

VISION FEEDBACK

Our vision is to be a church that is:

CHRIST CENTRED AND JESUS SHAPED.

That reflects the character of Jesus by being HUMBLER, SIMPLER and BOLDER.



That focusses its energy on four priorities:

1. exploring, releasing and supporting each other to live out our faith in everyday life
2. encouraging variety and creativity in our worship, mission and practice
3. being a church that's younger and more diverse
4. pursuing social justice for all

In June we asked church members to complete a survey on this new vision. We have currently received around 60 responses to that questionnaire, which amounts to more than 12,000 words of feedback! Respondents come from a wide range of backgrounds, and include people who are new to the church, as well as longstanding members. The vision working group identified that we've received almost no feedback from children and families, so will approach those people separately in order to seek their input into this process.

Below are some of the messages and key themes that are reflected in the feedback, that the vision working group felt stood out.

KEY THEMES THAT EMERGE FROM THE FEEDBACK

The following themes stood out across all the feedback:

- **Welcome** – we are an open, welcoming and inclusive church and that is one of our main strengths
- **Teaching and learning** – people have a thirst for God, and there is a desire to grow as Christians
- **Small groups** – people are looking for places to connect with others, and there is a desire for *multiple communities* within the wider church community
- **Youth engagement** – people of all ages want to see children and young people engaged and involved in the life of the church
- **Social justice** – people feel most strongly about the issues of poverty and inequality
- **Worship** – people are keen for us to develop our worship, and there was a strong theme of music running through the feedback (although it is unclear if this is more pronounced as we're not allowed to sing in church at present).

RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Why did you first come to this particular church?



The key message from this question is that people come to our churches because they're LOCAL, and we're close to where they live. It's also notable that people came to the Good Shepherd because of **life events** e.g. baptisms & banns of marriage, **personal contacts**, and **Christmas services**. The following quote was also of interest:

"My daughter was attending brownies and every Tuesday evening I used to look forwards to reading the prayer on the door. The more I read the prayer, the closer I was feeling to God."

If this isn't your first time, what made you keep coming?



The working group recognised that ‘taste’ is not a factor in people choosing to worship at our churches. People opt for convenience over taste.

Notable phrases here include:

“People love God here”

“The service is modern but not too modern.”

“We found a welcoming and loving community of God’s people.”

“friendly”

“Inclusive church”

What is it that helps you to feel close to God?



The working group felt there were a wide range of responses here, although the emphasis placed on music in worship surprised us. It’s unclear whether this is because we are not allowed to sing at present.

How do you feel our church helps you live out your faith over the week?

The working group felt there were a wide range of responses here also. People were particularly appreciative of sermons linked to life.

“Different services - Taize / more contemporary music”

“I find some of the readings and service format difficult to get my head around.”

“I do miss the BCP. That said, I would rather worship in a lively crowded church than a cold empty formal one.”

Do you feel that you belong to this church? Why is that?



The key messages from this questions are that the church is welcoming and inclusive. The other notable theme is that **opportunities to serve** enable people to belong. The working group felt that **diversity, representation** and **participation** were important words.

“I first saw a poster during a fete saying everyone was included even LGBT+ which meant I then suggested to my wife we go to the good shepherd at Christmas... I had stopped going to a catholic church when I realised I was gay as I felt excluded. But every time we had gone to the good shepherd everyone was so friendly and we felt like we belonged even though we only attended Easter and Christmas.”

When asked what stops people from belonging, one person replied:

“Not enough people like oneself either in the congregation or leading worship. Not being invited to take on a role, or the feeling that things have to be done a certain way or that you have to be a certain sort of person to take part.”

“People not knowing who we are / our names. Not being represented in images / food / songs. Not being noticed when absent.”

SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In September the PCC will spend some time discussing this feedback. The vision working group are encouraging the PCC to consider **which of the key themes are most important for us right now?** (*See page 1 for key themes*)

They propose that a small number of new working groups are formed to begin to explore two or three of the key themes in more detail. The idea would be to draw together a working group which includes people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. The working group may then seek further input from within and beyond the church, in order to understand that theme more fully. The overall purpose of each of the working groups would be to develop and reshape our ministry in order to fulfil our vision and our four priorities.

Vision Working Group, July 2021

Paul Adlington, Trudi Bramson, Min Britton, Jevan Green, Cherry Murdoch, Laurie Roberts, Bridget Shepherd, Nick Shepherd