

Vision & Values

“VISION STATEMENT”

As a church our vision is “To build spaces of care, love, freedom, creativity and justice in our community: Sacred spaces where our actions nurture wellbeing, wholeness and human flourishing... in Jesus’ Name.”

- We choose to be accessible, with a comprehensible vision and purpose...
- Living this out in an open and inclusive way

We want to make the good news of Jesus accessible to a generation that is sceptical about religion; in which the Christian message is often regarded as passé or irrelevant; in which religion is mistrusted and the Church has lost credibility.

We seek to build credibility by being ‘an undeniable force for good’ in our community. We seek to be accessible and relevant by communicating in creative, inspiring, engaging ways. We seek to build trust and overcome scepticism by being transparent, vulnerable, humble fellow travellers.

SOME OF OUR VALUES

- **Baptist and Anabaptist Identity**

We emphasise our baptist heritage as radicals, non-conformists and champions of the freedoms of speech, conscience and worship.

We particularly look to the Anabaptist roots and influence upon baptistic thought and practice:

- Our theology is Jesus centred and we understand discipleship as the journey of following Jesus as Lord of our lives in practical embodied ways.
- Orthopraxy over orthodoxy: We focus on ‘praxis’ (the practical outworking and lived experience of being a Christian) over ‘doctrine’ (intellectualised, abstract and conceptual expressions of systematic theology).
- We value the anabaptist emphasis on humility, generosity, and peace.
- We value the creation of meaningful, loving community and the role of that community in hermeneutics and decision making.

- **A Welcoming and Inclusive Church**

Of all the images and designations we find in Scripture, we orient principally around 1 Jn 4:7-21 affirming that ‘God is Love’, and that we reciprocate his love in loving others, especially those who in human terms might be difficult to love: Those unlike us, or even enemies (Lk 6:27-36).

Therefore:

- We seek unity not uniformity. We expect to be a diverse community comprising very different people with different ideas and beliefs. We seek to model a healthy family, that can debate, discuss and hold opposing views without breaking faith or fellowship. This means we seek to be inclusive of differing viewpoints, orientations and lifestyle choices, covenanting to walk with one another and trusting the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of how and where change is needed.
- In practical terms we seek to create warm and welcoming expressions of church; We are informal, recognising informality as a good way to help people be themselves; We seek to be non-judgemental, recognising that we are all ‘sinners’, we all get it wrong and are equally reliant on God’s continual grace to us.

- We seek to 'live well', pursuing 'fullness of life' in Jesus (Jn 10:10), which includes wise and ethical living; But we are sceptical of formulaic and facile moralising.

- **A Prophetic Church**

We believe the Church has a prophetic role, to bring the 'perspective and insight of heaven' to bear on the individual, national and global level. This means we will use our efforts and resources to stand for justice, recognising God's particular heart for the marginalised, poor and powerless. We will work for the freedom and flourishing of people.

- As a specific expression of this, we focus on the biblical mandate to be wise stewards of creation, and therefore work to promote and enact Creation care.

- **Worship, Beauty and Passion**

We seek to live 'lives of worship', seeing the potential to do so in the broadest possible terms: We take seriously the ancient mandate to express this "with all our hearts, minds, soul and strength." Thus, in every activity we want to bring passion, diligence and a heart for excellence rooted in an appropriate response to the Creator God. We want to do things that are aesthetically and technically rich and pleasing; So we will seek to develop our facilities, musical worship, and communications, amongst other things.

- **Missio Dei**

This is the acknowledgement that God himself is a missionary, and has always taken the initiative to seek out people and restore relationships with them: It is not that the 'church has a mission', but that 'the mission has a church'. We see mission as foundational to our lives and the purpose of the church. Mission does not exist to 'recruit for the church', but to fulfill the purposes of God as he brings healing, restoration and justice to his world.

- Further we recognise that God is 'ahead of us' not 'behind us' in this work, so we anticipate that his mission may be groundbreaking, surprising, disrupting our assumptions and settled paradigms. Therefore we embrace creativity and innovation in our whole approach to, practice and theology of mission.