



Ashbourne
Methodist 
Church
*seeking, serving and
sharing the love of God*

'Plan for Growth'

Our Mission Action Plan, 2019-2027



Our Calling & Vision

We are part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As a Methodist Church we exist to:

- increase awareness of God's presence and celebrate God's love
- help people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care
- be a good neighbour to people in need and challenge injustice
- make more followers of Jesus Christ.

Our Vision is:

to be a Church where people learn to know Jesus Christ, are equipped to live for him, proclaim his love and serve our local community

As we explored our priorities with people in our church and community, a common theme emerged for what Ashbourne Methodist Church should be.

We should be an inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

Our Priorities for Change

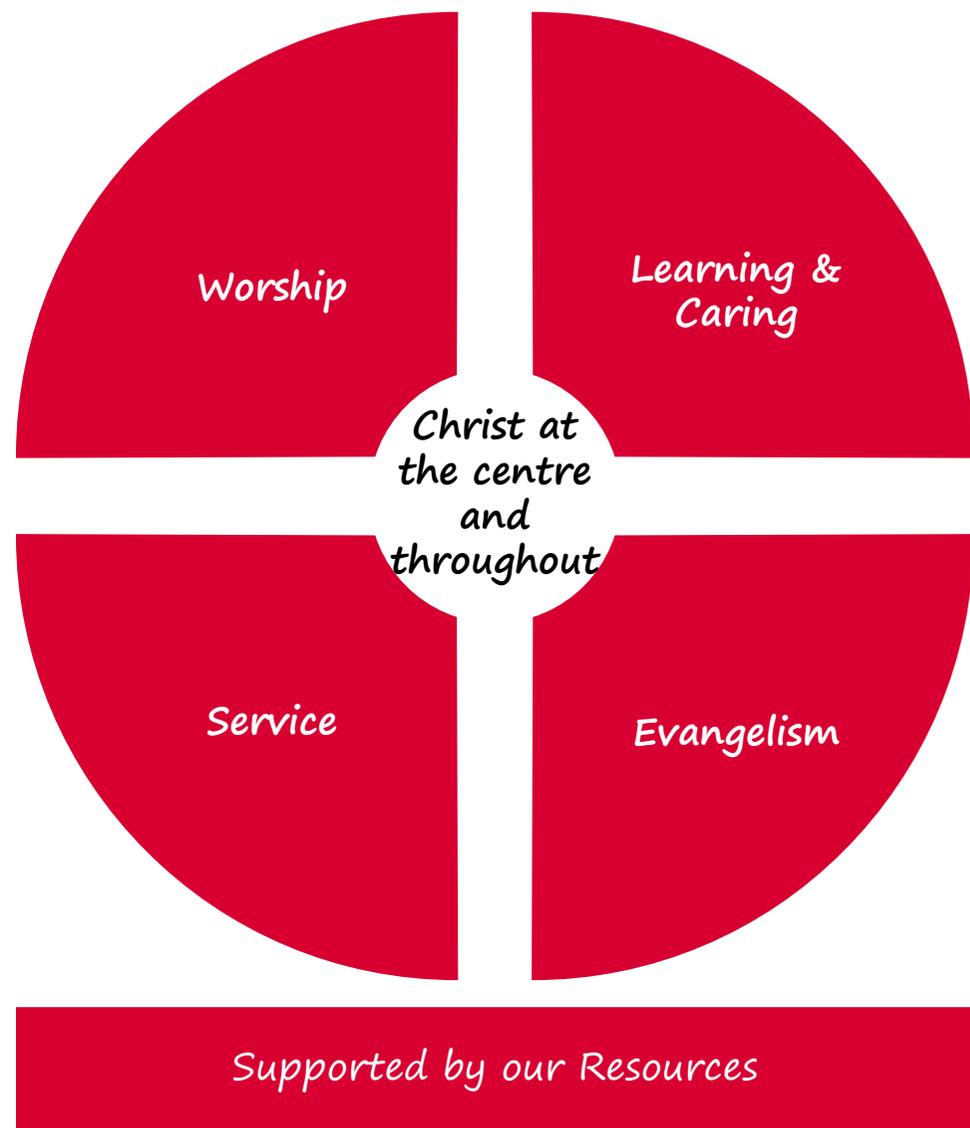
Christ will be at the centre of everything we do, and his influence will be felt throughout our activities.

As we work to implement our plan, we will need to continually pray for guidance, strength & encouragement. This is a role that everyone can be involved in, whether praying individually or together with others.

The plan has a role for everyone to play, however big or small, as we seek to do God's will and achieve our Vision.

We have four main priorities for our work, supported by our resources.

Whilst we have prayerfully considered the opportunities for our church, we will always be open to new ways to serve God in this place, and to serve the people around us as their needs and requirements may occur or develop.



Worship

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS & WHAT IS CHANGING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Fragmented community - living solitary lives

Shrinking attention spans

Post-Christian society

Increasing number of other Sunday activities

Busy lives – people struggle to attend activities regularly

Growing town

Increasing rural isolation – loss of transport

Church congregations are consolidating / merging

Increased expectations of choice and personalised activities

WHAT WE DO WELL

Variety of worship types

Inclusive and welcoming worship

Creative

Good standard of preaching with a variety of styles and backgrounds

Recording of services and other opportunities to share (e.g. online)

Coordination with Powersource

Variety of music with good standard of musicians

All family communion

9:15

Praise

Special services (e.g. seasonal celebrations, life events)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE & GROWTH

Children sharing in all aspects of worship

Making sure everyone feels included, comfortable & welcomed

Be more dementia and disability friendly

More use of screen in church

More publicity for special services

Different styles of services, e.g. Taize, Iona, healing, mid-week services

Special services for users of the building – e.g. Guides

Working together with other Christian gatherings (e.g. Ashbourne Churches Together) to host joint services & develop new worship opportunities.

Develop Praise and 9.15 enabling expansion in terms of numbers attending & frequency

Further develop Messy Church worship

Recording & Live streaming of services to enable worship at other times / places

IMPACT BY 2027

More people worshipping more often (20% increase in numbers participating in worship)

More varied worship on offer

More people feel that worship is inclusive, inspiring & energising

OUR AMBITION

Inclusive, inspiring & energising worship that enables everyone to encounter God every day of the week

inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

The Worship Coordination Team will take responsibility for implementation

Learning & Caring

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS & WHAT IS CHANGING IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Busy lives – people struggle to attend activities regularly
- People can find it difficult to form and maintain meaningful friendships in a large church
- Not everyone is attracted to or can attend the current small groups
- There is significant need for pastoral visiting
- People are too busy to meet for prayer
- The culture of meeting for corporate prayer is weak
- Increasing rural isolation – loss of transport
- Reduction in statutory & voluntary sector support

WHAT WE DO WELL

- Work with young people (e.g. kids@cornerstone, Powersource, Mustard)
- Work with older people (e.g. Lunch club, services at Dove House)
- Housegroups
- Good standard of preaching with a variety of styles and backgrounds
- Pastoral care
- Personal prayer

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE & GROWTH

- Improve provision for young people including setting up new activities and providing a safe space
- Be more dementia and disability friendly
- Increase house groups – including in different venues (church & community rather than in-home)
- Development of pastoral team by support and training, possibly in conjunction with other churches
- A need to enhance a culture of inclusivity and caring within the church - to be aware of people's needs and to meet them wherever possible e.g. lonely, older people, unemployed, people with depression
- Offering different opportunities for prayer & reflection, possibly with other churches

IMPACT BY 2027

- More people meeting regularly in small groups
- More people feel that they are growing in their Christian faith
- More people feel that the church cares for them
- More people feel that they are praying regularly
- Increased understanding of the needs of others

OUR AMBITION

To be a place where everyone is growing in their faith and receiving support from their fellow Christians

inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

The Learning & Caring Team will take responsibility for implementation

Service

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS & WHAT IS CHANGING IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Growing town with reduced facilities
- Reduction in statutory & voluntary sector support
- Lack of a large, high quality event space in the town
- Fragmented community - living solitary lives - high levels of loneliness
- Lack of local support networks (e.g. support from extended family) as people move around the country
- Ageing population with associated increases in dementia, disability, numbers of carers, etc.
- Lack of contact between generations
- Need for groups to get into the countryside at reasonable prices
- Increasing rural isolation - loss of transport

WHAT WE DO WELL

- The Cornerstone Coffee Shop
- Messy Church
- Craft and Chat
- Walking groups
- Lunch club
- Community / Christian festivals - late night shopping, Arts Festival, Ashbourne Show, use of building from other organisations
- Gateway
- kids@cornerstone
- Family Outreach Worker
- World Mission

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE & GROWTH

- Develop new opportunities to "go out" to serve, rather than expecting people to come to us
- The Cornerstone Coffee Shop - expand provision
- Lunch club - expand frequency to meet a growing need - possibly using new approaches or for new audiences
- New activities for older people, possibly with other churches or community organisations
- Messy Church - grow by moving into bigger space. Increased frequency - e.g. adding a shorter "Messy Church Lite"
- Kids@Cornerstone - expand by using larger premises and meeting more frequently
- Improve provision for young people including setting up new activities
- Make greater use of Gateway Residential Centre
- Increase support for Town Chaplaincy
- Development of our Community Hub with increased use by community
- Continued work to encourage people to engage with global issues working with other organisations

IMPACT BY 2027

- Everybody in the church involved in service
- More people coming into the premises
- Increased usage by community organisations

OUR AMBITION

To provide a range of services through a 7-days-a-week community hub, open to everyone as a place to drop in, and responding to the changing physical, mental and spiritual needs of our community

inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

The Outreach Team will take responsibility for implementation

Evangelism

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS & WHAT IS CHANGING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Post-Christian society
People generally less 'in touch' with the church
Changing family structures – fewer times when people celebrate life events in church
Increasing number of other Sunday activities
Increasing rural isolation – loss of transport
People generally uncomfortable talking about their faith

WHAT WE DO WELL

The Cornerstone Coffee Shop
Courses for Outreach
Messy Church
Lunch club
Community / Christian festivals – late night shopping, Arts Festival, Ashbourne Show, use of building from other organisations
MWiB – Advent displays
Open the book
kids@cornerstone
Family Outreach Worker

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE & GROWTH

Equipping people in practical ways of sharing their faith
Develop new opportunities to “go out” to share our faith, rather than expecting people to come to us
The Cornerstone Coffee Shop & Lunch club – opportunities for increased evangelism activity
Exploring new types of evangelism (e.g. courses for outreach, activities aimed at specific age groups, in non-church locations)
Messy Church – consider current offering supplemented by a shorter “Messy Church Lite” .
kids@cornerstone - opportunities for linking to other activities and to introduce worship activities
One off concerts with Christian input

IMPACT BY 2027

More people feel comfortable sharing their faith
More people taking part in kids@cornerstone & Messy Church
More people joining the church as members leading to 10% increase in membership
More non-church people taking part in activities to explore Christianity

OUR AMBITION

To share the gospel of God's love in Christ with everyone in the Ashbourne area, so that people may come to personal faith through the Holy Spirit

inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

The Outreach Team will take responsibility for implementation

Resources

Our resources support all of our work. Our priorities are...

PEOPLE ASSETS

Developing discipleship/mission/service journey for individuals: celebrating successes, encouraging volunteering, identifying obstacles to serving, providing opportunities for volunteering, identifying training needs and providing training or mentoring

Help people to identify opportunities to share the burden of work, for example by breaking tasks down

Leadership structures to be reviewed (e.g. HR & volunteering group)

Employ a new Community Hub Manager to work alongside our Minister, Family Outreach Worker and Caretaker in paid roles

Continue to review our paid staffing

Explore the potential for Local Lay Pastors

PHYSICAL ASSETS

Ensure Buildings developed in line with Church and Community needs (in the short term, this is the responsibility of the Link Development Team), specifically:

- develop the Worship space to be flexible for multiple uses
- improving access and facilities to meet today's standards
- providing Link building and Cornerstone Coffee Shop (our street level assets and "shop window") which can support becoming a 7 day a week church, community hub and drop-in centre
- Ensure that the booking policy keeps plenty of space available for church activities and checks that external bookings are in line with what we're trying to achieve

Maintaining the premises to ensure that they are safe for all – safeguarding, dementia friendly etc

Ensure that global issues (such as the environment and Fairtrade) are considered in our decision-making

Coordinate transport for the church

FINANCIAL ASSETS

To encourage giving to and fundraising for the Link Development Project (£800k by 2024) and repayment of any borrowings

To encourage an ongoing increase in giving of +25% (from a membership which is 10% larger, and with 20% increase in participation in worship)

Investigate grants for new initiatives (that would not be relevant to The Link Development Project)

Review rates for premises hire

inclusive, intergenerational church and community hub

The Resources Team & Link Team will take responsibility for implementation