

'A Welcoming Church that loves all our neighbours'

Informed by:

- Our previous vision to be 'A Welcoming Church for all'
- LICC 'Whole-life Discipleship' – three sessions
- URC Children and Young People (CYP) Friendly church
- Eco church
- Elders Awayday July 2022 & Church Meeting July 2022 (and previously)

This refreshed vision calls us to be proactive, intentional, and outward looking, as we love all our neighbours. This is built on strong foundations of *loving God, loving each other, and loving our neighbour* (Matthew 22: 37-40).

A welcoming church that...

- ...loves our neighbours who are children and young people
- ...loves our neighbours as we love our church family
- ...loves our neighbours by sharing our faith
- ...loves our neighbours in our local and global community
- ...loves our neighbours by providing a safe warm space

As we build on significant achievements in the last 2 years, here are next steps that will help us evaluate and progress our vision.



...loves our neighbours who are children and young people

'Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

- We listen carefully to CYP's ideas and views which influence planning and decision making
- We organise events for or inclusive of CYP and families, publicising local children's activities
- We are creating a leadership team across Church and Scouting which will include CYP.
- We strive to develop stronger links with hall users, youth groups, scouts and their leaders.
- CYP inform the development of our Community Garden and buildings with outdoor and indoor spaces that are child-friendly
- We link with local schools and youth clubs – enabling visits, etc.
- We are piloting other ways of supporting and reaching out to local CYP such as Warm Space.



...loves our neighbours as we love our church family

'Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing' (1 Thessalonians 5: 11)

- We continue to refresh our pastoral care arrangements and keep folk informed.
- We offer plenty of social events, contact and support for each other in a variety of ways
- We are developing our capacity to 'disagree well', understanding, respecting and exploring each other's views

- We strive to value the voices, contributions and skills of everyone, sharing roles and encouraging each other to participate and feel included
- We promote discussion in worship, after worship and in our daily lives.
- We communicate well, keeping our website, media and rotas inclusive and up-to-date



...loves our neighbours by sharing our faith

'As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.' (Colossians 2: 6-7)

- We are developing our 'Faith Talk' skills through training and faith based discussion
- We strive to share God in our social events, including book club and guild
- Our WhatsApp weekly blogs will include how God is influencing us
- We will review our prayer arrangements and how to reach more people
- We will develop our group and individual Bible Study support, including with SCUC, perhaps using URC Daily Devotions and sharing other online bible study resources
- We encourage leading prayers in worship
- We will strive to develop our links with local churches
- We seek to learn from the global church, for example through Commitment for Life
- We will produce a guide for visitors and members about our theology, beliefs and what kind of church we are – to give us confidence to speak about our faith.



...loves our neighbours in our local and global community

'So, reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you do it!'
(Romans 15: 7 - The Message Bible)

- We are developing our Community Garden and seeking community volunteers
- We actively support community schemes – Food Hub, Good Neighbours
- We open our facilities to community groups, and promote the activities of our hall users.
- We will encourage our church family, those who use our premises and our neighbours to make green commitments (reduce plastic, recycle waste etc)
- We advertise and engage with global charities and events
- We support local and international charities – through Tuesday Guild, communion offerings, events and the global church such as commitment for life
- We offer a community noticeboard and help yourself bookshelf.



...loves our neighbours by providing a safe warm space

'Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out.'
(Deuteronomy 28: 6)

- Complete roof, spire and stonework repairs
- Maintain fair rents for our halls
- Support Church of Pentecost, Vita Health and other users, so that people have a good experience in our buildings – encountering something of God's love.
- Start planning to upgrade hall lighting and toilet area
- Complete installation of inside and outside noticeboards and defibrillator.
- Offer shared space, warmth, refreshment, Wi-Fi and peace, regularly for our community.
- We will research and make energy-saving changes to the manse and church – solar panels, insulation, secondary glazing, EV charging points etc.