**Important Update - St Mary’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement**

St Mary’s is no longer in the position it was eighteen months ago. During the coronavirus pandemic we have learnt and adapted to doing and being Church in new ways:

* Livestreaming and recording services and assemblies
* Visiting care homes via Zoom
* Worshipping at home through electronic and hardcopy resources
* Praying and caring for one another via our Prayer Partners.

During this time our ministry and leadership team has grown, and our congregation has also changed and grown as well. As well as retaining what has been good in the past, St Mary’s needs to think about mission and ministry priorities in the present ‘new normal’ and also looking ahead to the future. None of us are getting any younger!

Churches often think about their Vision and Mission Statements in times of crisis and transition; setting themselves a path to walk along and setting goals to develop and grow as the Body of Christ.

The process is an act of discipleship. As we come out of this time of pandemic and crisis, we need to think, pray and action how we might become the best Christian body that St Mary’s can be.

With this in mind, on Saturday 18th September St Mary’s PCC (Parochial Church Council) met for an Away Day at Sacrista Prebend, the Diocesan Retreat House in Southwell. We prayed together, talked and listened together, and shared the Eucharist together. It was apparent in the atmosphere of the day, and in the way that folk worked together, that God was with us! The purpose of the day was to pray, plan and discern where God might be leading us as a church both now and in the years to come – beginning with us having a clear vision, and a missional route to help us achieve that vision.

Following is an outline of the process we took and the decisions we prayerfully and carefully considered and made, culminating in our new Vision Statement and Mission Statement for St Mary’s. A Vision Statement ‘advertises’ who we are. A Mission Statement unpacks how we are working toward making the vision happen.

**St Mary’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement - The Process**

**1)St Mary’s Core Values**

First of all the PCC considered St Mary’s core values. Our core values are the principles, ideas, morals and guiding beliefs which are central to St Mary’s as a church. Our core values are the guiding principles that determine the behaviour and actions of the congregation.

Each PCC member considered the following questions and then shared their answers with the whole group, and we looked to see where any consensus lay. The questions were:

1. How do you describe St Mary’s?
2. How do people in the town describe St Mary’s?
3. Which churches/Christian leaders, modern, historical or biblical, do you admire and why?
4. What are the three best compliments you have ever heard made about St Mary’s?
5. What is the one thing St Mary’s does best?
6. What is one thing St Mary’s does not do well?
7. If there is one thing you wish you never had to do again in church, what would it be?
8. If there was one thing you want your children/grandchildren/spouse/friend to learn at church, what would it be?

You might like to consider your own answers!

From that discussion, the PCC then narrowed down St Mary’s core values to the following; the first core value listed being the one that was mentioned the most (and so on).

Worship

Guidance and Teaching

Fellowship

Mission and Outreach

Pastoral Care

Children’s Work

Teamwork

Prayer

This important list of words helped keep us focussed in our further discussions and helped us to prioritise portions of our Vision and Mission Statements.

**2)St Mary’s Vision Statement**

After deciding on St Mary’s list of core values, the PCC then went on to begin looking at St Mary’s Vision Statement. A Vision Statement is:

* Brief: one sentence or less; sometimes only a phrase.
* Big-picture: a hope or a dream of what St Mary’s is about or what we can be.
* Something that everyone can agree on.
* Can be the same as a slogan: a way to advertise who we are (promoting St Mary’s on our noticeboards, notice sheets, magazines, posters, flyers, social media and websites.

The PCC revisited how we and other people described St Mary’s, and considered if we wanted to change that description, or for it to remain the same.

We also considered the following when putting together our Vision Statement:

* Does our Vision Statement give people hope?
* Does our Vision Statement inspire people to action?
* Would other people want to be part of a group who affirmed this Vision Statement?
* Does our Vision Statement actually say something about St Mary’s, or does it just sound nice? If it didn’t say something about St Mary’s, then we knew we needed to go back to thinking about our core values again!

We wanted a Vision Statement that every PCC member would agree upon. Whilst our Mission Statement might have parts or priorities that not everyone will like, our Vision Statement should be affirmed by everyone investing in implementing it.

Referring back to our core values of worship, guidance and teaching, fellowship, mission and outreach, pastoral care, children’s work, teamwork and prayer, the PCC felt that the following aspects of our mission and ministry were important:

* St Mary’s is striving to seek God, and to worship God.
* St Mary’s is aiming to serve God and our communities
* St Mary’s is looking to grow wider and deeper as a church, and to be inclusive and diverse in our mission and ministry.

And so, the PCC drew up the following Vision Statement which was agreed upon unanimously:

***ST MARY’S IS A DOWN TO EARTH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SERVING AND WORSHIPPING GOD BY SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS WITH ALL.***

**3)St Mary’s Mission Statement**

Having agreed upon St Mary’s Vision Statement, the PCC next turned to St Mary’s Mission Statement. In contrast to our Vision Statement, a Mission Statement is:

* Concise plans, goals and actions for the PCC and congregation.
* Also big-picture but with more details about areas of church programming; it leaves out minutiae but addresses in broad strokes the whole of the church organisation.
* Can be broken down into specific segments.
* Verb-orientated e.g. ‘creating’, ‘renewing’, ‘teaching’, ‘guiding’, ‘worshipping’, ‘serving’, ‘growing’, ‘being’, ‘doing’.

Then, as a group, the PCC determined three core areas of mission and ministry at St Mary’s. These were:

Worship

Children, young people and families (but also not forgetting older members of the congregation)

Bible Study and Teaching

We discussed specific short-term and long-term goals in each area of those core ministries. Which goals would help us to live out our core ministries and mission? What do we need to do as a whole church to help us to achieve what we want to do and how we want St Mary’s to be?

From this discussion the PCC began to put our Mission Statement together. First of all, we wanted to tell people what our core values were (worship, guidance and teaching, fellowship, mission and outreach, pastoral care, children’s work, teamwork and prayer) in a way that identified them as the most important pieces of St Mary’s mission and ministry. We wanted our Mission Statement to tell people the most important thing we want them to know about St Mary’s. And we wanted our Mission Statement to tell people what we hope they will gain from coming to St Mary’s church.

And so, as a group, we put it our Mission Statement together and the PCC members agreed upon it anaminously!

***WE STRIVE TO BE CREATIVE IN OUR WORSHIP, OFFERING A VARIETY OF SERVICES BY TRAINING AND EQUIPPING, RESOURCING AND ENCOURAGING THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD.***

***WE AIM TO BE A CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS - OUTLOOK LOOKING; A VISIBLE PRESENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. WE AIM TO BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL PEOPLE AND ALL AGES.***

***WE ARE REACHING OUT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES BY BULDING LINKS WITH SCHOOLS AND ENCOURAGING FAMILY FRIENDLY WORSHIP.***

***OUR MISSION AND MINISTRY IS BASED ON THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE AND THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS INSPIRES AND INFORMS ALL OUR ACTIVITIES.***

**St Mary’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement –**

**The Result and Way Forward**

After a full - and actually quite fun - day, in the context of prayer and fellowship, we had successfully drawn up St Mary’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement!

All we have to do now, is implement them, and live them out; and for this we need the prayers, help, volunteers and resources from the whole Body of Christ. And that is you, dear Reader.

Now St Mary’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement have been finalised, we need to use them. Our ministers (lay and ordained), church officers, PCC members, PCC Sub-Committees and congregation members need to use the Statements as a path for the present and future life of St Mary’s church.

Dear Reader, please share our Vision and Mission Statements frequently so they become part of our church’s life and witness. And may we be richly blessed by God as we reach out to one another, and all the people in our communities, and continue to foster and develop our ministry and mission together.

*Fr Andrew*

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