



Vision and Strategy



Updated April 2023

St Michael's Church, Stoke Gifford

Our Vision

**Living to make a difference
by being a Christian heart
at the centre of our communities**

Our Strategic Aims

- Learning and Growing Together
- Sharing Jesus Together
- Serving Together

Introduction

The vision of the church is shared by a charity born from within St Michael's Church – St Michael's Church Centre Ltd (SMCC).

Put simply: The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is about vision, people and ministry, the SMCC is about the provision of quality space and facilities to support the vision of being 'A Christian heart at the centre of our communities'.

Over the years, structures have developed in an organic and sometimes reactive way – constant change is seen as a natural part of being a healthy, growing church.

This document sets out our vision and strategy and includes our underpinning values, key aims and objectives, and challenges and actions over the next three years to further the vision of St Michael's Church to be:

Living to make a difference by being a Christian heart at the centre of our communities

This vision and strategy document underpins the development plans of both the PCC and SMCC, and provides a focus and structure for our plans to achieve our vision and how we implement them.

The overall strategy covers the period from April 2021 to March 2024; however, this version focuses on April 2023 to March 2024.

Background

There has been a church on the site of St Michael's Church for hundreds of years.

Over the last 40 years the congregation of St Michael's has grown beyond all expectations. There are currently 361 worshippers on the electoral roll, but this by no means the best or only measure.

Our attendance is now a mixture of both in-person and online, with people regularly attending online from across the UK and even abroad.

Thousands of new homes have been built in Stoke Gifford, Stoke Park, Cheswick, Scholar's Chase and Harry Stoke over the past decade. In March 2006 we stepped out in faith and purchased land next to the Old School Rooms to build a new church and community centre to enable us to grow and serve the community in many new ways.

Our Heart of the Community project was launched in May 2012 and has been central to our vision to be a welcoming, thriving, sharing community that is truly living to make a difference. Every part of the project was designed to make a difference to the lives of people living here, to the life of the church and to the lives of those in need by:

- creating a spacious modern church and community centre with seating for 500 people, meeting rooms, offices, storage space and a purpose-built kitchen
- preserving, protecting and increasing the use of our historic church building
- refurbishing the Old School Rooms, and
- making a difference well beyond our parish by funding projects locally, nationally and internationally in collaboration with mission partners and charities in the UK and around the world



Values

These are the values we hold to as a church community. They characterise everything we do.

Continuity and Change

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. But, the gospel of His salvation must be proclaimed afresh in each generation.

Cross and Resurrection

We honour what Jesus did for us on the cross, and embrace the cross for ourselves, while receiving the power of His resurrection to set us free.

Gracious and Truthful

We aim to be kind and generous in the way we respond to others whilst clearly communicating what we believe and why we believe it.

Leadership and Every-member Ministry

We believe in missional church leaders and that every Christian serves like Jesus in their home, church, work and life.

Mission and Community

The Church must reach the lost and the poor, and work for justice, as well as being a grace-filled community where people find relationship, healing, faith, hope and love.

Natural and Supernatural

We believe in natural reason, wisdom, skill and medicine. We are also learning to operate in the supernatural gifts of the Spirit to minister as Jesus did.

Now and Not Yet of the Kingdom

We live in the good news of the Kingdom of God and expect signs and wonders; we also know that suffering will be part of life until Jesus returns and makes things new.

Transcendence and Presence

We celebrate God's transcendent majesty, at the same time experiencing His intimate presence as we encounter Him in heartfelt worship.

Unity and Diversity

We unite under the banner of Christ, and honour differences in worship style and emphasis.

Word and Spirit

We believe and teach the Bible as the written word of God, whilst hearing and obeying the voice of the Spirit speaking to us individually and collectively.

Young and Old

We need the wisdom of age – aligned with the enthusiastic passion of younger people.

Our Strategic Objectives - Long Term

Learning and Growing Together

- Strengthen how we learn to follow Jesus.
- Grow more like Him through fellowship, prayer and Bible study.
- Multiply Life Groups.

Sharing Jesus Together

- Improve how we reach people by sharing the good news of Jesus with those we live and work with.
- Build on our welcome and support for UWE students, and other students and young adults.
- Provide for the expanding population in Stoke Gifford, Stoke Park, Cheswick, Scholar's Chase and Harry Stoke.
- Work with our Mission Partners to enable evangelism in the UK and abroad.

Serving Together

- Discover what our God-given gifts and talents are and encourage each other to use them in a variety of ways that generate goodwill, community regeneration and evangelism.
- Resource how we release people to serve, support and grow the Kingdom.
- Bless and encourage projects that serve communities both through our own work and through our Mission Partners.

Our Strategic and Specific Objectives

April 2023 – March 2024

Learning and Growing Together

- Equip Life Groups to multiply, thereby following Jesus by responding to His command to; "Go and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19).
- Strengthen and equip the current Life Group leaders to be more effective in their leadership & support them through Life Group leaders' clusters.
- Train more Life Group leaders to sustain growth.
- Leadership training and opportunities for young people and children. Development of leaders in ministry
- Learning how to integrate new church members from every culture and background.
- Refocus our prayer life of Church, including prayer ministry teams and prophetic ministry.
- Improve and strengthen our focused men's and women's ministry. (Women's group Re:fresh added in February 2023)
- Equip families to take responsibility for worship and prayer at home, vision and priorities in place during Autumn 2023

Sharing Jesus Together

- Resource Church Development in 2023 - including resourcing of wider youth ministry and potential church graft focus.
- Maintain a variety of 'invitational' events' where people can meet Jesus in a range of settings, including more Alpha courses.
- Establish more mid-week gatherings to meet the needs of students and young adults in Stoke Gifford and new housing areas.
- Encourage people to move into new housing areas for the purpose of serving, sharing Jesus and growing Church.
- Strengthen the evangelistic reach of Forest Church and enable discipleship.
- Establish detached youth work in New Housing Areas.
- Develop appropriate 'Welcome Strategy' for all Sunday services.
- Strengthen the evangelistic reach of the monthly service in Stoke Gifford retirement village.
- Continue to strengthen our relationships with our Mission Partners.

Serving Together

- Work with South Gloucestershire Council as a Hub for Resettling Communities
- Encourage all members of St Michael's to find an avenue of service.
- Develop appropriate strategies to encourage serving that reflects the cultural diversity of St Michael's.
- Explore processes that encourage representative leadership.
- Enhance Mental Health Care provision in our communities.
- More involvement in social justice (The Noise, Foodbank, Warm Space, Bristol Night Shelter etc).
- Continue running Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing groups within the community (eg Youth, student & school).
- Develop Over 65's ministry.
- Develop new ways of widening the ministry of the Coffee Shop.
- Continue to receive monthly updates from our mission partners and where practicable, encourage church members to visit and bless their projects.
- Continue to implement our strategies for Eco Church.(Repair Cafe established in 2022)

Financing the Strategy in 2023-2024

How?

The work of St Michael's Church is supported entirely by the generosity of those who give. Each year there are two gift days. The May gift day is aimed at resourcing primarily building and infrastructure projects (SMCC Ltd). The November gift day is aimed at resourcing the ministry and mission of the church (PCC).

What?

Alongside our general day-to-day expenditure, the following areas have been identified as key financial priorities to enable our strategic aims.

Buildings

Complete the improvements to the historic church within the next 12 – 18 months. Accelerate the repayment of the external loans and the mission tithe over the next 3 years, so that the Centre becomes self-sustaining by May 2024. Complete the works inside the auditorium – improved audio/visual capabilities, mechanical ventilation and air handling and aesthetics. Financial outlay: £631,000.(reduced from £1 million)

Mental Healthcare Provision

To work with existing agencies to resource our response post Covid, in education settings and community
Financial outlay: £30,000 - Grant funding not yet forthcoming

New Housing

Strengthen community links in Cheswick, Harry Stoke and Scholar's Chase, which all sit within our parish. Call people to move into New Housing Areas to begin new Life Groups.
Financial outlay: As per budget

Youth & Children's Ministry

Invest in our teams to resource the expanding ministry and lead our amazing volunteers.
Financial outlay: As per budget

Young Adults

We sense a call to develop our students & young adults ministry to meet the specific needs of this generation in the current climate.
Financial outlay: As per budget

Challenges

- How do we retain and develop our value of unity and diversity at our different services?
- How do we encourage and support the growing cultural diversity at St Michael's, including leadership development?
- How do we retain our values of unity and diversity in an era when traditional Christian beliefs are challenged?
- How do we communicate with worshippers who access information digitally, without excluding those who don't?
- How do we welcome newcomers, and encourage them to serve in the life of the church?
- How do we encourage people to give generously of their time and money to achieve our vision?
- How do we develop ministry for new housing areas?
- How do we develop the aesthetics of our buildings?
- How do we obtain Silver Eco Church accreditation with A Rocha UK?
- How do we effectively plan for succession in leadership and team members?
- How do we develop contributing leadership in Bristol based initiatives eg the Mix (local area youth) the Noise (local area serving)?
- How do we facilitate conferences within the Centre that extend the Kingdom?