

CHRIST CHURCH SUTTON



MISSION ACTION PLAN- 2022-2027

The Recent Past

In spring 2016, Bishop Jonathan Clark (then Bishop of Croydon) invited Phil Brooks to apply for the post of team Vicar in the Sutton Team Ministry, with a particular focus on Christ Church. He was appointed in August 2016.

Christ Church has been a part of the Sutton Team Ministry since 2006, and had seen a marked numerical decline in those years. It is testament to God's grace, and in particular the 'faithful remnant' who stuck with Christ Church in that season that there has been a healthy core to grow again from.

Since the summer of 2018, Phil has been able to focus his ministry exclusively at Christ Church. In God's goodness, the last five years have been tremendously encouraging. We have seen steady numerical growth in Sunday morning worship. The electoral roll for May 2022 is set to be over a hundred- for the first time in many years. Junior church has grown remarkably and now has a weekly attendance of around fifteen to twenty children. Our congregation is increasingly international, not least owing to the arrival of several individuals and families from Hong Kong.

The last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic have been challenging, and grievously painful at points. We have, in God's goodness, emerged from it as a larger church than we were in April 2020. With around a hundred people attending the 10.30am on a good Sunday, we believe that now is a good moment to draw up a renewed Mission Action Plan and set goals for the next five years.

We want to be:

The church that God wants us to be; faithful to our own context, calling and culture, not shaped by the ways of the world, or imitating other churches. A church that does not anxiously try to do too much, but has a ruthlessly protected margin.

A church that grows deeper; deeper in Christ, deeper in fellowship with one another, and deeper in expectation that God would bring people to living faith in the Lord Jesus.

A church that is on a secure footing for the decades to come. We want to be financially viable (not at risk of sharing ministry with another church). We want to safeguard a continuing evangelical ministry. We want to continue our renewal of the church fabric, so that our building continues to be fit for purpose for years to come.

Our human plans are contingent- God alone knows what the next five years will hold. We will hold these plans lightly, but we will also hope and pray that this Mission Action Plan will help us to be that church.

Acts, chapter 2:

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

'they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching'

We want to be a church that is centred on Jesus as we meet him through the Bible. The Bible is not a peripheral document, only to be referred to in church on a Sunday. We will have confidence in God's word in all we do; in our public proclamation (preaching and teaching) and personal interactions (our small groups, counselling and conversations).¹

Goals:

In five years' time, we pray we would:

See an increased number of people committed to small groups (currently 3 groups).

Have an increased emphasis on expository, Christ-centred preaching.

Have a growing 'Biblical counselling' ministry, bringing God's word to bear on the problems that we all struggle with.

See congregation members growing in confidence to read, handle and share the Bible themselves. See some congregation members take steps towards new ministries. Provide accessible teaching on the Bible.

See our Junior Church continuing to grow in size and depth.

¹ **Isaiah 55:11:** the word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. **Matthew 7:24** Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **Hebrews 4:12:** For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. **Luke 24:7** ...and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

'They devoted themselves to fellowship'

We want to be a church who truly know and love one another. We are the body of Christ², a unique kind of family. We have a precious unity in Jesus which must be enacted in loving word and deed. We want to be real with each other, sharing and caring for one another honestly. This is true at all times, but is particularly true in this present moment as we emerge from the pandemic with a growing, international church.

Goals:

In five years' time, we pray we would see:

Effective, organised pastoral care that addresses particular needs and concerns in the congregation and wider church community.

Greater overlap and integration within the congregation across all possible diversities. A range of social activities which encourage this.

A sustainable and growing Hong Kong fellowship.

Development of our ministry to children and youth, particularly anticipating the challenges and opportunities presented as our cohort of young children grow older.

Increase in the profile and implementation of safeguarding policy.

² **Ephesians 4:15-16:** speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. **John 13:34:** "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **Romans 12:4-5:** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **1 Corinthians 12:13:** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

'They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and to prayer'

Our weekly worship is the heartbeat of our life together.³ It is a gift to us. We worship God as Father, Son and Holy spirit through simple things- singing, sharing the bread and wine, reading the Bible, praying. As we do these things, Jesus comes to meet us. Our worship should encourage and build up Christians as well as welcoming and convincing non- Christians. We are committed to excellence in all of our worship- remaining faithfully Anglican, accessible to all, and increasingly international.

Goals

In five years' time, we pray we would:

See increasing diversity of language and culture in our Sunday worship.

See greater inclusion and input from children in our worship, particularly all-age.

Provide prayer ministry weekly after the service.

See a significant proportion of the congregation coming to a regular prayer meeting.

Have considered the possibility of multiplying our pattern of services.

³ **Isaiah 25:1:** O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago. **John 4:24:** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." **1 Corinthians 10:16:** Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? **Matthew 11:28-30:** Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. **Revelation 7:9:** After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

'and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved'

Jesus sends his church into the world to share the good news of his Gospel⁴. As Christians, we expect, hope and pray that we will experience the joy of seeing people become Christians. We want to do this not out of a sense of 'recruitment' to boost our numbers, but because we are compelled by our love of the Lord Jesus. In our context, this plays out in different ways. We are a Parish church, and so have a duty to share the good news with the 10'000 or so people who live within our Parish who would not consider coming to church. We also have a steady trickle of people who come to our church for various reasons- services and community events- welcoming them is a part of our outreach.

Goals

In five years' time we pray we would see:

More people becoming Christians.

More people coming to church through our community groups, events and services.

A world-class welcome on Sunday mornings, with even better visitor retention than we currently have.

A greater proportion of our finances being devoted to mission partners.

Engagement in local evangelism and outreach across various demographics of age, language, ethnicity etc.

Engagement in loving service to our local community.

Regular evangelistic courses such as Alpha or Christianity Explored.

⁴ **1 Peter 3:15:** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. **2 Corinthians 5:20:** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. **Matthew 9:37-78:** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." **Romans 10:13-14:** for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **1 Corinthians 9:22:** To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some.

Stewardship and securing the future

This category doesn't come into the Acts reading, but securing our long-term future is a vital part of church life. Jesus's church is invincible; we are part of a story with a happy ending! But we do not assume that our particular church will remain until Christ's return. We do know that the church will face many challenges in the decades to come. We have a duty to be 'good ancestors' to those who will come after us. Planning carefully for the future is a part of our call to be faithful with what we have been entrusted with.⁵

Goals-

In five years' time we pray that we would:

Be on a more stable financial footing, not least with our Parish Support Fund payments. We want to ensure that future decisions about ministry in the Parish mean we can continue to have a full-time stipendiary Vicar as and when Phil moves on.

Be confident that ongoing ministry within the church will be evangelical.

Have structures for PCC, Wardens, lay ministers (etc.) which are accountable, efficient, clear and enabling.

Have continued the excellent work on the upgrade and repair of the church fabric, so that we both fit for purpose and ecologically responsible.

Have clearly defined relationships with the other local Anglican churches- both at deanery, cluster and (potentially) group level ministry.

⁵ **Proverbs 21:5:** The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. **Proverbs 24:27:** Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house. **2 Corinthians 9:6-7:** whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **Luke 14:28:** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? **Philippians 4:6:** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

