

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTS 1:8 VISION

Acts 1:8

A VISION FOR A NEW SEASON

WHY WE'RE HERE (PURPOSE)

1

WHO WE ARE (VALUES)

:8

WHAT WE DO (ACTIONS)

1:8

This year is the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Great Reformation. It was driven by the slogan 'semper reformanda' (always reforming): that is the idea that the church in each generation ought always to be reforming, or to use a more modern word, 'recalibrating', in the light of the word of God and the modern day world.

The factors we consider in order to undertake this recalibration process have been likened to a stool with 3 legs. The first leg is to do with being aligned with God's original intent and design for the church as revealed in the New Testament. We must never deviate from this, and the reminder of our rich historical roots and the energy and desire that so transformed an ill-equipped group of people into a movement that changed the world. We walk in their footsteps as we do all those who've gone before us in this church who have served God so faithfully.

The second leg is the importance of listening carefully to the Spirit as he speaks to us about our specific mission in today's world. In the book of Revelation, we note that the Spirit speaks individually to each of the 7 churches (Rev 2 & 3). It's not a one-size-fits-all message but a word that's unique and personal to each individual church. Our vision should be unique to us here at St Peter's because the Spirit speaks uniquely to each church.

The third leg of the stool is to look at both our setting in Worcester and to observe contemporary culture. These change from year to year and from place to place. Certainly, the challenges that faced me when I started out in ministry are significantly different to some of the issues today. I'm thinking of the changing shape of family life and relationships, the influence of technology, and the pressure of the world of work. Questions like 'What are the pressing needs of our community and city?', 'What is the demographic of our church?' and 'What are the prevailing issues we should be contesting for in our culture?', all reveal important clues. Answers to these questions and others like it reveal how we might connect meaningfully with people in a relevant way. So, our semper reformanda or recalibration is informed by an alignment to scripture, listening to the Spirit, and understanding our setting and culture.

What you have before you is a document called Acts 1:8 that outlines a vision for this church for the next season of our lives together. I believe it takes account of all three legs of the stool I mention above. The idea of semper reformanda has been stirring me for over 30 years of full-time ministry. I believe the church unwilling to reform is only ever one generation away from extinction. There is no doubt that this vision has a lot of me in it with its origins in my own journey and my interior world and all that's forged it, rather than being a broad consultation across the span of the church.

It's also true that these ideas have been informed by all that I've observed since I came to Worcester 12 months ago, both within and beyond the church. Alongside that, I've been carefully listening to the Spirit about the particular shape of church He's wanting us to become. As I've pondered, prayed and listened, this Acts 1:8 vision has formed in my mind. I believe what you read here has the potential to take this church forward from good to great. As I've presented these ideas with the Vision and Oversight team in recent weeks, we have shared a sense of excitement about them.

This is our time for semper reformanda here at St Peter's. Whilst it's more likely to mean evolution rather than revolution, it always takes both courage and faith to change, especially when the church here is viewed by most as strong and healthy, and especially when we might not be clear about where God wants to take us. I hope with all my heart that this vision resonates with you. I am excited, humbled and daunted by the potential of this church in the hands of God, and I am believing God for a future here where the reach of this church goes way beyond our expectations. I trust that you will consider Acts 1:8 carefully and prayerfully and reflect on your place within it, and whether it outlines a direction you believe you can commit to, serve within and sacrifice for.

In Christ,

Mark

1 WHY WE'RE HERE (PURPOSE)

CALLING THE FAITHFUL CITY BACK TO THE FAITHFUL GOD

As Archbishop William Temple famously said:

**“THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY ORGANISATION THAT EXISTS
PRIMARILY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ITS NON-MEMBERS”**,

so we must never forget that our main purpose is to work in partnership with other churches in Worcester to call this city back to God.

:8 WHO WE ARE (VALUES)

- ▶ VALUE 1: WELCOME
- ▶ VALUE 2: FAMILY
- ▶ VALUE 3: ENCOUNTER
- ▶ VALUE 4: LEARNING
- ▶ VALUE 5: BLESSING OTHERS
- ▶ VALUE 6: WORK/LIFE BALANCE
- ▶ VALUE 7: CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION
- ▶ VALUE 8: GOSPEL

VALUE 1. WELCOME

Where ordinary people, loved by God, can belong	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generosity • Inclusive • Hospitality • Food • Warmth • Friendliness • A great visitor experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enabling a great welcome ▶ Newcomers Suppers ▶ Hospitality Suppers ▶ Profiling communities to make more accessible to newcomers ▶ Connecting more with building user groups ▶ New Social Planning Group - Sept 2017 ▶ New Season for Eden Coffee Shop as Church Shop Window

VALUE 2. FAMILY

Cherishing our diversity as a gift from God	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great parenting • All ages • Investing in children, youth and millennials • Honouring senior people • Promoting biblical values on family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Releasing spiritual mums and dads ▶ Community life skill courses ▶ Identifying and mentoring younger leaders ▶ more family-friendly services ▶ Develop ways of harnessing the gifts and experience of senior people

VALUE 3. ENCOUNTER

Seeking God and his ways in our lives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic worship services • Regular ministry times • Releasing spiritual gifts • Diligent personal prayer • Bring back the quiet time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relaunching Prayer and Prayer Ministry (Prayer Texts, Prayer Gathering) - Jan 2018 ▶ Developing Leadership of Worship Services ▶ Teaching on Spiritual Gifts and receiving and using them ▶ Encouraging more mutual ministry and the use of spiritual gifts in small groups and services

VALUE 4. LEARNING

Life long learning, informed by the Scriptures, towards greater maturity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible, Bible, Bible • Small Groups • Sunday Teaching • Focussed learning seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An annual preaching series to connect with communities ▶ Greater use of Website and Social Media ▶ A Month of learning each year (St Peter's as a learning hub) ▶ Bi-annual Summer Theology School ▶ Monthly Theology Nights

VALUE 5. BLESSING OTHERS

The life of God spilling out to Worcester and beyond	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant & welcoming Coffee Shop • Sharing our resources and skills • Buildings fit for purpose • Overflowing blessing to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establishing a Discipleship/Intern Programme - 09/18 ▶ Review all Mission Partnerships with SA & WM -2018 ▶ Continue to develop our Malawi Partnership ▶ Establish a building plan to update and develop our buildings - 2018 ▶ Further reflection in the Broomhall Development ▶ A Focus of giving - early 2018

VALUE 6. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Human Beings not Human Doings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbath Principles • Contemplative Spirituality • Workplace as a mission field • Doing what God wants not doing what voices tell us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teaching on discerning commanded work ▶ Resourcing people in the workplace (Faith on the Frontline) ▶ Re-establishing High Days and Holy Days in the Church ▶ Annual Church Calendar bringing rhythm and definition to the church year ▶ Look at spiritual disciplines

VALUE 7. CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Releasing creativity, innovation and the arts

- Allowing innovative ideas to be discussed and weighed
 - Risky rather than cautious
 - a more attractive, homely building reflecting who we are and who God is
- ▶ Use of the arts in worship
 - ▶ Signage/Pop-ups/Art on Walls
 - ▶ Welcoming and Considering ideas that require faith and risk
 - ▶ Increasing use of Social Media
 - ▶ Website - New Website in 2018

VALUE 8. GOSPEL

Belief and Confidence in the Good News of Jesus to change lives

- Unashamed faith
 - Transformation
 - Power of the Cross and Resurrection
 - Hope for the lost
 - Embracing and promoting our Christian Distinctiveness
- ▶ Encourage one another to share faith relevantly within our sphere of influence
 - ▶ Good Quality invitational events
 - ▶ An annual season (June?) when the whole church engage in strategic evangelism
 - ▶ Annual Alpha Course

WHAT WE DO (ACTIONS)

TRUST THE FATHER
RECEIVE THE SPIRIT
TELL THE STORY OF JESUS

(TAKEN FROM ACTS 1:8)

ACTS 1:8 – NEXT STEPS

A time to reflect:

- What is God saying to me about my place within this vision?
- What implications are there for our small group life, our various activities at St Peter's, and our Sunday Services?

Children and Youth

A Children's and Youth version of Acts 1:8 will be written and adopted

A time of feedback during October and November

Mark and the church leaders welcome your feedback.

Here's how you can give it:

- On a one-to-one, Mark and some of the leaders will be available to chat between 10-11am on Saturday mornings at the coffee shop on Saturday 14th and 21st October, and Saturday 11th and 18th November.
- Mark will be available to chat with the small group leaders at their next gathering
- You are obviously free to contact Mark or any of the leaders to chat this through at any point during October and November

A Day of Prayer

Mark will announce a time and date for a day of prayer later in the Autumn as we come together to seek God about Acts 1:8 and the accompanying re-structuring (see below)

Staff Re-structuring

For some considerable period of time the church leaders have been reflecting on this. They will be bringing their ideas in the form of a proposal for discussion and decision to the church meetings on the 8th and 29th November. A paper outlining this will be sent out prior to the meeting.

Launch of Acts 1:8

On the 7th January 2018, as part of our morning services on that day, all those who see St. Peter's as their spiritual home will be invited to endorse and affirm Acts 1:8 during a time of public response.

During 2018 and 2019

We will focus, at different points over this 2 year period on various aspects of Acts 1:8 and seek to look at ways we can make progress in the light of it.