



St Andrew's Methodist Church

The Stow, Harlow. CM20 3AF

Mission Statement

Agreed by the Church Council on March 18th, 2018

Opening Statement

We at St Andrew's Methodist Church believe our mission is to do deeds and to speak words that make God's life-giving love real inside and outside of the church. Integral to this mission, we aim to bring as many people as we can to Christ, so that they might experience his saving love and share it with others. We also believe that it is part of our mission to redress social injustice and uphold the stewardship of creation. Our concern is both for the well-being of the individual and for the health of society.

Worship and Christian Education...

We take seriously our responsibility to share our faith with others. To this end, **our worship services will be inclusive and responsive to the spiritual needs of our wider community.** We want to welcome all people equally, to be sensitive to social diversity, and to provide a spiritual place where all feel strengthened for the tasks of Christian living.

In the next five years we will work hard at getting a balance of traditional and modern worship styles that respond to the needs of all who come into our church. Our Methodist heritage is rich with liturgy and hymnody, but there is also much that can be gained from new worship styles and contemporary Christian music. Our aim will be to make the most of both the old and the new.

We are particularly intent upon including children and young people in the life of our church. We already have a fairly strong Sunday Club and creche. **In the future, we will seek to build upon our children's work by improving family services, starting a Holiday Club, starting a youth group, and encouraging participation in wider church events such as 3generate.** The intention of all of these groups and efforts will be to bring our children to a strong and expressed Christian faith.

Although we have some very good lay people working with our young people, **we believe that it would help a lot if we could employ a part-time youth and children's worker.** We therefore feel that this is an avenue that we want to explore as soon as possible.

We currently have two Bible study groups, one house group and a Saturday morning drop-in prayer time. We believe that all of these groups play a key role in enabling people to express their faith and encourage one another in faith. **In the next year we will seek to develop a third Bible study for young parents. We will also encourage people to attend wider church events such as Spring Harvest (an evangelical time of refreshment) and Green Belt (a Summer arts, faith and justice festival).**

Fellowship...

A lot is already being done to strengthen our sense of community and fellowship. There is a women's fellowship, a friendship group, coffee mornings, monthly lunches, a play group, a Ghanaian Methodist Fellowship, occasional Church dinners, parties, and fetes. **In the future, we will also add an annual day in the park and an annual church weekend away.**

Society...

The needs of society, both in general and on our own door step, will never be far from our thoughts. We have a particular concern for those who are struggling with poverty, loneliness, depression, mental / physical illness, and addictions. **We will continue to support the Harlow Food Bank, Action for Children, the White Chapel Mission and the Hope for Harlow** initiative that has us providing shelter for homeless people one night a week in January and February. **We will also continue to work with the Stow businesses in developing a safer local habitat.**

Overseas Missions: we work throughout the year with children and adults in collecting for JMA, "Junior Mission for All". We also support Christian Aid week in May every year to raise funds for their work. In addition, the congregation and MWiB (Women's Fellowship) regularly collect for World Mission.

Property...

We are proud of our premises and believe that they are a precious resource for the extension of God's mission through us. Their primary purpose will always be for the Christian work of our own congregation. However, it is also part of work to serve the needs of the local community. Indeed, many different community groups currently use our buildings when we ourselves are not using them. A.A. groups, an Alzheimer's Group, a Diabetes Prevention group, Guides, and a Slimming World group are just some of the groups that we are happy to host in this way. We are also happy to host a Tamil Christian congregation that meets for worship and fellowship twice a month on Sunday evenings.

With a view to how much good work is done on our premises, it is important to us to keep them in a good state of repair. **In the next five years, we will continue to spend the money necessary so that our buildings and surroundings are attractive and comfortable all year round.**

We will also look at becoming a green church so that our property and premises are used in ways that are good for the environment and consistent with the gospel. Although this will take some effort and perhaps some money too, it stems from our desire to be faithful to Christ and good stewards of God's creation.

Conclusion

In the next five years we want our church to be a vital place of mission and service in Harlow. We pray that God will use us to help others, and we commit ourselves anew to Christ's service in this place.