Whilst many of our efforts resemble more the child's drawing stuck to the fridge than a magnificent Rembrandt they are cherished none the less by our loving Father because they are offered by His loving children. Nevertheless we should always seek to offer God the best we can bring because He is worth no less than the best.
3. **The goal of our worship** - Our primary concern in worship is to give of ourselves. We must therefore endeavour to explore new ways of enabling people to express their worship especially when they come from a background where such a thing is completely alien.

Nevertheless, we inevitably find in our worship that we draw near to Jesus. In doing so we find ourselves healed, restored, forgiven and often comprehending new depths of his love for us. These things in turn cause us to want to share this love with others so that they might know His love for themselves.

Practical outworking

In practice some of the initiatives we engage in may include:

1. **Prayer opportunities in worship** - We will seek to retain and build upon the pattern of Sunday worship which sets aside one Sunday a month for extended periods of prayer. We will continue to experiment with creative ways of enabling people to engage in prayer and deepen their prayer life.
2. **Prayer opportunities at other times** - The mid-week Compline and Tuesday early morning prayer will continue. Other opportunities for whole church and small group prayer times will be explored and developed.
3. **Intimate worship** - We are creating a regular worship event with opportunities to explore and grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We hope that this will see us grow in confidence in moving in the Spiritual gifts in other settings such as Sunday morning worship and other aspects of everyday life.

In light of our desire to see people come to Jesus we must therefore ensure that our **impact upon the local community** is as effective as possible. This will be affected by a number of different factors all of which must be taken seriously when planning our strategy for effective community engagement. These will include:

1. **Easy access to our site** - Although often seen as a mere means to an end our buildings say a lot about us. We probably go to great lengths to ensure that our own homes are warm comfortable places which reflect our characters and idiosyncrasies as people. We make them fit for purpose because they are not merely functional spaces which provide us with shelter and warmth but rather places that reflect our values and personalities. The same will be true of our church buildings. Things such as inclusive access, facilities catering for all needs are vital. Developing an infrastructure which serves the needs of the other two tracks are essential to our desire to impact the community with the gospel.
2. **Strategic investment** - We need to ensure that the financial provision which is entrusted to us by God is invested in the right resources. This will support and enable our volunteers to be effective in meeting the needs of the community.
3. **Scratching where they itch** - It has been said that Christians spend their time trying to scratch people where they are not itching. The reality is that lots of people have very different felt needs. Ultimately we believe that a relationship with Jesus is what will meet every need people have. However, Jesus Himself met people at their point of need and this was the beginning of a journey for many who found that he led them to places that they were unaware they needed help. We begin our task of impacting our community by asking ourselves, and perhaps those we seek to serve, where the needs are.

Practical outworking

In practice some of the initiatives we engage in may include:

1. **Enhancement of the site** - Plans are already being drawn up to develop the site in terms of accessibility (entrances, toilet facilities, off street ease of access etc) to ensure that there are minimal practical barriers to people from the wider community making use of the buildings.
2. **The priority of hospitality** - At the heart of our strategy to be at the centre of our community will be the creation of a Hospitality Hub which will be inviting, accessible and suitably staffed to operate as a base from which other outreach activities may operate.
3. **Ministry enabled** - Recognising the growing number of elderly people within both the wider and worshiping community we will grow a team of volunteers to undertake home visits offering prayer and fellowship to those no longer physically able to access community events.
4. **Ministry and mission enhanced** - Existing activities already see us engage with the wider community (eg Toddler group, Tuesday Seniors club). Through the Hospitality Hub and more strategic planning we will use these opportunities to enhance their effectiveness for mission and ministry.