



A GROWING CHURCH

View from the vicarage



JANUARY 2018

Welcome to the first edition of **view from the vicarage**. I want to share where I feel God is leading us and, in this edition, I'm focusing on St Giles being a growing church.

The Attractional Church

Over the years, St Giles has grown by operating what we might call an *attractional model*.

- ✓ Christian families come looking for **good quality children and youth ministry**. They appreciate the sense of **family** and the way **the different generations** work together.
- ✓ People who are Christians already come looking for **good bible teaching** and the opportunity to grow through **midweek groups**.
- ✓ People recognise how **the Holy Spirit** is moving here. They are drawn by the way in which we **worship** with the emphasis on informality and the sense of **the presence of God**.

- ✓ People are drawn to **Alpha**. Those who are searching for God and those who want to see their faith refreshed and reinvigorated come **to explore**, many of them **invited by their friends**.

We give thanks to God for the way this church has grown over recent years. We do pray that we'll continue to grow as people are drawn here. We want people to be attracted to Jesus as well as being attracted to St Giles!

The Missional Church

There's a danger than an attractional church might become a **consumer church** focused on the needs of the people who are already here. But we take seriously *the challenge to be missional* and to share the good news of the gospel.

- ✓ Through **Alpha**, courses such as **Fruitfulness on the Frontline**, our teaching on **evangelism and discipleship** and the emphasis on **spreading out**, we are an outward looking church.

- ✓ We encourage people **to serve and bless others** in practical ways, in acts of kindness, in works of compassion and mercy.
- ✓ We offer financial and practical support for **mission at home and overseas**. We take seriously the challenge that we are all **sent by Jesus**, in the power of the Holy Spirit, with a desire to **share God's love** with others.

By continuing to emphasise the following 4 priorities, we aim to get the balance right in the life and ministries of our church and to fulfil our vision:-

- *Growing Up*
- *Joining In*
- *Spreading Out*
- *Giving Away*

The Resource Church

 We've been praying and thinking for some time about how we might be a **minster church**, what the Church of England is now calling a **Resource Church**. This describes churches which have the potential to encourage and resource mission across a wider area and to plant churches in their locality.

'A city centre resource church is a church which, working closely with the local bishop, intentionally resources mission across a city, by planting and revitalising churches, developing leaders and providing other resources for mission. Its aim is to help evangelise the city and transform society.'
The Church Growth Research Programme
(Church of England)

We've produced a leaflet entitled "**Being a Resource Church**" to



provide an overview of the things we are already doing and what we might do in the future. It's hugely exciting, but it will also be costly. It

will mean giving our time, our money, our resources and, most importantly, giving ourselves.

It could mean:

-  Joining a church planting team from St Giles
-  Committing some of your time and gifts to help resource another church

-  Getting involved in God's mission in the town
-  Offering hospitality to students

As you read this leaflet and hear more about being a **Resource Church**, we want to ask everyone to prayerfully consider how God might be calling us to play our part.



At the start of 2018, we felt it was right to focus our Sunday teaching on the theme of **caring church, safer church, thriving church** and so on. A church that displays these qualities, where people *love God and love one another*, will be very attractive to others and will make an impact in our town.

As the **Ministry Leadership Team** have prayed about the year ahead, there are 3 priority areas where we feel we need to focus our energies:-

-  *Worship, Word & Spirit*
-  *Families, Children & Young People*
-  *Believe & Do Greater Things*

We need to *resource ourselves*, to be continually *refreshed and empowered* by the Holy Spirit, to *support and care* for one another and to *encourage and inspire* each other in our *discipleship*.



In **February and March**, we begin a new teaching series where we will focus on topics such as our identity, our calling and our authority.

We will be asking: **who are we?** And also **whose are we?** We cannot answer either question without reference to the other. Like the Psalmist we must first know that we are created, loved and cherished by the Lord of the universe – we are *'fearfully and wonderfully made.'*

These questions of identity and calling are for everyone. We invite you to join us on this next exciting step of the journey together. We pray

'Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.' Psalm 25v4-5

Steve Kelly
VICAR ST GILES

