

OUR VISION



BIBLE STUDIES FOR ASHFIELD-PETERSHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OUR VISION

Under God, we desire to be **a church through which God is transforming his people and his world** (Ephesians 2).

This will mean (Acts 2:42-47);

1. We are a church where God is loved and worshipped as King.
2. We are warm and inviting and connect newcomers into our community.
3. We joyfully give up what we have for others in the church.
4. We devote ourselves to fellowship, prayer and hospitality.
5. We are deliberately and daily shaped by God's Word.
6. All members are engaged and serving within the church.
7. We have an impact on the world around us and are growing through conversion.

THE VISION: A CHURCH THROUGH WHICH GOD IS TRANSFORMING HIS PEOPLE & HIS WORLD

1. **Read Ephesians 2.** What has God done for Christians (v1-10)?

What are God's plans for human relationships (v11-18)?

What are God's plans for the church (v19-22)?

2. **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** How does Jesus plan to transform the world through his followers?

How does Jesus encourage and equip us to do this?

To make disciples is the mission¹ of the church. At Ashfield-Petersham Presbyterian Church, we express this as “**growing followers of Jesus**”. This describes **the goal** as well as **the process**. We aim to be followers who are growing. And our task is to grow people as followers – planting and nurturing them..

3. **Read Acts 2:42-47.** Can you identify where each of the seven sub-points above matches up to this description of the early church? Can you think of any important areas missing from this list?

¹ There is no general agreement on the difference between 'vision' and 'mission'. We understand **vision** to be **the preferred future**, a **target** to aim at for a period of time. This may change with circumstances. **Mission** is **why we exist**. This won't change.

For each of the seven sub-points, score how healthy you think our church is in this area (particularly thinking of the gathering you attend most frequently), from 1 (very unhealthy) to 5 (very healthy). Be honest.

Which sub-point should be our top priority in the next twelve months? Why?



Spend some time discussing your answers. Were there any significant differences in opinion?

I attend the _____ gathering	Very Unhealthy	Somewhat Unhealthy	Neither unhealthy or healthy	Somewhat Healthy	Very Healthy
1. God is loved and worshipped as King	1	2	3	4	5
2. Warm and inviting and connect in newcomers	1	2	3	4	5
3. Joyfully give up what we have for others	1	2	3	4	5
4. Devote ourselves to fellowship, prayer and hospitality	1	2	3	4	5
5. Deliberately and daily shaped by God's Word	1	2	3	4	5
6. All members serving	1	2	3	4	5
7. An impact on the world, growing through conversion	1	2	3	4	5

It would be really helpful if you could add your group's best suggestions to the online survey, (accessed using the QR code) so that we can collate responses and share the findings.



SCAN ME

1. GOD IS LOVED AND WORSHIPPED AS KING



1. **Read Mark 12:29-30.** What does it look like to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

2. **Read Romans 12:1-2.** How is worship described here?

What might this look like (notice the commands that follow this verse)?

3. **Read Hebrews 13:15-16.** What type of sacrifices does God want us to offer?

What does it mean that we are to offer these through Jesus?

4. **Read Colossians 3:16-17.** What types of activities should we do when we gather together?

What does it mean to do things in the name of the Lord Jesus?

5. **Read Revelation 4:9-11; 5:11-13.** From these verses, how would you define worship?

6. How might we do better as a church at loving and worshipping God? Brainstorm for a few minutes.

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SCAN ME

2. WE ARE WARM & INVITING & CONNECT NEWCOMERS IN



1. **Read Acts 4:12-16.** Describe the relationship between the believers and the people.

2. **Read Romans 15:5-9.** How and why are we to accept one another?

What might this look like in the context of welcoming newcomers?

3. How might we do better as a church at being warm and inviting and connecting newcomers in? Brainstorm for a few minutes

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SCAN ME

3. WE JOYFULLY GIVE UP WHAT WE HAVE FOR OTHERS



1. **Read Mark 12:31-34.** In what ways do you love yourself?

What should/ could it look like to love the members of our church like we love ourselves?

2. **Read Galatians 6:10.** Who is to be our priority as we do good? What might this look like practically?

Does this mean you shouldn't help those outside the family of believers?

What does "as you have opportunity" mean for how we make decisions about who we help, and how and when we help them?

3. **Read Acts 4:32-35.** What's the connection between unity (v32) and generosity?

What's the connection between preaching the gospel of grace (v33) and generosity?

Is there a principle to follow in giving money to the apostles to distribute as needed (v35)?

4. How might we do better as a church at joyfully giving up what we have? Brainstorm for a few minutes

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SCAN ME

4. WE DEVOTE OURSELVES TO FELLOWSHIP, PRAYER & HOSPITALITY



1. **Read 1 John 4:19-21.** What is the connection between loving God and loving other Christians?
2. **Read Hebrews 13:1-3.** In what sense are the actions of these verses a response to who God is and what he's done (see 12:28-29)

1 Thess 2:8??

Are these challenging commands? Why/ why not?

Hospitality!!! Especially for non-Western cultures.

3. **Read Romans 12:9-10.** What is sincere love?

When might hating what is evil be connected to sincere love?

What does it look like to be devoted to one another?

4. **Read Ephesians 6:18.** In what circumstances is it easy to pray?

In what circumstances do you find it difficult to pray?

Why should we pray?

5. How might we do better as a church at being devoted to fellowship, prayer and hospitality?
Brainstorm for a few minutes

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5. WE ARE DELIBERATELY & DAILY SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD.



1. **Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.** Why read God's Word?

Why do we find it so hard to read it consistently and regularly?

2. **Read Matthew 7:24-25.** Why should we hear and obey Jesus' words?

3. **Read Acts 17:11.** What can we learn from the Bereans?

How can we encourage this sort of eagerness?

4. How might we do this better as a church at being deliberately and daily shaped by God's Word?
Brainstorm for a few minutes

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SCAN ME

6. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENGAGED & SERVING WITHIN THE CHURCH.



1. **Read Ephesians 4:11-16.** Is it only the leaders who serve the church?

What are the results of people doing works of service?

What does it mean (v16) that the body grows and builds itself up from Christ the head?

2. **Read Romans 12:3-8.** What is the connection between humility and using your gifts?

In what sense are we one? In what sense are we many?

What is the expected response if you've been given a gift?

3. How might we do better as a church at being engaged and serving? Brainstorm for a few minutes

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SCAN ME

7. WE HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORLD AROUND US & ARE GROWING THROUGH CONVERSION.



1. **Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.** This is Paul's personal approach to mission. Does this mean that he is a people-pleaser, and has no firm principles?

What might it look like for **you** to make yourself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible?

What might it look like for **a church** to do the same?

2. **Read Colossians 4:3-6.** What part should prayer play in evangelism? Why?

What mistakes might result from a lack of wisdom in the way we act towards outsiders?

What sort of opportunities are there to speak about Jesus? How can we find more opportunities?

What is a conversation that's seasoned with salt?

3. **Read 1 Peter 2:12.** What impact does a good life have on our witness to unbelievers?

Is a good life enough?

4. **Read 1 Peter 3:15-16.** How can we prepare to give an answer?

What advice is given about how we answer?

5. How might we do better as a church at having an impact on the world and growing through conversion? Brainstorm for a few minutes

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SCAN ME

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

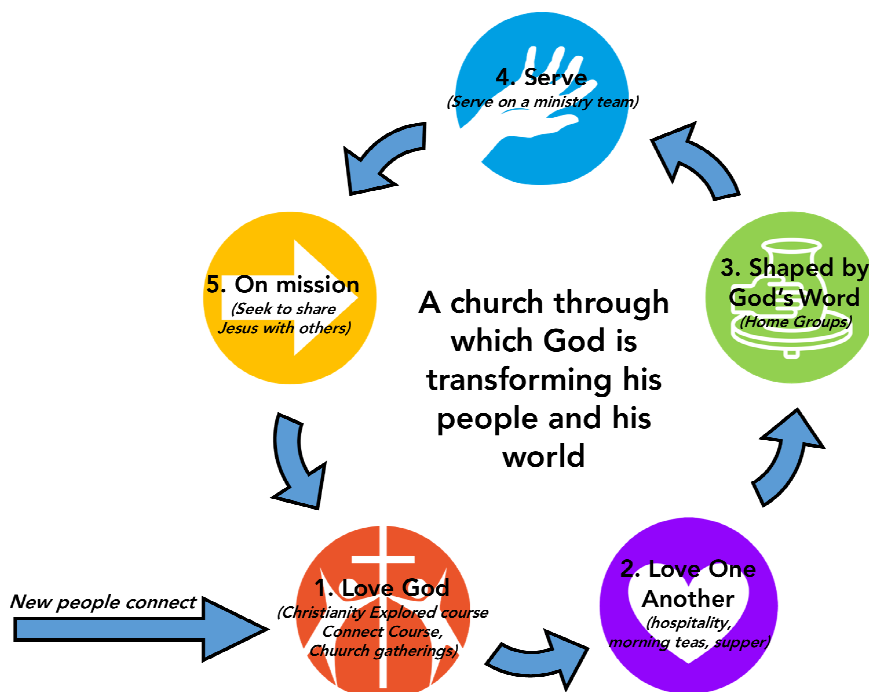
How do we achieve our vision? Only God can build his church (Psalm 127:1; Mt 16:18; Eph 2:20-22; Eph 3:20), so **we need to pray!**

The seven aspects of the vision can be grouped into **five areas of healthy church life**. A healthy church is one which;

1. Loves God (Mk 12:29-30)
2. Loves one another (Mk 12:31)
3. Is shaped by God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17)
4. Serves (Eph 4:12)
5. Is on mission (Col 4:5-6)



Each area influences the others. A church is not healthy if only 3 or 4 of the areas are effective. They all need to be effective.



1. How do you respond to this description of a healthy church?

Anything you don't understand?

Anything you disagree with?

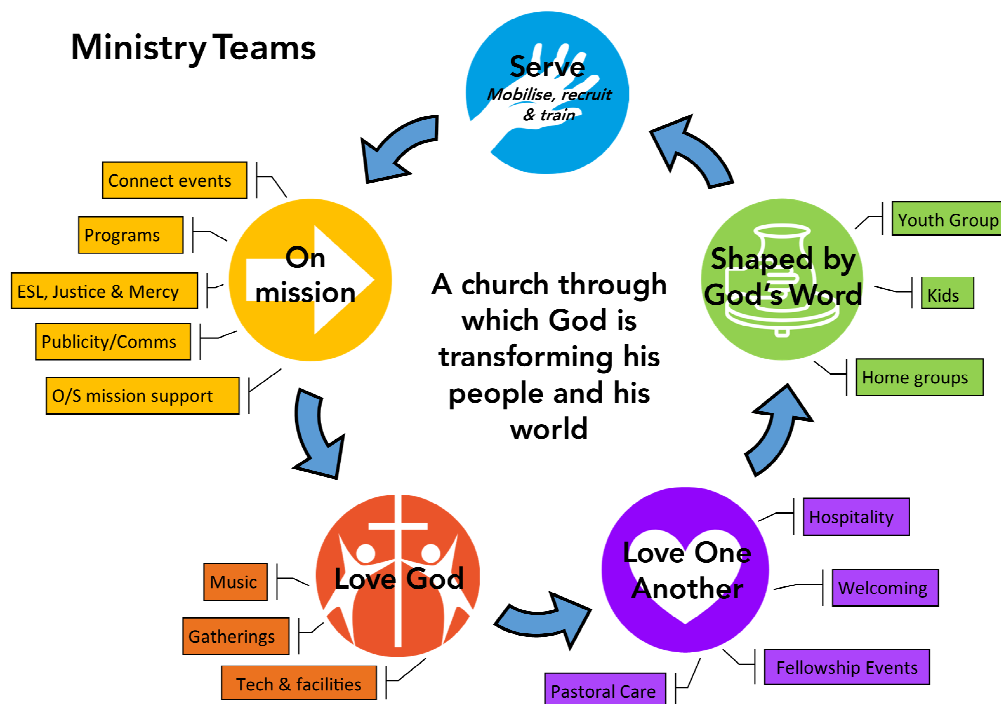
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MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry teams are groups of people responsible for part of one of these areas. Together, they work to achieve the vision.



Our next task is to organise people to serve in one (or perhaps two) ministry teams so that we can achieve our vision. **Stay tuned!**

2. How do you respond to this description of ministry teams?

Anything we've forgotten?

Anything you disagree with?

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SCAN ME

DISCLAIMERS:

- It's important to remember that all we do is **a response to God's grace to us in Jesus**, not a means of earning his favour (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- We don't seek to 'do things' for God, but rather to live lives worthy of the calling we have received (Ephesians 4:1), doing it all for his glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- All growth is of God, but he also calls us **to do all we can** with the means he has given us (Matthew 25:14-30).
- We want to be organised and clear, not because we're 'corporate', but because **we love people**, and don't want to lose any who 'slip through the cracks' or 'leave through the back door'.
- Although generously using your gifts will benefit others, we want you to serve, principally, because **this is how God will mature you** in character, convictions and competency.