



CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE
AND MAPLEDURHAM
ST PETER | ST MARGARET | ST JOHN

PARTNERSHIP FOR
MISSIONAL CHURCH

PMC

Becoming a Christ-like community

A vision for the parish that came out of joint work between PCC, CLTs and the PMC team and came through road-testing involving the APCM, a parish PMC event and consultation with Church Forums; plus the PCC's scrutiny of the reactions.

The theology behind it stems from St Paul's understanding of the Church being the Body of Christ or the Bride of Christ. Our calling (1 Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5) is to become like Jesus or, in St Paul's words to be "imitators of Christ".

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus calls his disciples to "follow me" - not just embark on a journey with him but pattern our lives after him: to love one another, to wash one another's feet, to heal the sick, and proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God.

To become a Christ-like community.

Vision for Embodiment

(otherwise known as Putting it into Practice)

“Becoming a Christ-like community” is what PMC calls a Missional Vocation Statement (let’s call it a vision).

To help define what this means for our parish, PMC then calls for a Vision for Embodiment to show how our vision is missional, incarnational, related to our PMC work, and concrete enough that we can expect to identify progress over time. Let’s call that ‘putting it into practice’.

Jesus is the model and prototype of the Church. We are to be like him. At the end of John’s Gospel (ch20 v21), the risen Jesus gathers the disciples and says:

“As the Father sent me, so I send you.”

We believe that “Becoming a Christ-like community” is God’s call to mission for Caversham, Thameside and Mapledurham Parish.

God calls us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, into a journey of transformation. We are called to grow our own personal living faith in Jesus Christ, we are called to grow our church communities to be the body of Jesus in this world, and we are called to partner with those around us to grow God’s Kingdom in our wider communities.

Change is something we both expect and desire: God is at work here and he wants us all to thrive and grow, whether inside or outside our church congregations. We note that transformation involves letting go as well as taking up: much of what has been valuable in the past continues to be so in the present, but other things must be laid down so that new gifts from God may be received.

God calls us to be a worshipping community: in personal prayer and time with scripture; in gathering for collective worship in prayer, music and sacrament; in shared hospitality and fellowship; and in working together for justice, mercy and peace. It is as we work with Jesus and as we spend time with him that we grow more like him. As we grow more like Jesus, as we more and more see others as he sees them, we become more effective at working with him in our communities as they become more like him.

God calls us to be confident in our faith and to help others come to a living faith in Christ. He calls us to be people of grace and mercy: encouraging, supporting and building up those around us. And he calls us to be a prophetic voice in church and wider community: ready to challenge injustice and to speak truth in the face of power. As salt, light and yeast we are called to make a real difference out of proportion to our numbers.

Our vision is that, more and more, when people see us they see Jesus within and through us, and that, more and more, Jesus is visible in the people and communities of Caversham. Our calling is not just for ourselves but for all in the part of God's kingdom where he has placed us. We seek to be people who know Jesus through making him known.