

Mission Action Plan for St. Guthlac's Church, Market Deeping



Our Vision Statement is:

Reaching out in love, growing in faith, welcoming all.

In implementing this Mission Action Plan we will set a positive tone in everything we do, focused on sharing the amazing, forgiving, inclusive love of God throughout Market Deeping and beyond.

These three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love.

And the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13.13)

Our values

St. Guthlac's core values are based around who we are and what we do –

- We are rooted in faith in a loving God, and express our faith in various ways, including through worship, prayer and music, both when we meet together and individually.
- We are a loving community, sharing the love of God through compassion in our words, thoughts and actions.
- We are a welcoming church, encouraging friendship between all.
- We are supportive, which we express through pastoral care and practical actions for those within the church, the local community and beyond.
- We are an inclusive church, inviting everyone with us in experiencing God's love as your true self, the unique individual God made you to be.
- We are a growing church, encouraging participation in the life of our church and local community, and for each person to deepen their faith in God and understanding of how that impacts their daily life.

Setting the scene



As a church we are keen to listen to how God is inspiring us to move forward. This Mission Action Plan captures some of what we feel we are being led towards over the next few years, which we are prayerfully hopeful will have a positive longer-term impact on our congregation and the local community.

We are aware of Lincoln Diocese's call to be 'faithful, confident, and joyful' and are keen to share these values within St. Guthlac's Church. Therefore we will use these headings, alongside our vision statement, within this Mission Action Plan to show how they are related to all we are seeking to achieve at St. Guthlac's through positive and hopeful mission and ministry.

Growing in faith

Faithful worship – Deepening our faith

We are committed to helping people encounter God, through prayer, worship, the Bible, music and through one another. We think it is important to help those new to faith to grow in faith, as well as helping those with a longer standing faith to deepen their depth of faith.

Therefore a key part of our Mission Action Plan involves helping people to grow and deepen their faith and spirituality.



Over the next five years we will:

- **Create a prayer diary for the Parish.**

This will root all we do in prayer. The prayer diary will give a suggestion of what to pray for each day, focusing on our local community, the church and various organisations we are linked with.

- **Develop our all age worship.**

It is important we share the love of God with all and seek to develop all people's spirituality. Therefore we will review and develop our current monthly all age service, as this service is a key way we help children and young people participate in worship and express their spirituality. As part of this, we will liaise with and invite the local schools, uniformed organisations and other appropriate local groups to participate in these and other relevant services.

- **Re-print our services booklets.**

Service booklets are a vital tool to help people engage with worship. It is important we review and re-print all our services booklets in a way which is aligned with our recent work on our public image and which makes the services clear to follow for various types of people coming to the church. Being able to follow a service clearly is particularly important for anyone newer to church. Helping them to be able to do so easily will help alleviate any anxiety they feel about being in a slightly unfamiliar setting and so make them feel more comfortable about being here and coming back again.

- **Promote music.**

We will continue to promote music in St. Guthlac's Church as one important way many engage with worship. We will continue to support and promote St. Guthlac's Church Choir, to look into developing other music events as appropriate, and into the possibility of developing further ways we can use music as part of our worship and to help individuals engage with their spirituality.

- **Explore ways we can help people develop and deepen their spirituality and discipleship.**

We will explore ways we can help people develop their spirituality, such as explorers courses for those thinking about faith or who are newer to faith, other short courses or Bible study groups. We will also look into the possibility of a parish weekend away and quiet days, as well as promoting appropriate events taking place in other local churches, the deanery and the diocese.



Welcoming all

Confident discipleship – Developing our communication

As a church we will seek to develop effective, clear and appropriate ways to communicate with our church and local community. It is important we present a clear, confident and hopeful message in order to share the church's mission and ministry with others. We feel it is vital we share God's amazing, inclusive love with others in a way which is appropriate to today's modern world and which is in line with our core values and context. So we will be confident in our communications and in telling others about God's love in a positive, welcoming way.

When talking about communications we are thinking about it in its broadest sense, both communication within our existing community, and also beyond our regular congregation towards others within the parish and further afield. Increasingly, communications, both online and in print, are ways in which people first interact with us as a church, or seek to stay in touch with us. Therefore it is essential our communications are aligned with the same, clear message of God's love for all, in an affirming, positive and welcoming tone.

We feel it is important to be clear about why we follow Jesus, and that as such our discipleship is linked to our communications. Part of our discipleship is being confident

and clear about expressing God's love and welcome to all, which developing our communications is a key part of. While discipleship is also linked to other areas in this Mission Action Plan, such as growing the church and practically expressing our faith, we believe our communications hold all these things together and affect all these areas. Therefore we feel that reviewing our communications is a vital way to support the work we are doing in the other areas outlined in this Mission Action Plan, and an important part of encouraging people to become committed to following Christ and to growing in their faith.



Over the next five years we will:

- **Work on promoting the public image of St. Guthlac's Church.**

While St. Guthlac's Church has of course been a vital part of the parish for centuries, we feel it is important to move forward with developing an appropriate, clear and consistent image and message of the church for where we are today, seeking to raise the profile of the church in the local community. We will continue the recent work we have started on developing the public image of St. Guthlac's Church, in a way which will be clearer about our ethos and values. We have created a new

vision statement, adopted an associated Bible verse and have a clearer sense of our core values. The next stage of this journey is to create a new logo for the Church.

- **Create a new website for the Church.**

A new website will be easier to navigate, clearly express our values and ethos, and be more accessible for the modern age we are living in.

- **Continue developing the reach of our e-newsletter.**

Recently we started an e-newsletter which goes out regularly (at least once a month, sometimes twice a month) to all those associated with the church. We will work on increasing the number of people who receive these e-newsletters and adapting the content as necessary. We will promote our e-newsletter as a key way of staying in touch with the life of the church.

- **Review our regular printed communications.**

We will review and update our monthly printed magazine and weekly parish news sheet to be aligned with our recent work on our public image, and to be attractive, more celebratory, and clear to any one new to the church, as well as relevant and interesting to our current, regular congregation. We feel it is important to continue to provide hard copies of these for those coming to church wishing to take something away and also for those without internet access.

- **Increase our social media presence.**

Recently we have increased the amount we post on St.

Guthlac's Facebook page and we will continue to do so, to develop our content and to encourage people to 'Like' us on Facebook. To develop further the church's online presence, we will also look into other ways we could utilize social media.

- **Develop the technology we have available in the church building.**

Very recently we have installed the internet in church. We will look into how we can develop the use of this. We will also explore the possibility of installing other appropriate technology within the church building, seeking to enable people at home to engage better with an online service and those within the church to have a clearer view during a service.



- **Explore joining various organisations which link with our ethos.**

St. Guthlac's core values include love, welcome and inclusivity, and it is clear from our vision setting sessions and the process we have been engaged with to develop our current public image of the church, that diversity and God's love of all is important to those within our community. Therefore we will look into the possibility of joining organisations linked with these values, such as joining Inclusive Church and becoming a Dementia Friendly Church, as ways of clearly telling others of our inclusive ethos and our love and care of all.

Reaching out in love

Joyful service – Growing our congregation and community

We believe that while faith in God is spiritual, it has a natural working out in practical ways. We feel it is important to reach out in love to others, to be supportive of those in need, while being sensitive to where individuals are in their journey of faith and life. We are committed to pastoral care both within our church community and beyond. We are committed to a faith which is spiritual, pastoral and practical.

We believe that through joyful service, we will grow our community. We will aim to grow the church through welcome, attractive spirituality, developing relationships and by joyfully seeking to make our church and God's message of love accessible to all. We are committed to exploring new initiatives, as well as promoting existing activities. Each congregation, group or initiative will maintain our shared values (as outlined on page 2).

When talking about growth, we are talking about the size of our worshipping community, the diversity of people attending our church for services or other events and groups, and individual's depth of devotion to God. We will aim to develop a diverse community with the feel of a caring family.

Over the next five years we will:

- **Strengthen our links with organisations, groups and services in the local community.**

We will continue to build on our existing links with the local community and seek to establish new ones. We will seek to engage further in relevant ways with the local schools, including offering and encouraging events, services and activities at the church, as well as taking part in those appropriate within the life of the schools. We will also seek to develop closer links with other organisations as appropriate, including the uniformed organisations.

- **Further our engagement with the local community.**

As we seek to look out as well as in, and aim to support those in need, we will explore ways in which we can support people within our parish. This might mean joining with existing initiatives, promoting existing initiatives, or starting fresh ones. We will also seek ways to participate more within the life of the local community.



- **Develop our links with other local churches.**

We will continue to support and be active members of the Deepings Churches Together and will work with and support other local churches as appropriate.

- **Encourage people to express their faith practically through supporting the church's mission and ministry.**

We are committed to working together and believe all can assist in the ministry and mission of God in various ways. We will continue to encourage people to explore their vocations and to volunteer within the life of the church. We will continue to support people to take up new roles within the church, including those who are newer to faith or leadership positions. We will aim to have a diverse group of people assisting with the mission and ministry of St. Guthlac's Church and are committed to supporting and mentoring individuals as necessary.

- **Continue to be diligent in our exercise of mutual pastoral care.**

We will ensure that our exercise of pastoral care continues and that we support the development of the Well-being Group.

- **Focus on stewardship.**

Stewardship relates to our responsibility for that which is entrusted to us. We believe we are called to exercise responsible stewardship of the world, of one another and of the Church. We can do so by sharing our time, our skills, and our resources or finances. Therefore we will promote stewardship in all these regards, including financial. We will

include stewardship within sermons, study groups and our communications when appropriate.

- **Focus on caring for God's environment.**

Caring for God's environment is one way we can practically express our faith and love for God and the world he has given us. We will continue to develop the work of the Environmental Group and will work towards the Silver 'Eco Church' Award and to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. We will encourage others in our local community to support us with this and in making God's world a more sustainable place for all.

- **Strengthen our contact with baptism families.**

Connecting with baptism families is an important way we can start to build relationships with some people who perhaps do not have another natural link with the Church. It also gives an opportunity for some to start to explore faith. Therefore we will review how we prepare families for baptism, the timing and style of our baptism service and how we keep in touch with families following a baptism.

- **Review the physical space within the church.**

The physical space of a building says so much. It is therefore important that our building is aligned to our core values. We will review our physical space and if necessary amend it where we can to be in line with our welcoming, inclusive ethos. We will give particular thought to accessibility, to a welcome area, to the children's area and to an area for refreshments.

- **Review how we welcome people in the church.**

We will be more intentional with our welcome to all, particularly towards anyone new to church. We will explore ways in which we can make those new to church feel welcome, including creating welcome leaflets, inviting new people to get to know others who already attend the church, and inviting them to services, activities or groups which might be relevant to them. We will also explore how we can reach out and welcome those in any new houses which are built locally and to those who move into the area.



- **Start new groups for children and/or young people.**

We will assess the practicality of starting a new group/groups or services specifically for children, for babies and toddlers, for teenagers and for young adults.

- **Develop our social events.**

We will build on our existing pattern of social events and aim to increase the diversity of events we offer, with particular thought to what we can provide for children, those with families, and those who are elderly or isolated.



And the rest...

Everything outlined in our Mission Action Plan is a snapshot of what we are involved with as a church and will be continuing to be involved with over the next few years. There are many important aspects of people's lives we are involved with which have not had a mention here. This is not to say they are not significant, rather we feel they are working effectively and the highlighted areas are what we feel we should be focusing on developing. Our Mission Action Plan is a working document and will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

We are excited as a church in the ways we feel God is calling us to develop and are keen to see what progresses over the coming years at St. Guthlac's as we continue to share God's love through our ministry and mission. We are enthused and encouraged by the faith, commitment and care shown by our current congregation. This gives us all a sense of positivity, energy and hope as we **reach out in love, grow in faith and welcome all.**

