

# **12 Month Plan**

## **for High Street Methodist Church**

### **2017 - 2018**

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## ***Why we do what we do***

*'let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,  
fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.'*  
Hebrews 11.1-2

Like other types of organisation, churches can easily lose sight of their purpose and find themselves simply existing. Back in 1938, the famous Methodist preacher W. E. Sangster commented, "Some of us know so much about 'running a Church'; we wonder at times if we are quite so informed as to *why* a Church should be 'run'". In recent years we have worked hard at High Street to discern why we do all that we do. This purpose has been succinctly put into the words of our Vision and Strategy agreed by a unanimous vote of the Church Council in March 2014:

OUR VISION is to see:

**Lives, relationships and communities in this world  
transformed by the love of God in Jesus Christ.**

and OUR STRATEGY for sharing in this great work is to:

**Encounter God  
Equip God's People  
Extend God's Kingdom**

These are not empty words. They give us direction. They are our purpose, our goal, our *why*. They are not only shaping *what* we do, but the *way* we organise ourselves as a church. This *High Street 12 Month Plan for 2017/2018* is part of that purposeful way of work. Through consultation with our various teams, committees and office-holders, this plan has been compiled by the church Leadership Team and agreed by our Church Council to provide our action plan - our direction of travel - for the next twelve months.

Our Leadership Team enables us to work better together in this more coherent, co-ordinated and purposeful way. Alongside this document, I am publishing a yellow guide as to the way we do things and how the leadership is structured, called *Leadership at High Street*. Much of the work now being done so diligently and so well by our Leadership Team used to rest on the shoulders of a very few people, which was good neither for those individuals nor for the church. This plan provides us with some insight into the work now done on our behalf by the Leadership Team, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to them for serving us so well in this way.

Alongside our Vision and Strategy we have in recent years also agreed other statements that are equally important in shaping the church that we are, and it is helpful at the start of this new church year to remember these.

In a poll taken during our General Church Meeting in March 2014, over 90% of us agreed with the following statements about our Sunday morning worship:

***We want to cherish, equally, our two distinct styles of Sunday morning worship.***

***We want each congregation to have ample room to grow.***

***We want our weekly Sunday morning worship to attract and keep all ages, and proportionally more children, and young adults and men.***

***We want to provide the two styles of service every Sunday morning.***

These strongly held desires have not been forgotten. We remain utterly committed to doing all we can to ensure that our traditional and informal worship services continue to thrive.

In May 2014 the Church Council agreed the following bold policy:

***To work towards having more members and worshippers of all ages, and proportionally more children and teenagers, men and young adults.***

***And to work towards having more joyfully generous givers.***

These firm commitments have not been forgotten either. Again, we remain utterly committed to being a Christian community that genuinely provides a spiritual family for all. This is a vital part of who we are. It is, of course, simple to say, "All are welcome"; but not nearly so simple to build genuine relationships of love and trust between people of different ages, tastes, interests and outlooks. Nevertheless, this is who we believe God is calling us to be, and we are a people who believe that with God all things are possible. It is because of this that at our General Church Meeting in March 2015 we developed our VALUES, stating our desire for our church family to be shaped by:

**CHRIST-CENTRED DISCIPLESHIP**

– God-reliant, Spirit-filled, disciplined in prayer and Bible reading

**OTHER-CENTRED CARE**

– Love-fuelled, person-to-person, attentive

**NON-JUDGEMENTAL WELCOME**

– Open, hospitable, genuine

**ALL-EMBRACING UNITY**

– Unconditional-love, mutual-concern, non-partisan

**OUTWARD-FOCUSED SERVICE**

– Humble, generous, self-sacrificial

**AUTHENTIC WITNESS**

– Honest, real, confident

I have no doubt that occasionally our commitment to these values will be tested as we seek to travel together the road before us. One particular test for us will be our ongoing consideration of how best to ensure our buildings are truly fit for all the activities we wish to do in them. Following lengthy consultation of church members, in March 2016 our feasibility brief stated:

***We are looking for proposals to enhance and improve the church to make it more conducive for worship in different styles and also appropriate for activities that take place on the premises.***

In recent months we have all had the opportunity to consider and comment upon the feasibility study of our architect. Many of us have expressed the desire to ensure that whatever changes we eventually agree are fully in harmony with our mission as a church. The Leadership Team are now working through the consultation feedback you produced – all 260 pages! This cannot be rushed - your feedback will inform and help shape how the Church Council decide to take forward this important work of ensuring that our buildings are fully fit for our purpose. I stress, this work will continue to proceed in a logical and careful way.

Having remembered *why* we do *what* we do, the remainder of this report provides an overview of what we now plan to do in 2017/18.

As we read through this plan we should also keep in mind all the ecumenical and community partnerships that we, as a church, are involved with. There are too many to list each and every one but, as examples, we have volunteers involved with providing RE lessons in schools in partnership with STEP (secondary schools) and JUMP (primary schools); we are partnering with others to provide The Haven which is a safe space for young people living with anxiety and stress; many members have been pivotal in the setting up of and now running the Harpenden Hopper bus service. This year we hope to help the Salvation Army to host their Christmas lunch while their building is renovated; in August a number of us are visiting our longstanding partner church in Zwickau, Germany to celebrate with them their jubilee; we are exploring with Churches Together the possibility of getting a Citizens Advice Bureau back into the town; and we are exploring possible links with Cliff College to enable them to provide training more easily to the South of England.

Again, many thanks to all those who contribute so generously to the mission and ministry of High Street. Our buildings are not the church, you are the church, and it is through your unstinting commitment to follow Jesus Christ within this part of his body that we are able to do so many things for the glory of God.

So please join me in reading this carefully, and praying for all those who share in the ongoing development of our work for God during the next twelve months.

Every blessing

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Hammond". Below the signature is a horizontal blue line.

## ➤ Pastoral Ministry

During the 2016/2017 plan we identified prospective new bereavement team members – arrangements for their training are in hand; the notices and website have been used to raise awareness of the annual bereavement service; contacting the bereaved between bereavement team meetings was discussed but it was agreed not to change the existing system after all; Mo Swain has taken over from Judith Phalp as Membership Secretary, which means we have put in place the necessary arrangements for the continued maintenance and audit of our membership records.

We are still to achieve action regarding the prayer book as this is part of a wider conversation via the Prayer Team about how we submit prayer requests and pray for each other. Whilst no real progress has been made on the pastoral side, a position paper on pastoral care has been drafted and is being discussed with members of the pastoral team. Conversations with other large churches as to how they operate have failed to offer any solutions as they are facing the same issues as us.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Review the operation of the pastoral care system.
- b) Review and develop pastoral training options.
- c) Ensure that our system of pastoral care is accessible to all church members.
- d) Look at having an alternative membership database which would be more user-friendly and would generate more meaningful reports.
- e) Have a page on the website about weddings and a dedicated email address for enquiries.
- f) Continue the practice of displaying notification of people's deaths and funeral arrangements in the foyer.

## ➤ Encountering God

### **Newcomers Team**

There has been a change with the organisation of the newcomers teas, transitioning from two to three times a year, and the teas now coincide with Sundays where people are received into membership. This happened for the first time on Sunday 7 May in Wesleys and we felt it was successful.

## **Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) To develop a welcome pack (to include the welcome booklet, an invitation to the next newcomers tea, a welcome card, copy of the notices, a pen and small bag of sweets) to be handed out to newcomers at their first visit. The aim of this is to welcome new people and to make newcomers more identifiable to members of the congregation. The budget for this is £350.
- b) To establish the new pattern of membership services and newcomers teas.
- c) To continue to seek additional team members (we have lost a number of team members this year and would like, in particular, to increase the younger representation of the team).

## **Worship and Music**

We will continue to cherish our two distinctive acts of worship on a Sunday morning. The Choir, New Creation, Worship Group and Praise Band will continue to use their gifts and contribute to these and other acts of worship.

## **Our priorities for this plan are specifically :-**

- a) To begin to explore how we can encourage and train up young organists for the future.
- b) For the Junior choir to look at ways of connecting with parents and children to encourage new members to join. The long-term aim would be for the choir to become a stable size so that they would be able to take part in regular services at High Street and ecumenical events with the other children's choirs from the town.
- c) To seek to develop an additional group of musicians to help with the leading of the informal/contemporary worship.

## **Stewards Team**

The stewards have requested a review of the 6.30pm evening services to include consideration of initiatives to increase attendance.

## **Worship Leaders**

### **Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) To establish a pattern of meeting together for prayer, encouragement and idea sharing.

- b) To actively seek those with gifts of worship leading to grow the team.

## **Prayer Team**

We have hosted three 24 hours of prayer, each with a different focus - personal spiritual development, the life of HSMC, and our town, Harpenden. The sick, the bereaved and world issues continue to be prayed for at our midweek prayer gatherings. The prayer booklet has been updated and is available for all. We ran two prayer courses, one during Lent and one for training to be part of the prayer ministry team. There are now 18 people who have been through the training course and are committed to offering prayer when called upon. We have joined with other churches for the global Thy Kingdom Come initiative and provided prayer stations during Christian Aid week and Advent.

We intend to continue with and develop the work established over past year in maintaining the prayer tree, home intercessions and the prayer corner in the south transept; updating the prayer booklet annually; delivering two prayer training sessions annually; organising three prayer days based on (1) church activities, (2) Harpenden and (3) our individual spiritual growth; working closely with preachers and worship leaders to encourage varied intercessions in church services and encouraging use of personal testimony as a faith builder; organising training for the prayer ministry team; providing post service and mid- week prayer ministry; maintaining pre-service prayers.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Explore with youth leaders how we can encourage support in prayer for youth work and also the possibilities of occasional integration of youth and adult prayer.
- b) Update the prayer section of the website.
- c) Improve promotion of events through Facebook etc.
- d) Develop ways to encourage the whole church to share what we believe the Lord may be saying to us in prayer.
- e) Develop a way to expand our ministry of praying for the sick within our church community.
- f) Explore taking prayer outside the walls of our church.
- g) Look at our various prayer meetings with a view to clarifying their objectives and content and possibly renaming them to give clarity and encourage growth.
- h) Consider with the prayer ministry team how prayer ministry might be offered at an additional time to after-service ministry.

## **The Gathering**

In the last year, we have recruited a team, identified a training course which some team members attended, partnered with 'Prospects' (now 'Livability'), contacted potential worshippers and introduced an act of worship for adults with special/additional needs on the second Tuesday morning of each month.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Extend the team.
- b) Increase publicity and possibly introduce a system of sending reminders about meetings.
- c) Look at the possibility of securing external funding.
- d) Keep under review the partnership with 'Livability'.

## **➤ Equipping God's People**

A significant theme that has emerged this year is to develop a more cohesive approach to developing effective discipleship in the church. This would begin with the Newcomers Team and befriending newcomers, exploring where they might best connect with the church, and leading on to Home Groups, church membership, and becoming an active member of the church community.

## **Alpha Courses**

We ran two Alpha Courses, September and January, with around 14 guests attending in total.

### **Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) To continue to develop Alpha for all those seeking to come to faith in Christ, or who wish to review and renew their faith, and to encourage all church members who have not yet done so, to attend.
- b) To run two Alpha Courses, one in September and one in January. The September course will be run ecumenically with other churches in Harpenden, with the possibility of running a further joint event in January. These events will form the basis for training and developing further leaders with the resources and skills in helping to lead Alpha Courses. We have included an increased budget for this course, and would look to other churches to contribute their share of the total.

## Home Groups

This work is ongoing, with Anna Holding and Suzi Peachey working with home group leaders to develop the effectiveness of our groups. The High Street at Home event on 17 June was well received, and offered groups fresh guidance, ideas and encouragement.

### **Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) As part of the broader growth in discipleship, to continue to encourage everyone to belong to a well-led home group.
- b) Home group leaders and members to be equipped and encouraged by holding one event each year to bring together our current leaders, and those with an interest in leading.
- c) To help existing groups to review their current range of activities and to review the effectiveness, frequency and timing of groups to enhance their impact in the busy Harpenden community.

## Newcomers Welcome Team

This team has now been transferred to 'Encounter God'.

## Parenting Courses

The 2016/2017 plan was achieved with the primary years and secondary years courses running again last year in September and January respectively. Despite increased publicity, attendance at both the courses was disappointing. Having said that the people who did attend gave good feedback.

**Our priorities for this plan are** to change from running these courses annually to operating on a three-year basis. The next courses therefore will run in September 2019 (primary years) and January 2020 (secondary years).

## Theology School

Theology school numbers continue to be small but appreciative.

### **Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) To continue to the end of Bible Track, and then review our position.
- b) To investigate the possibility of connecting more with the home groups, possibly by way of providing better coordinated teaching materials for groups to use.

## **External Events**

Both Spring Harvest and Soul Survivor were popular, successful and well supported. We had a group of 60 at Spring Harvest, and our booking for next year has increased to over 90.

**Our priorities for this plan are** to continue to encourage a large group from High Street to attend Spring Harvest and Soul Survivor during the year ahead.

## **Resources Centre**

Use of the Resources Centre has continued to increase in recent years and, most recently, the range of users has broadened across the Church community and beyond into other denominations.

**Our priorities for this plan are :-**

- a) To continue to offer the existing free lending facility of Christian books and other material to HSMC and the community.
- b) To develop the materials on offer to meet the ongoing and changing opportunities.

## **Additional Courses**

We are exploring the possibility of running the Marriage Course after the current Theology School series has been completed. This is unlikely to be before January 2018.

Additionally, officers of the Connexional Learning Network have asked us to explore the scope of jointly running a course called IGNITE, a discipleship course consisting of 6 modules of biblical teaching that runs in small groups or in churches. Our plan for 2017-18 would include exploring the possibility of running IGNITE in Harpenden the following year, in conjunction with other churches, and in particular with Network Church who are part of the Pioneer Church movement involved in the origination of the course.

**In the longer term we would hope to :-**

- a) Explore new resources and opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of our discipleship, individually and as a church. This may include initiatives such as IGNITE as well as other suggested opportunities from time to time.
- b) Run Alpha two or three times each year, including both evening and daytime courses if needed; promote Alpha locally, and in conjunction with other churches, with the aim of running a scaled-up series of courses attracting at least 50 people each year.
- c) Increase the number of home groups so that everyone who wants to can be in a group that suits them and their life, and helps them to grow as disciples; gradually to build an approach for newcomers that steers them towards becoming regular

members of a group. To develop home groups as a key component for the development of discipleship in the church.

- d) In the light of recent experience with the Parenting Courses, we plan to change from running these courses annually to operating on a three-year basis. To find facilitators to run the courses and a small budget to cover production of a flyer. It would be our intention to advertise this amongst the churches and schools in Harpenden.
- e) Explore other external events that offer high quality teaching and worship, and to encourage attendance; to find someone to take over as Spring Harvest Group Organiser within the next five years; to evaluate the possibility of holding a High Street Church weekend/holiday away at a suitable venue.
- f) Explore how the Resources Centre may be enhanced, possibly to include more hi-tech offerings, in line with changing methods of communicating. To find others to join the team and ultimately to take over from Peter Syson. In the light of possible architectural changes to the premises, to ensure that the location of the Resources Centre continues to allow ease of access to the public. For the development of the Centre the current location in a very public place is crucial to its continuing success.

## ➤ **Extending God's Kingdom**

### **Building Blocks**

During the 2016/2017 plan we produced flyers for children and family events and courses that have been used at Building Blocks - we had parents attending the parenting course as a result of this publicity; we now have a proper nappy bin in the toilet outside the hall; as a spin-off from Building Blocks a new group has been established, mumSpace, whereby Wesleys is open for coffee to those mums who are new to Harpenden or who are feeling lonely and looking to meet people and make friends.

We have not yet run a preparing parents for school session because we do not have enough volunteers to make this happen.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Increase the size of the team to ensure we have enough cover for holidays and sickness.
- b) Continue with two sessions a week.
- c) Continue to build relationships and extend invitations to the various courses, and continue to seek opportunities to share faith.

- d) Help mums new to Harpenden connect with other new mums and provide a small friendly environment for those mums who are looking to make friends, to review why we set up mumSpace to check it is still meeting a need and to explore how to develop this ministry.

## **Christmas Carnival**

The 2016 carnival was another major success, building on existing elements and introducing new ones. A post-carnival review has been conducted.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Continue to communicate the Gospel with people at the Christmas carnival, to bring people onto the church site, to share God's love and to love our town generously.
- b) Appoint an events team, supported by the office, to co-ordinate the event, building on the learning from last year.
- c) Communicate better to the whole church the opportunity this presents as only a small number of church people take part, but the day is as much about us building community within the church as it is about serving the community.

## **Mentalk**

The format has continued the same over this last year and typically around 15 people have a meal together, with others just dropping in for a drink on their way home. These are not always the same people. We are confident it continues to fulfil an on-going need for this type of fellowship; some men who don't attend church regularly (or at all) are coming along and feeling comfortable. Men from across the full age spectrum are getting to know (and value) each other. It seems to be a way of linking men who would ordinarily only attend either the informal or traditional service.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Find a way to encourage more of the younger men to meet and share the common issues they face in the various pressures of balancing family and work life, perhaps through a separate series of "events".
- b) Consider partnering with the independent men's group formed of ones and twos from the other Harpenden churches for a Harpenden-wide outreach.
- c) Try and get some of the men to step forward as leaders to plan and implement a more structured (and spiritual) program of events.
- d) Deepen fellowship to enable fuller sharing with each other.

## **Shoppers' Lunch**

During 2016/2017 we have continued to provide regular lunches to members of the community. With such a small number of volunteers, there is little scope for redistributing the workload in any meaningful way.

**Our priorities for this plan** are to seek to enlarge the team so that the workload can be spread.

## **Wesleys Café**

During the last year, publicity of church events has been introduced. The youth workers have not got the time to help in Wesleys as they initially thought. We have been asked to explore whether it is possible to display a religious picture in the children's corner without negatively impacting on the other art on display.

**Our priorities for this plan are to :-**

- a) Recruit more volunteers.
- b) Replace or re-upholster the leather chairs.
- c) Explore, in conjunction with Harpenden Trust, the possibility of becoming a hub where those without the internet can access information.

## **World and Society**

Over the 2016/2017 plan a meeting was held with the 'champions' of our chosen charities to discuss delivery of the support promised in our policy; proceeds from the train fun day, harvest supper and midnight Communion service offering were divided between the chosen charities; the charities have been included in the church prayer book; proceeds from B.J. Johnston's play on the life of John Wesley on 24 June will also be divided between our chosen charities; the annual review of the charities policy has been conducted, with proposals for minor changes being agreed at the April Church Council meeting; an additional member has joined the Committee.

Communication remains an issue.

**Our priorities for 2017/2018 are :-**

- a) To explore a longer-term partnership working with at least one local and overseas charity as an alternative to providing short-term financial support to nominated charities.
- b) To raise the profile of the Share scheme and to look to run Wesleys on a Saturday morning to raise funds for Share so that items may be bought when stocks run low.
- c) To have updates in the notices from our chosen charities every six months or so.

- d) To review the feedback from the 'Big Day In' workshops insofar as it relates to the extension of God's Kingdom and to implement any suggestions as considered appropriate.

### **Outreach to the elderly**

Wesley's, shoppers' lunch, Outlook and 'cakes and carols' all provide some form of outreach to the elderly. Views have been expressed that we should do more. In the event of suggestions and willing volunteers coming forward, we will look to extend our current provision.

### **Community links and life beyond HSMC**

We will continue to engage with Harpenden Trust, the Children's Centre and other churches and organisations in the town as appropriate. Sometimes this will be no more than making the necessary introductions/connections. An example of this is Deacon Angie, through her chaplaincy, being able to connect the Manager of Sainsbury's with someone who wanted to provide another defibrillator in the town; another example is a conversation with the Activities Manager at Willow Court which revealed that some of the more active residents there don't necessarily want churches to provide activities that are 'done to them', but rather with them. Consequently, some church members have gone in to Willow Court to form a choir with some of the residents.

### **Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to :-**

- a) Join with other churches and organisations in seeking to bring a Citizens' Advice Bureau back to the town.
- b) Encourage people to share their stories as appropriate, recognising that many work/volunteer to extend God's kingdom without a specific HSMC label.

## **➤ Children's and Youth Work**

### **Children's Work**

We have had a very busy year in Children's Church and are looking forward to achieving many of our goals in the next 12 months. We have an excellent team of volunteers who enable the Sunday morning sessions to take place, but we are always in need of more help. We have built upon our ecumenical links, with X:site remaining a great outreach to junior school aged children and will once again work with volunteers from other Harpenden churches in running our Summer Holiday Club and Light Party.

## **Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to :-**

- a) Continue to provide lively, bible-based Children's Church sessions parallel to both the main morning services, using the parlour as well as the hall when necessary for school-age children, the left-hand side rear room for 3-4 year olds and the meeting room for the crèche.
- b) Explore ways to make more use of our puppets, perhaps at the start of services as well as in Children's Church sessions.
- c) Hold a Holiday Club, Light Party and New Year Party for children, as well as social events for families such as a Quiz Night and an Indoor Picnic. All these events make money and although there is a cost in terms of volunteer hours, we have the pool of Sunday morning helpers to call on and can extend this by asking for help ecumenically from the X:site team.
- d) Promote and participate in ecumenical children's events such as X:site, 267 weekends away and 'JUMP' R.E. lessons in primary schools.
- e) Have a recruitment drive for new helpers and leaders and run training sessions for them once or twice a year.
- f) Create a pop-up prayer corner for use in the hall.
- g) Provide 'bring-a-friend' invitations for use at any time, not just for a specific Sunday.
- h) Subject to approval from the Property Steward, decorate the Meeting Room to create a cosier environment for the crèche. We anticipate that the cost of this will be minimal and fall under regular building maintenance – the room requires redecorating in any event and it is anticipated that the redecoration will be carried out by a team of volunteers. We may wish to buy some posters or pictures to make the room more child friendly for a Sunday morning but the costs of this will be nominal.
- i) Try serving coffee in the hall to parents between the 9.15am and 11am services, say once a term, to facilitate getting to know each other.
- j) Produce a flyer on a regular basis to promote our activities and have a stand at Harpenden Carnival.
- k) In conjunction with the Junior Choir, hold a carol singing event, on the concourse.
- l) Liaise with the welcomers' team and stewards regarding directing people towards our crèche facilities.
- m) Buy an iPod so that we can have music in the crèche and/or hall. At present we bring our own iPods if we need music for games etc. We would envisage

buying this out of Holiday club profits or holding a cake stall to raise funds (as we did for the puppets).

In the longer term we would hope to start to look at the possibility of employing a lay worker for children; providing mid-week activities such as sport or drama; organising sleepovers at church or weekends away and exploring offering 'Big Start' assemblies to local schools.

## **Youth Work**

The youth work at High Street remains an exciting area of growth and development. As well as our High Street events the youth team is also now involved in a partnership to provide The Haven, a safe space for young people with stress and anxiety. We have a good team of staff and volunteers but are always on the look out for more people with a heart for youth work – either to help with events or to join us in praying for our work with young people.

### **Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to :-**

- a) Provide Jam and Insight sessions based on prayer and worship.
- b) Produce a programme for each group each term and find a fool-proof way of communicating this to young people and their parents.
- c) Develop a consistent method of maintaining registration records for Jam and Insight.
- d) Hold a 'transition session' for parents and children moving from year 6 to year 7, ie those moving from Children's Church in the hall to Jam in the LX.
- e) Organise a weekend away for Jam and Insight. The weekend away is paid for by participants, with staff costs (including hours) coming out of the existing Youth budget. We are able to subsidise certain places by raising funds from running Wesleys on a Saturday.
- f) Continue after-school drop-ins.
- g) Take young people to Soul Survivor events and support FUEL, X:site and The Haven. Funding as e) above. Support for X:site, Fuel etc comes out of existing Youth staff hours.
- h) Make plans to take a group to 3Generate in 2018 (as 2017 venue is a long way and the dates clash with Harpenden Christmas Carnival). The District is offering to fund anyone who wishes to go to 3Generate. Leaders go free so the cost is time taken from the Youth work hours.

- i) Run a 'Next Steps' course in September to nurture young people and offer preparation for Church membership (instead of Alpha).
- j) Explore the demand for a 'Rock Solid'-type event for years 6 to 9.
- k) Introduce an after-school 'Encounter Hour' including meditation/lectio divina, Christian mindfulness, interactive prayer and art.
- l) Develop a system of prayer triplets and encourage participation in 24 hours of prayer.
- m) Encourage the young people to bring the Bible we have given them to sessions and promote the use of Bible study notes.
- n) Develop a post-18 transition programme to place those who no longer fall under 'youth work' in suitable study and social groups.
- o) Reintroduce a system whereby members of the congregation write to those away at university.
- p) Nurture our volunteer trainees so they can confidently share in the leadership of Summer Soul Survivor.
- q) Send the leaders to the annual National Youth Worker meeting and other training events.
- r) Continue working with STEP in local secondary schools.
- s) Find a way to engage the young people with the charities supported by HSMC.
- t) Set up a Youth Forum to feed into Church Council.
- u) Identify opportunities for service locally, eg through the Harpenden Trust or Town Council.
- v) Put on events that young people would feel comfortable bringing non-Christian friends to.
- w) Hold a social event for parents and youth.
- x) Nurture a culture of expectation that young people will engage fully in the life of HSMC and be seen as potential (and actual) leaders of worship and preachers as well as in other leadership roles. Facilitating this by providing encouragement and access to training for emerging leaders and liaising with the Youth Worship Team.
- y) As a Church, we hope to send our Lead Youth Worker, James Manning, on a training course to obtain a Youth Work qualification eg a Certificate in Youth Work from Cliff College.

We have many longer-term aspirations including having sufficient leaders and young people to split the Sunday morning session into two age groups; increase the number of helpers on Friday nights so that we can split the group by age; having a larger space so we can play the games from the Lumen sessions properly; continuing the volunteer trainee programme with increased numbers.

## ➤ **Operations (property, caretaking and lettings)**

The aims of the property team are to support the delivery of the vision and mission of the church and to ensure that, at all times, the building is maintained and operated in a way that is compliant with Methodist and wider regulations. We have a Long-Term Property Plan which gives guidance on the key replacement and redecoration plans through to 2036.

### **Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to :-**

- a) Maintain a caretaking team of two to provide cover and resilience. They are overseen by the Buildings Manager. The Buildings Manager reports to the Property Steward, Peter Black, and manages the property and team from day to day.
- b) Establish a team of people who are prepared to carry out a range of support functions: decorating, security, or cleaning.
- c) Resolve ongoing repairs and maintenance quickly and bring in external contractors when necessary.
- d) Establish an ongoing trap and dispatch programme for the pigeons and spike the main ridge to keep numbers low and thus reduce fouling to flat and pitched roofs as well as gullies, gutters and downpipes. To protect the ornate windows to the west and south of the church which may be by netting or covering in Perspex.
- e) Fit hand rails to assist with access to the main doors.
- f) Re-decorate the choir vestry, Minister's vestry and toilet.
- g) Replace the chancel carpet. (We will wait for the first indications of next steps with the church development plan and if this area is expected to be approved for immediate action then we will leave it to be incorporated into the bigger plan. We will plan for it to be implemented by Christmas 2017).
- h) Redecorate the hall.
- i) The Long-Term Property Plan will be reviewed during the year in the light of experience and updated as necessary.

## ➤ Lettings

It is important to effectively balance maximising income from our premises and availability for church use.

**Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to: -**

- a) Continue to hold one Saturday in the Hall for church use each month. These held days become bookable for outside hirers from 6 weeks beforehand. Saturday hire of the Hall is significantly less than in previous years due to a decline in visitors to the type of craft market that has historically been held on regular Saturdays.
- b) Continue to allow outside hirers to book up to 15 months in advance. Some of our concert hirers would prefer to book two years in advance, but we must balance this with the availability of the premises for the church's own events.
- c) Continue to market and let available rooms and times, including the refurbished parlour, conference room, Hall, Wesleys and small room. Most available Hall times are now full.
- d) Not actively to pursue 'residential' lettings (such as 2:67, HCC) when and if they leave. This will create a significant decrease in income from outside lettings. The 2:67 room is not currently considered to be in a lettable state. We are also looking to provide space for the Citizens Advice Bureau in the near future, and this may include the small room, meeting room and/or 2:67 room.

A budget of £25,000 for the year has been agreed, to be reviewed quarterly.

## ➤ Finance

In line with the objectives laid down in the Executive Plan, a 2017/2018 outline budget is attached.

In preparing this budget, the Co-ordinators on the Leadership Team have consulted with all the relevant budget holders, and budget requests for the funding of existing and proposed initiatives have been included, without variation. Comment on significant increases in funding requirements have been included in the commentary of the mission section concerned.

Some estimates in the outline budget have been prepared by the Treasurer and it is anticipated that these estimates will be refined over the summer and before the final budget is approved by Church Council in October, as is our normal custom. Key budget assumptions are shown at the foot of the budget schedules. At present, the outline budget figures have been lifted into the final draft column to allow for comparisons to 2016/2017 estimates. This will be revised, as necessary, as the budget process unfolds.

The key underlying tenet of this budget is one of routine development of mission and operational activities in line with our approved strategy. In the event that Church Council decides that any development work should take place, following the conclusion of the feasibility study consultation, the financial impacts (costs and funding) of any such proposed development project will not be felt until 2018/2019 at the earliest. In any event, it is agreed that any development project will not commence, in terms of full 'roll-out' until the costs thereof are fully funded. There may, however, be revenue costs (manageable) in 2017/2018 for the refining of architects plans etc. but, if required, these can be financed by the Mission Development Fund.

Once the final budget for 2017/2018 is agreed and the outcomes for 2016/2017 known, a revised 5 year plan will be produced.

A meeting with the auditors is planned for early July to ensure full clarity on the implementation of Financial Reporting Standard 102 for the 2016/2017 year end.

We are undertaking an analysis of risk factors facing the church and how we should best act to mitigate these.

Action is underway to secure a replacement for the Church Treasurer who intends to retire in Autumn 2018. It is hoped that such a replacement will be secured by mid-2018 to allow for a suitable hand-over period.

## ➤ **Giving Initiative**

Whilst there has been an increase in planned giving recently, there is a question over whether this is likely to continue after years of decline. There is also a general feeling that a growing church in a wealthy town like Harpenden should be bringing in more from regular giving. In addition, at two or three Church Council meetings over the past 12 months, questions have been raised over how much money we spend on our own mission and activities as opposed to external charities or projects.

A team has therefore been set up (Rev Mark Hammond, Lewis Cox, Helen Snowden, Alex Schlich, Juliet Jacobs and Helen Smith) to look at how to bring in more money, sustainably and joyfully and to clarify what is being spent where, focusing our thinking on outcomes, so that everyone can be more confident of the impact of the money spent.

### **Our priorities for 2017/2018 are to explore and deliver : -**

- a) Analysis and understanding of giving habits and trends across different groups, to enable more targeted fundraising or requests for regular giving.
- b) Estimations of the "real costs" of each activity – apportioning an appropriate amount of our building costs, utilities, staff costs etc to each thing we do, so that instead of saying "running a gifts workshop only costs us £20 for cheese and biscuits," we can

describe the cost of the activity in terms of heating, lighting, proportion of the maintenance costs etc. This will be extremely helpful in describing what people's giving is going towards.

- c) Analysis and understanding of all High Street's activities, their outputs and outcomes.
- d) Gathering of testimonies and outcome measurement of all High Street activities.
- e) Communication of all of the above, through videos, testimonies, leaflets, letters and personal conversations with people about giving.
- f) Ultimately with the outcome of delivering increased income for the Church and clarity on the outcomes delivered.

## **Communications**

The last year has been a busy one, with several new communication initiatives. We have a new colour printer / copier machine, which has allowed us to re-vamp our printed flyers and posters; the Notices have a new fortnightly format with a colour photo on the front and room for articles inside; a change in website providers gave an opportunity to move to a new simpler web address for the website and email; new email notices view better on smart phone and portable devices without sending large attachments through and the new digital screens erected in the foyer, as agreed by Church Council last year, are now operational.

### **Our priorities for this plan are to:-**

- a) Develop an overarching communications strategy covering both communication within High Street and to those in our community and beyond.
- b) Work on content for the foyer screens, trialing different content and slide styles, balancing church notices and outreach messages.
- c) Continue producing fortnightly Sunday notices printed and electronic, with longer articles focusing on church events and stories. We anticipate a moderate increase in our use of colour printing, where appropriate for the event and style of publicity.
- d) Continue to produce special Easter and Christmas 'postcard' style cards to evangelise and advertise services at High Street.
- e) Work with the co-ordinators and event organisers to continue to produce advertising posters and flyers for church events under a 'style guide' so all communication from the church is clearly identifiable.

- f) Meet with event organisers at the beginning of a project to discuss communication options and provide communications advice. To also produce a pro forma schedule so that coordinators and event organisers are able to see what communications options are available.
- g) Continue to maintain and update the website, Facebook and Twitter. This is no small undertaking. Gareth Holding currently helps with the website but we will be looking for others to help with Twitter and Facebook.
- h) Continue the recently commenced fortnightly communications meetings to try to ensure that both regular and one-off events are planned for in terms of communications - written, visual and oral at the start of services - this meeting will look at the church calendar and seek to anticipate what communications are required.
- i) Trial a standard form of notice announcement during both the 9.15am and 11am services to ensure continuity of information.
- j) Try out a new communication entitled “Church Council Jottings”. This will be a one page briefing on what was discussed and decided upon at Church Council meetings. This follows feedback that the general membership are not aware of decisions taken by Church Council.

## ➤ **The Architect’s Feasibility Study**

Since 2014, as a church, we have been looking at how we might reshape our buildings to suit what we do in them. We have been exploring how our various worship activities and “wider than worship” activities could develop to benefit not only our church but, in accordance with our Vision, how they could benefit the wider community of Harpenden, the wider Circuit and our developing partnerships with the other churches, charities and community groups both within the town and beyond it. This led to a number of space requirements (25 in all) being identified and an architect being appointed to interpret these and make recommendations based on these requirements.

In the Spring of 2017, responsibility for this project was passed to the Leadership Team to present the findings to Church Council and seek authority to proceed to the next stage.

There followed a presentation by the architect and a period of consultation on the ideas the architect had presented. That consultation period has now ended and there has been a huge amount of feedback to digest and analyse before moving forward. This will involve a full report back to the Church Council (hopefully in November 2017) where authority is likely to be sought to appoint a project group of people with the required skills to come up with some firm proposals to be put to Church Council in 2018.

It is likely that any building project which may be proposed will be a phased development and funding will be required to be in place before commencing any phase of the project.

As yet, of course, nothing has been decided and we are in listening mode to gather the views of members and church users as to how they feel the space can best be utilised in the future. We are also seeking the advice of the Methodist Church Conservation Officer and the District Property Secretary. Everything we are considering must be in harmony with our church Vision and Strategy, which was unanimously agreed by our Church Council in 2014.

We are very conscious that any project involving our buildings is a huge undertaking and an expensive one. No firm costings are of course yet available but we want to be absolutely certain that we proceed one step at a time and take people with us on this journey. We hope during the coming year to be able to finalise proposals and move to the next stage in this exciting project.

## ➤ **Conclusion**

This is our second annual plan and, as with the first, it is intended to set out our priorities as a Church as a whole over the next 12 months, and not simply what will be carried out by the Leadership Team. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything we intend to do or achieve but a blueprint of what our priorities are. Our priorities may change as we go through the year but this is a road map against which we should check any change in priorities.

We are very grateful to the numerous volunteers and staff who work tirelessly and with enthusiasm to help us, as a church, achieve our vision. Once again, we encourage everyone to pray that we all have the courage to take the steps necessary to grow in faith and expand to serve future generations.

Attached           - outline budget  
                          - leadership team list

### Administrative posts

CHAIR – Richard Atkins

DEPUTY CHAIR – Charlotte Ballard Scott

### Key Office Holders

PRESBYTERAL MINISTER – Rev Mark Hammond

DIACONAL MINISTER – Deacon Angie Allport

SENIOR CHURCH STEWARD – Linda Black

CHURCH TREASURER – John Bristow

OPERATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR – Peter Black (property steward)

COMMUNICATIONS – Lewis Cox

### Mission Co-ordinators

ENCOUNTER GOD – Sally Hammond

EQUIP GOD'S PEOPLE – David Thomson

EXTEND GOD'S KINGDOM – Deacon Angie Allport

CHILDREN AND YOUTH – Pamela Atkins