

St Andrew's, Catford Mission Action Plan



Our vision for St Andrew's:

*Opening our hearts, opening our doors, serving the community:
we want St Andrew's to be a welcoming, generous church, a place
for everyone to find joy, peace and fellowship in Christ*

Introduction



A rapidly changing social context in the UK means that we cannot be complacent: the church today is in danger of becoming culturally irrelevant or unknown. The gospel needs contextualising in each generation. So, with our MAPs, we are urged to look beyond preserving the institution of the church for its own sake in order to share the hope and love of Jesus Christ more widely by building deep relationships within our communities and engaging with the real issues they face.

Diocese of Southwark



This document is the result of an extended process of consultation and discernment involving detailed input from both the St Andrew's worshipping community and the community at large. Based on the answers to questions such as – *What would make St Andrew's a better church? Where is God leading us? How do you experience God in this church? How could the church be more involved with our community in order to better serve it? How could we make it easier for you to participate in our church life?* – a representative group of adults and children has elaborated a vision of St Andrew's as a vibrant, warm-hearted church family and local hub, a vision of St Andrew's not merely at the geographical heart of our parish but actively engaging with, and serving, the local community, and central to the lives of all parishioners. This vision is based on three priorities with a set of specific, time-bound actions for each:

Priority 1: GROWING OUR YOUTH

Engage the younger members of our church family and nurture the next generation of churchgoers; offer a form of worship and a range of activities that will captivate and challenge our children and in which they can invite their friends to share, thereby "growing our youth" in terms of both numbers and our young people's spiritual development and involvement in the life of the church.

Priority 2: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

To embed diversity, equity and inclusion into the DNA of St Andrew's, we must integrate these principles into our core values, policies and practices. This means creating a culture where diversity is not just tolerated but where equitable treatment is standard, where inclusion is a guiding principle in all our decision-making processes and where we have shared expectations for behaviour and language for our ministry team, congregation and community.

Priority 3: OUTREACH

While the St Andrew's worshipping community numbers around 115, our parish has a population of 12,238, living in 4,500 households. It falls into the third most deprived of Church of England parishes. 51.3% of its households are deprived in one, two, three or four dimensions (education, employment, health, housing), and 26.9% of homes have single occupants.

Actions

WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT/IN PROGRESS

GROWING OUR YOUTH

Consult our young people on an ongoing basis about what they want, not least by inviting older children to an occasional Children & Young People's committee meeting.

Encourage even greater involvement of children in church services, for example serving and stewarding.

Allow the back of the Lady Chapel to be used as a parent and young child refuge (with toy rug) during Sunday services, while reserving it as a place of quiet, a place for private prayer, at other times.

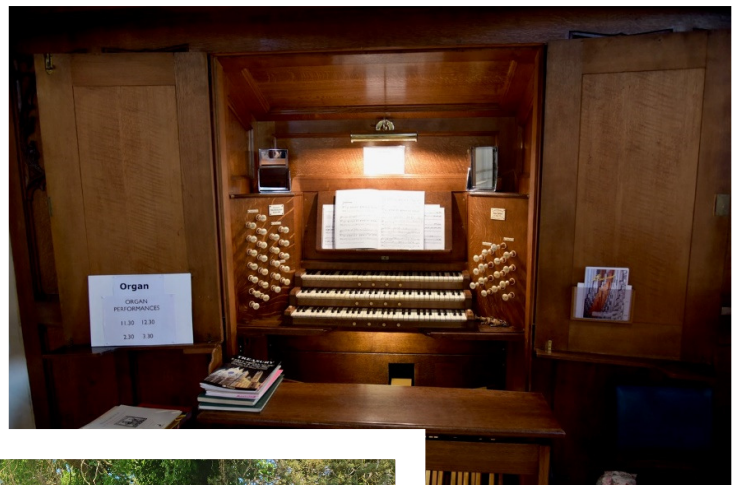
Offer our young people craft activities that can be integrated into services and celebrations.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Adapt hymn selection to help make worship more accessible.

OUTREACH

Publicise our major services via leaflets and posters as well as social media in order to get the message out to as many people as possible.



WITHIN A YEAR

GROWING OUR YOUTH

Seat children in the chancel (south stalls) when they enter church after Sunday school.

Develop children's music-making within the service through the formation of a children's choir (or children's participation in the church choir) and the playing of instruments.

Explore the possibility of a children's community choir based at St Andrew's (perhaps in collaboration with Sandhurst School).

Trial Messy Church in the early summer, perhaps using the vicarage garden as a temporary venue. A suitable leader will need to be found.

Hold children's sports and games (e.g. table tennis) after the Sunday service. Supervised activities could take place in the Vestry Room once the choir has finished changing.

Stewards to place a special emphasis on presenting a welcoming face to young families.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Fully adopt the Diocese of Southwark *Anti-Racism Charter* and, through intentional action, "actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice" at St Andrew's. Ensure that all those with leadership or committee responsibility undergo mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as proposed by the Diocese: "Diversity training helps individuals and churches address the issues of unconscious bias which arise in diverse communities. Everyone in a position of leadership, whether lay or ordained, needs to consider these matters. This includes clergy, Readers, SPAs, Pioneers, leaders of children's and young people's groups, and PCC members." *Discipleship and Ministry* brochure, spring 2024.

Improve communication, for example distribute copies of the *Weekly Newsletter* at post-service refreshments; promote our Thursday morning service; avoid or explain jargon when addressing a wider audience in order to ensure that no one is left behind; convey key information and recent developments in any spoken notices in church. Make more effective use of the hall noticeboard, duplicating as appropriate the board at the back of the church.

Further widen the musical offering during services, looking beyond traditional sacred music and encouraging greater participation from both child and adult members of the congregation. Introduce a "children's music choice", whether live or recorded, in the recommended dedicated monthly family/child-friendly Sunday service (see 1–3 Years, Growing Our Youth).

OUTREACH

Open the church doors more – both for events and (with appropriate stewarding) at set times so that people can walk in to look, reflect and pray.

Offer informal hospitality in church for local people. For example, when distributing hot cross buns during Holy Week, invite the local people we encounter to come in for refreshments.

Open a conversation with the congregation about catering specifically to the needs of the more deprived local people, including the provision of food and hot drinks to the homeless.

Reach out to local residents through the St Andrew's Community Garden.

1–3 YEARS

GROWING OUR YOUTH

Hold one dedicated family/child-friendly Sunday service per month with a “children’s music choice”, whether live or recorded.

Introduce a regular Messy Church event if the early summer trial is successful.

Develop further opportunities for children’s games and sports activities.

Develop closer working relationships with local schools and uniformed groups.

Develop a Religious Education module based on the sacred art at St Andrew’s – the windows, wood-carvings, Stations of the Cross and other imagery – for use as a young people’s learning activity.

Invite occasional speakers to address the young people of St Andrew’s and the local community.

Engage a part-time Youth Worker.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Hold refreshments at the back of the church to encourage the participation of those who don’t generally go through to the Hall and those in wheelchairs or with prams, and to avoid splitting the congregation in two after the service. Effect the necessary minimal changes to the plumbing to facilitate this.

While retaining our traditional Sunday worship in the catholic tradition, consider a mixed ecology of services and aim for a degree of variety in our worship both online and in person. At the same time, properly embed any additional or alternative services in our church life – the object is not to create separate congregations that never meet.

Gift spotting (nurturing leadership and other gifts): encourage members of our congregation not just to attend church but to play an active role in church life and to become involved in lay ministry in its widest sense, including vocation to licensed and commissioned lay ministry.

Get to know and understand each other better through prayer groups, study groups and social events and activities.

Provide more, and a wider range of, events in church and hall (promote the active use of all our facilities).

OUTREACH

Without altering the essence of our traditional worship at St Andrew’s, explore and, if possible, initiate some form of Fresh Expressions (in addition to the aforementioned Messy Church) for young adults. Fresh Expressions are informal, interactive Christian worship events, new forms of church that emerge within contemporary culture and engage primarily with those who “don’t go to church”.

Reintroduce online services.

Initiate a community café/food kitchen/food redistribution service. It may also be possible to develop a manifestation of Fresh Expressions within the context of a St Andrew’s café.

Conduct a thorough skills and connections audit to enable St Andrew's to draw more effectively upon the talents of its members.

Organise a Time Bank for the exchange of personal services free of charge among members of the congregation and the community.

Plan and initiate a programme of Hall and church events and classes that take into account the need for free or very low-cost opportunities ("everything costs a tenner these days!"). Conduct a local needs audit: what could we offer that's not available locally (Goldsmiths, Abbotshall HLC, Corbett Community Library); collaborate with community groups.

Offer Bible study/prayer groups to the wider community on St Andrew's premises.

Green/eco issues. In addition to the Community Garden, reach out through our renewable energy project (working towards net zero), which, by reducing heating costs, should help us to become a more open church as well as helping to safeguard the integrity of creation.

Provide a 'hot-working space' in some part of the St Andrew's complex.



3–5 YEARS

GROWING OUR YOUTH

As the demand and opportunities develop, establish longer-term goals for the youth offering at St Andrew's in partnership with our Youth Worker.

OUTREACH

As finances and funding allow, open up additional community spaces in the Hall block in order to create a vibrant church and community hub in which events, classes and group sessions of all kinds can run concurrently, helping to make St Andrew's Church and *Halls* the beating heart of the parish.



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