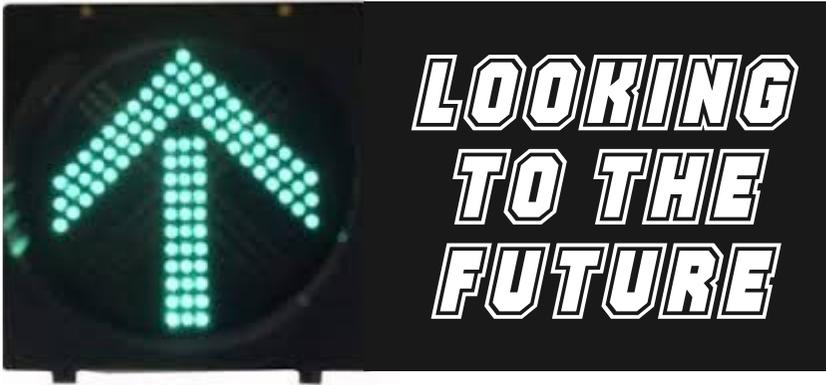


# All Saints' Church, Springfield



## *our vision and future priorities*

*'I know the plans I have for you,'  
declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper  
you and not to harm you – plans to  
give you hope and a future.'*

*(Jeremiah 29:11)*



# A special prayer for the church

Almighty God,  
by whose grace alone we are accepted  
and called to your service;  
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit,  
and make us worthy of our calling;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
Amen.



Twenty five years ago we discussed "the way forward" and the parish plan that was developed has helped us on our journey. Now is the time to look to the future again.....

# From the Rector

The Rectory  
April 2014



Dear Friends

Many years have passed since Bob Dylan sang, “The times they are a-changing.” He was right. In recent decades western society has undergone massive change. A large number of commonly held assumptions that have shaped society for hundreds of years have disappeared. What is going to replace them? What sort of new society will finally emerge? Of one thing I am sure: a Christian input is vital to help shape this emerging world.

In order to make this input the Church needs to be heard. It will be heard only if it communicates the Good News about Jesus effectively. “*looking to the future*” is all about communicating the Good News.

Part of this communication involves our church having a vision and sense of direction. The pages that follow offer these. They give a map of the journey on which All Saints’ hopes to travel. But a map can only guide the journey. It is not the journey itself. The journey itself can be only undertaken by people. This is where you and I come in.

The wonder is that we are the Church in this place. Although God always plays his part, without us the Church dies. So these pages face us with a challenge. The challenge is to ask ourselves, “What is *my* response to this? What is Jesus calling *me* to do?” It is only as we all make our response to the call of Christ upon us that the Good News will be heard effectively in Springfield. It is only as we walk the walk with Jesus that we shall make our distinct contribution to shaping the society that is ours.

It was William Wordsworth who said of his time, “it was bliss to be alive.” Today is an exciting time to be part of the church. To be part of All Saints’ is a privilege indeed. “*looking to the future*” is a visionary plan for the coming years. It points a way forward through the changing times in which we live. I commend it to us all.

Your Rector

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

# **a changing world**

The world is changing rapidly. Lifestyles, attitudes, and relationships are very different from how they were only 10-20 years ago. Gone are the days when most people in this country saw themselves as Christian, and had a good understanding of the Christian faith. Churches are now in a missionary situation, where we are called to share our faith in Jesus with people who will often be hearing it properly for the first time, and who through us, may experience the love of Jesus in their lives for the first time. And we need to show that love in action, by the way we reach out and care for the wider community.

## **changes in church**

Churches are changing too. Overall church attendance has fallen, particularly among younger people, who often see church as out of touch and irrelevant. A lot of clergy are approaching retirement and, with fewer younger people coming forward for ordination, there will be a big reduction in the numbers of paid clergy in the future. Meanwhile the costs of clergy, clergy pensions, and maintaining church buildings go up and up, and many parishes are struggling to balance the books.

So churches like ours have to make an important choice. We can carry on with dwindling congregations of mainly older people, served by ever more stretched clergy, and increasingly unable to pay the bills. Or we can step out in faith, boldly trying to become the kind of church God needs us to be in the future, and trusting that God will give us new purpose, new life, and new growth in the years ahead – which is what we would like to do at All Saints’.

## **All Saints’ Springfield**

This is an exciting time to be part of what’s happening at All Saints’. We are already seeing changes, most obviously through the diversity and new life given to us by the young families who

come to our ‘Sunday Special’ services and ‘Children in Church’. We are thinking and praying about the direction God is taking us, and the kind of church God will want us to become.

Now is a good time to do this – to share our ideas, and to seek God’s help, in deciding how we can best follow Jesus, and serve the community, in the coming years. Like any journey into an unknown future, it could be challenging, uplifting, worrying, inspiring, or very fulfilling, at different times. We trust that God will guide us, encourage us, strengthen us, and care for us as we keep moving forward.

**All Saints’ Church Council (PCC) has produced ‘*looking to the future*’ so that everyone will have a clear picture of the vision and future priorities for our church. It sets out a vision for the kind of church we would like to be, which has seven themes. For each theme, it gives a brief description of what we do now, followed by our future priorities for development and growth.**

## **Our vision for All Saints’ Springfield**

***ALL SAINTS’ aims to be a friendly, welcoming church for everyone, and a transforming presence in the heart of the community.***

**To that end, we will be**

- A people of PRAYER**
- with a lively and inspiring CHURCH LIFE**
- deeply involved in SERVING THE COMMUNITY**
- gladly and openly SHARING OUR FAITH in Jesus**
- WORKING TOGETHER with other churches and charities**
- generous and creative in FUNDING WHAT WE DO**
- and MAKING A DIFFERENCE, through our prayers, and our actions.**

# 1. Prayer

Prayer is how we come to know God, and let his love and goodness flow through us. So prayer is the foundation of everything we do. Prayer is a central part of the services we hold throughout the week, and our Prayer for All Saints' is used daily. Our Prayer Ministry Team is here to pray with people at any Sunday morning service, or afterwards at coffee time, and can be contacted by phone at any time for prayer. The team leads a monthly prayer meeting to which all are welcome. The 'Prayer Corner' in our monthly magazine gives fresh ideas and encouragement for prayer, and there is more guidance on our website with prayers to use.



## ***Future priorities:***

- *Emphasise the importance of praying for all aspects of the church's life and mission in the community and the world.*
- *Make prayer an integral part of all our meetings, groups, events and activities.*
- *Encourage people to use the listening and support which can be given by the Prayer Ministry Team, and the prayer resources on the website and in the magazine.*
- *Offer opportunities and guidance for those wishing to go deeper in their prayer.*

## 2. Church life



All Saints' has a full and varied church life, and the warmth of the welcome people say they receive is a real strength. We are blessed with both a beautiful historic church, and a modern church centre that we can use. There are a wide range of church services on Sundays and during the week, and many people come. At Christmas and Easter the church is packed. Many more people are involved in all the different groups and activities in the church, including Boy's Brigade, Guides and Brownies as well as all the activities for adults. Every year, there are dozens of marriages and baptisms here. Our annual summer fete and autumn bazaar attract large numbers of visitors. We do our best to keep the community informed about what's happening at All Saints' through our communications.

### ***Future priorities:***

- *Engage with more people in the community, and enable the church to grow.*
- *Expand and improve opportunities for children, young people, and families to share in church life and grow in faith.*
- *Plan to meet the changing needs of the children and families coming to Sunday Special.*
- *Strengthen the friendship and fellowship between our different groups and congregations, to bring the whole church closer together.*
- *Incorporate fresh and imaginative approaches into our services, with the right balance between modern and more traditional styles of worship.*
- *Expand the rota of drivers to bring elderly or disabled people to church or meetings.*
- *Review the effectiveness of our external and internal communications.*

# 3. Serving the community



We are active in serving the local community, both as a church and as individual Christians. Church groups provide weekly programmes for young and older people, and there is a monthly lunch club for those who live alone or have mobility problems. Home visits are made to people who are unwell or unable to get out easily, to bereaved families, and to those who would appreciate a visit for any other reason, and they can receive Holy Communion at home if they wish. Church members visit and help local hospitals, hospices, residential care homes, schools and the prison, and provide volunteer, financial and prayer support for many local charities. The church centre is well used by community groups as well as for church activities.

## ***Future priorities:***

- *Increase our understanding of the greatest needs within our community, and of the opportunities for us to help.*
- *Support and work with other local churches and charities who are involved in meeting community needs, for example the Foodbank and CHESS.*
- *Form a small team of suitable people who will be trained and DBS-checked, to support the clergy in pastoral care.*
- *Continue and where necessary strengthen our involvement with local hospitals, hospices, care homes, schools and the prison.*
- *Build closer relationships with the community groups who use the church centre.*
- *Invite people to share information about their own community involvement, so that they can be encouraged and supported.*

## 4. Sharing our faith

We share our faith by trying to live Christ-like lives, serving our community, providing opportunities for people to find out about the Christian faith, and sharing our own faith experiences with others. At All Saints' we do this in a whole variety of contexts – in church services and in all our church groups, activities and events, as well as through marriage and baptism preparation, Discovery and home groups, and the church magazine, website and Facebook page. We try to make these opportunities as inviting, friendly, interesting and accessible as we can. We are planning a “Summer Special” programme for 28-31 August 2014 which we hope to build on in years to come.

**Summer**  
*Special*

### ***Future priorities:***

- *Be a church which is always outwardly-focused and mission-oriented.*
- *Share our faith personally with the young families who come to our “Summer Special” programme.*
- *Provide ongoing opportunities for people to deepen their faith, including ‘nurture’ courses, home groups, bible study and teaching.*
- *Review our church services, groups, events and communications to make sure all of them are welcoming and helpful to newcomers.*
- *Encourage people to use the diocesan training to learn how to share their faith with confidence and sensitivity.*
- *Explore the potential for involving children and young people in new ways, for example through “Messy Church” (see [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk) for more information)*

# 5. Working together

All Saints' is part of God's great mission to the world, and we can do so much more by working together with others. At the local level we are aiming to develop closer links with the other Springfield churches, we have good relationships with all the local schools, and we help the work of charities like the Foodbank. We support the church's wider mission to the people of Essex and East London through our active involvement in the work of the deanery and the diocese, through prayer, and through the financial support given in our large 'parish share' contribution. We have CMS mission partners based in Spain, and we support a range of Christian charities doing important work in this country and abroad. In 2013 we raised £6,350 for charities, and also collected £4,440 in Christian Aid Week mainly through our door-to-door collections.



## ***Future priorities:***

- *Develop good collaborative working with all the Christian churches in Springfield.*
- *Play a full part in the churches' mission to the growing area of Beaulieu Park.*
- *Explore opportunities to work with organisations like the YMCA and Mothers' Union to improve what we can offer young people and families.*
- *Have a fuller engagement with the churches and charities we support, so we can know and help them better.*
- *Strengthen our mission links with Christians and communities in other countries.*
- *Show our Christian concern for social and political issues, and support those working for justice and peace.*

## 6. Funding what we do



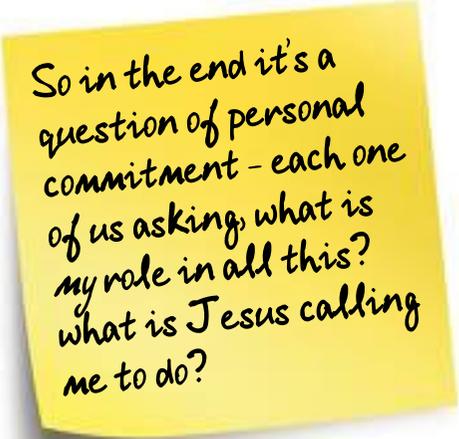
God gives us everything we have. So giving money for the life-changing work of his church is one of the best ways we can thank God, and serve God in our lives. We are very grateful at All Saints' for the generosity of our planned givers who, with other Gift-Aided donations, provide an income of over £100,000 a year. With income from other sources, including one-off giving and net income from wedding and funeral fees, our total annual income is about £145,000 based on 2013 figures. However the annual running costs of All Saints' (which are kept to a minimum) are approximately £30,000; and our 'parish share' of the costs of maintaining clergy throughout the diocese, together with other diocesan and national church costs, is about £125,000. So we currently have a funding shortfall of about £10,000 a year.

### ***Future priorities:***

- *Pray that our church will grow, our sense of sharing in fellowship and mission will become stronger, and our income will increase.*
- *Invite people to reflect on how they are being called to serve God in their lives, including all ways of giving to the church.*
- *Encourage people to join our planned giving scheme and allow us to reclaim Gift Aid on their donations if they are taxpayers.*
- *Every year thank those who give money regularly to the church, and ask them to prayerfully review and renew their commitment.*
- *Look for new ways of raising funds, and opportunities for stimulating giving or income from different sources.*
- *Use our increased income to pay our 'parish share' in full; to provide the funding we need for the mission priorities of All Saints'; and to increase our support for the churches and charities we work with.*

# 7. Making a difference

‘Follow me,’ says Jesus. Just as he spoke to the disciples, so Jesus speaks to each one of us personally: ‘Follow me.’



So in the end it's a question of personal commitment - each one of us asking, what is my role in all this? what is Jesus calling me to do?

Each one of us is called to follow Jesus in our own way. Each one of us has things we can contribute, which may not seem special to us, but which are special to Jesus. Each one of us can make a difference by what we do for Jesus and his church; so that the church can make a difference to people's lives, in so many ways.

## **Future priorities:**

- *Increase awareness of different ways of serving the church and the community, and actively encourage more people to become involved.*
- *Clearly identify the responsibilities and skills needed in these roles, and ensure people are equipped to do them well.*
- *Use the course ‘Your SHAPE for God’s Service’ to help people discover how God may be calling them to particular kinds of service and ministry.*
- *Encourage everyone to reflect and pray regularly about how we personally can serve God within both the church and the wider community – how we personally can make a difference.*

**If you would like more information, or have ideas about the vision and priorities that you would like to share, please talk with one of the clergy or churchwardens (see our website [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/team](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/team) for contact details).**