

## Our Vision

We are **here for life**. Life to the full, now and forever, in Christ alone.

**Our vision is for people to discover that life in Jesus is infinitely better than life apart from Him.**

Our church is a community of men, women and children who are:

- Growing in knowing and loving the God of the Bible - Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Growing in knowing and loving one another as Jesus' followers
- Growing in making God's truth known and God's love shown to those who do not yet follow Jesus

We foster all of these growing relationships according to God's Word; depending upon our Father God; receiving and believing His promises in His Son Jesus Christ; and obeying His commands in the power of His Holy Spirit.

## Our commitments

### God's news

We believe that God's Word, the Bible, reveals that there is no such thing as life apart from Jesus Christ. All life exists by Him, through Him and for Him. Apart from Him, we die. Belonging to Him, we have eternal life. Life to the full, now and forever, is only possible through knowing and worshipping Him as our King and our God through the Holy Spirit.

We believe that, apart from Jesus Christ, people remain alienated from their Creator God because of their sin, and destined for a life without Him, and upon death, eternal separation from Him. We believe that, in Jesus Christ, all people have the opportunity to be restored in their relationship to God, and to experience real, full life now, and upon death, to have eternal and perfected life with Him.

### God's community

We believe that God's Word calls men, women and children to belong to the community in this world who know Jesus Christ as King and God - the Church. We believe that God's Word reveals that a church should be a place where people, through the Holy Spirit, are growing three particular sets of relationships, shaped by the promises and commands of God's Word - **relationships with the God of the Bible, with each other in the church, and with the world who does not yet know Jesus Christ.**

We are to grow in knowing and loving each of those we have these relationships with - and to do that according to the lead of God's Word, the Bible, which alone is the permanent, written authority that reveals to us who God is, who we are, and what God calls us to do in response to this.

We express all of these relationships with worship and prayer to the God who is Lord over each of these relationships; word and sacrament as that which defines and nourishes each of these relationships; the use of our gifts expressed through love as the currency of our relationships; and with a leadership of the church agreeable to the Word of God to oversee our exercise of these relationships.

We are committed to all of these relationships being nurtured, so that, if any one of them is not growing, we recognise that as a church we need to change our practice.

### God's mission

We are committed to the parish of St. Columba as the field to which God has called us particularly to pray for and in which to make His truth and love known and shown. Nonetheless, we seek to serve and welcome people in Christ's name in every set of relationships that each of us is led into; in our homes and families, work places and schools, clubs and societies, seeking that Jesus might be known as King in us and through us.

# Our Strategy

In 2016-2020, our focus for growing these relationships will be in these five areas:

## 1) **Group Fellowship - Life Groups and Prayer Groups**

We will commit time, energy and emphasis to our twice monthly Life Groups, where people can meet together to do the four things a church does according to Acts 2:42 - share in the Apostles' teaching (the Bible), fellowship (sharing our lives), the breaking of bread (eating together) and prayer. In any given year, these groups will always include a 'greenhouse group' where people can explore in community the essentials of who Jesus is and why it matters. We will also promote and encourage the forming and sustaining of our monthly small prayer groups (2-4 people, or family units) as the context where we pray with and for one another, our church and our community. These groups will all have a deliberate focus on discipling and equipping for 'faith on the front line' - being witnesses 24/7 in the places we each already live, work, rest and play.

## 2) **Sunday services**

We will commit ourselves to serving in different ways to gather in Sunday services that are worshipful of God, committed to teaching His Word such that a variety of ages and backgrounds can learn to live in the light of it, expressive of the welcome and invitation that God wants to extend to people to be part of His family, and well suited to the demographics of our parish. We will commit to leading six services per year which attempt a fresh expression of worshipping Jesus relevant to our community, with the aim of creating an accessible way into Sunday worship for the people we are forming connections with through our Connections Project ministry.

## 3) **Community Engagement**

We will commit our own money, and time and effort in fundraising, to develop the now established Connections Project. This project entails the employment of a part time Community Worker, and the rental of a shop unit from which to operate. The project works to meet the identified need of connecting people in our new community with one another, with our church, and ultimately with Jesus. We will in this period of time focus on parent and toddler groups, community events, joint church/community ventures (e.g. Tanzania '16). We will serve the poor and suffering in our parish and elsewhere, and help others to do so.

## 4) **Online engagement**

In this period, we will develop our use of social media as a means of connecting people in our community together and connecting our church with the community. We will redevelop our website during this period, and aim to make our life and activity as accessible as possible to our community (for example through blogs, video streaming, greater use of social media channels).

## 5) **Development of a church/community building**

In this five year time frame, we will seek to purchase appropriate land in our parish, and develop a plan for a building to act both as a place of worship for people to connect with the God of the Bible, and as a community centre for people to connect with one another. We will embark on consultative exercises both with our congregation and community to seek their input on to how best a building could serve these functions. We will aim for the building to be completed in this five year period, to be present as housing in our community is established around it.