

**ST JOHN'S HOXTON**  
**MISSION ACTION**  
**PLAN 2021 - 2026**



**A BEACON OF HOPE**  
**FOR HOXTON**



**ST**  
**JOHN'S**  
**HOXTON**

# VICAR'S INTRODUCTION

On Thursday 22nd June 1826, St John's Hoxton opened its doors for the very first time to the people of Hoxton for public worship.

Dedicated to St John the Baptist, whose feast day is celebrated on 24th June each year, it was a new church building and congregation to cater to the growing population of the Hoxton neighbourhood. As the church building approaches its 200th birthday, the mission to the neighbourhood of Hoxton remains as urgent and pressing as ever. Although the world has changed beyond recognition over the past 195 years, the need for every woman, man and child to 'encounter the love of God in Jesus Christ' remains the same.



Our vision is to be 'a beacon of hope for Hoxton' – and we strive towards achieving this vision as we Worship God, Make Disciples, Share Jesus and Transform Hoxton. The Scripture which inspires our vision is 2 Corinthians 5:19 – 'that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.' We believe that God's purpose for our local church is that everyone woman, man and child might come to experience what it means to be reconciled to God in Christ. We hope and pray this will result in people confessing the Lordship of Christ in their lives and dedicating themselves to following Jesus in Christian faith. But we also strive for the common good of our neighbourhood, so that people may experience the goodness of the kingdom of God made manifest in their midst regardless of whether they profess Christian faith or not. We are inspired by Jeremiah 29:4-7, in which we're invited to 'seek the peace and prosperity' of the neighbourhood in which God has placed us.

Over the past 11 years since I began my ministry here, we have witnessed God's hand at work among us time and time again. The church family here at St John's has grown in number, but also in depth and reach. I'm thankful for the amazing leaders that God has raised up from among the congregation as well as those he has called to join us for a season to serve as labourers in his harvest-field. Indeed, the measure of our growth is not just how many have come to join us at St John's, but also how many have been sent to serve in mission and ministry across the wider church. The past 18 months have profoundly shaken the world around us through the COVID pandemic, and yet I have had cause to be thankful for the compassion, generosity and creativity with which members of St John's Hoxton have responded and adapted to bring hope, comfort and love to a neighbourhood in need. As we turn towards the next 5 years we're all uncertain what the future holds, but I'm confident that 'he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Phil 1:6).

**Revd Graham Hunter**  
**September 2021**

# VALUES

It is sometimes said that 'culture eats vision for breakfast'!  
We want to ensure the culture of our church remains healthy, and we seek to see the following values underpinning all that we do:

## ROOTED

- We are confidently Christian: we're focused on prayer and worship; we are attentive to the voice of God in Scripture; and we work within the inherited structures of the church.
- We are committed to loving and serving Hoxton. We want to be ambassadors and agents of the kingdom of God in this particular part of London.
- We are rooted in our relationships to the wider church: with our immediate Anglican neighbours in Hoxton, the Hackney Deanery and across the Diocese, but also with Christians from other traditions. We will honour the gifts of God in every tradition, and humbly seek to work and learn together.

## RELATIONAL

- We are committed to sharing life together with all its ups and downs – rejoicing together and weeping together.
- We want fun, food and friendship to be hallmarks of our church: welcome and hospitality a fundamental part of our approach to our corporate life.
- We're cautious about making any negative judgements about people – and want to embrace the great diversity and variety of people in our neighbourhood.
- We are determined to pay particular attention to the biblical justice issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. We seek to remain a multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural church family in which strangers become friends.



## RESPONSIVE

- We're responsive to the changing shape and nature of our church and neighbourhood, and we take time to continually adapt our models of mission and ministry to reflect the changing context. We're happy to experiment creatively in mission and ministry, and we recognise that fruitfulness is not always based directly on short-term visible outcomes.
- We want to make sure our outreach and compassionate ministry is based on real rather than perceived need
- We want our church ministries to give expression to the variety of gifts and vocations of our members – not fitting people into a predetermined model.

## RISK-TAKING

- We trust in a God who is able to do 'immeasurably more' than we can ask or imagine – our experience over the past years has backed this up.
- We will be attentive to the voice of the Spirit, and willing to step out in faith and adventurous living.
- We will not shy away from making risky or uncomfortable changes if we believe that God is calling us into something new.

# FOUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The key priorities listed here are designed to summarise the wide variety of mission objectives listed further down, as well as to give focus to those projects and opportunities that will invariably emerge over the coming years.

**1**

## **A Thriving Church Family**

### **Worshipping God**

We believe that healthy, thriving congregations in which people are welcome and nurtured in Christian community will be the best means of mission and evangelism at our disposal. We will continue to invest time, energy and resources in ensuring that the worship experience of our Sunday services is excellent. This means that welcome, hospitality, music ministry, liturgy, teaching and preaching as well as kids and youth ministry will be continually evaluated, developed and improved.

**2**

## **A Relentless Concern for Kids & Youth**

### **Nurturing Faith**

Over the past ten years, and indeed even earlier, a feature of the mission of St John's Hoxton has been its focus on youth and children's ministry. This is both our gift and responsibility. Although the demographic profile of our neighbourhood has changed over the past decade, it remains the case that we have a very young parish population, with a particularly high proportion of children and youth. We have maintained, and will continue to maintain, a bias in our staffing plans towards resourcing mission and ministry amongst young people.

### 3

## #LoveHoxton

### Conserving our Heritage

Our building conservation project has developed over the past 5 years and has helped us clarify the vision: we now describe it as ONE PROJECT, with TWO PHASES, and THREE PRINCIPLES. The project remains '#LoveHoxton' – an ambitious conservation and redevelopment project. It has two phases: a church conservation phase, and a community development phase. It has three principle objectives: CONSERVE the historic Grade II\* listed building, including undertaking repairs to the building, and adaptations to make it fit for purpose in 21st century ministry; CREATE new spaces for church and community use – in particular the redevelopment of the crypt space, and the construction of an annexe space for various programmes; CONTRIBUTE around 30 genuinely affordable, permanently rented flats for the local neighbourhood to help alleviate the housing crisis and also provide new educational spaces for the primary school and surrounding community.

### 4

## Beacon Project

### Serving our Neighbourhood

We want to explore the creation of a new social transformation project called 'The Beacon Project'. This is a result of seeing a wide range of social justice and social transformation programmes running over the past few years, but without strategic oversight, evaluation or connectedness. The vision of the Beacon Project would be to create a vehicle with the resources to respond to local need in our neighbourhood, but to do so in an integrated manner, with appropriate management structures for evaluation and impact monitoring. We hope that this would also create the fundraising capacity to enable some small projects to be supported beyond the short timescales of small grants programmes – for example, the Sing For A Change community organising choir project. It will also provide a clear platform for partnership with other local organisations such as the Hackney Foodbank, Ivy St Family Centre and others.

# MISSION OBJECTIVES

We have set some specific objectives for ourselves to work towards over the coming 5-year period. Many of the objectives are a continuation of healthy mission and ministry activities which have already been established and need to be sustained. However, there are some new proposals for further exploration, development and implementation. In each case, we have indicated whether the objective is specific to a particular year or phase of the 5-year plan. The plan will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Parish Church Council and Senior Leadership Team.





# WORSHIP GOD



Reintroduce a 2nd worship service on a Sunday afternoon to provide capacity for congregational growth as well as leadership development opportunities

Yr 1

Continue with our aim to grow the regular worshipping community to around 5% of our parish population by the year 2026

Yr 1-5

Evaluate the innovations of 2020-21 concerning 'online church, and determine whether and how to proceed with live-streamed services

Yr 1

Adapt the pattern of Holy Communion at Sunday services to alternate between morning and afternoon services each week, providing more space for prayer ministry

Yr 1

Prioritise prayer in the life of the church by:

Yr 1

- Building a prayer ministry team
- Initiating a weekly early morning prayer meeting
- Initiating a monthly evening prayer meeting
- Renewing a quarterly 'half night of prayer'

Plan a special celebratory worship service to mark 200 years of St John's Hoxton in 2026

Yr 4-5

# MAKE DISCIPLES

Develop 'Recovery Year' Pastoral Care Team to focus on calling and visiting church members who have been particularly affected by the COVID pandemic

Yr 1

- Continue regular provision of the Sanctuary Course to support mental and emotional health

Place priority focus on the role of Connect Groups for discipleship with the aim of establishing 6 regular midweek Connect Groups by the middle of 2022 and then adding 2 groups each year as the church congregation grows

Yr 1-5

- Encourage members of Connect Groups to also form prayer triplets to help support their spiritual growth

Include within our annual congregation audit a new set of questions designed to help church members evaluate their growth in faith and discipleship

Yr 1-5

Create 2-3 facilitated workshop opportunities for exploration of the Living in Love & Faith material

Yr 1

Maintain a special focus on children's ministry by:

Yr 1-5

- Relaunching SJH Kids on Sundays with 3 groups running (Pre-school & Reception; Yrs 1-3; Yrs 4-6)
- Delivering SJH Kids midweek through two Kids' Connect Groups (Yrs 1-3 and 4-6).
- Supporting the provision of kids' ministry at all other Sunday services offered.
- Ensuring our staffing plan resources the development of new kids' ministry leaders.
- Working in close partnership with SJB Primary School through provision of School Chaplain services.



Maintain a special focus on youth ministry by:

Yr 1-5

- Investing in the theological education of our youth team.
- Ensuring our staffing plan resources the development of new youth ministry leaders.
- Sustain a familiar pattern of regular youth groups open to all local youth.
- Develop termly special events including youth residentials

Continue the Local Action Teams (Outreach, Engagement, Depth) established as part of the Organising for Growth project for the leadership development of congregation members

Yr 1-5

Develop materials to support post-Alpha discipleship and church assimilation:

- A 'Christian Basics' Connect Group
- 'Welcome Home' materials to help people assimilate into church life and culture through course sessions
- 'Following Jesus' materials to help people learn some of the basics of Christian life through podcasts

Yr 1

Yr 2

Yr 3

# SHARE JESUS



Deliver the Alpha course on a termly basis, utilising in-person, online, daytime and shortened versions of the course.

Yr 1-5

Relaunch Live At St John's as a means of enabling church members to show hospitality to the wider neighbourhood through live music events.

Yr 1

Introduce 'evangelistic' appeal sections to key special events, including the Summer Fair, Beer & Carols and all kids' holiday clubs

Yr 1-5

Ensure that all of our activities and events have a clear connection to the worshipping community of the church – so that our Christian faith is known to be the motivating force behind all that we do.

Yr 1-5

# TRANSFORM HOXTON

Continue our active membership of Hackney & Islington Citizens, and encourage the development of leaders within our church through collaborative action for social change

Yr 1-5

Develop proposals for 'The Beacon Project' to become an 'umbrella' project for all social transformation work streams, including:

Yr 1-2

- Poverty Response: CAP Centre & CAP Money Course; partnership with Hackney Foodbank; tackling digital exclusion and fuel poverty.
- Health & Wellbeing: working with partners to deliver public health interventions; encouraging active lifestyles and healthy diets; supporting mental & emotional health through Sanctuary mental health courses; co-counselling; kids and youth counselling.
- Families Support: partnering with Ivy St Family Centre and Kids Matter to offer family support programmes.
- Youth Outreach: continuing to engage young people in the neighbourhood through football, open youth groups, and also the Experience Exchange project; exploring options for offering SEN Alternative Provision through partnership with TLG.
- Welcome & Integration: delivering programmes to support asylum seekers and immigrant communities, including partnering with other organisations to offer ESOL classes and support; developing awareness of prison ministry and caring for ex-offenders projects.

Develop funding strategy, seeking 3-year start-up funding to provide oversight and leadership in particular.

Launch and pilot the 'Beacon Project'

Yr 3-5

## LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

Redevelop church communications systems to encourage 'active listening' rather than 'passive hearing', including:	Yr 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redesigned website with improved mobile responsiveness</li><li>• Relaunch of My ChurchSuite as principal platform for all church member administration</li><li>• Developing email database segments for different audiences such as parents, youth, community events</li><li>• Cessation of WhatsApp and Facebook Groups</li><li>• Reduction of Text Messaging</li></ul>	
Increase revenue to enable us to maintain Senior Leadership Team consisting of Vicar, Associate Vicar / Curate and Operations Manager	Yr 1-5
Increase Common Fund offer to attain Parish Standard Cost by 2023	Yr 1-3
Establish a Stewardship Working Group co-chaired by Treasurer and Operations Manager to enable:	Yr 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least 50% of Electoral Roll to be engaged with regular financial giving to the church</li><li>• The development of a Legacy Giving programme to enable church members to provide in their wills</li></ul>	
Develop an 'Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion' policy to help guide our approach to welcoming people into the life of our church.	Yr 2
Establish church leadership training programme to enhance the development of interns, ordinands and placement students	Yr 2-5
Form a working group to develop a new 'measurement matrix' to help us evaluate the health and growth of the church.	Yr 1-2

## BUILDING AND PREMISES

Continue a programme of works to address items reported in the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection report	Yr 1
Seek to establish a project board with the Diocese of London and other key stakeholder to develop proposals for #LoveHoxton <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Form a PCC working group to contribute to this process</li></ul>	Yr 1
Renew a partnership with Groundworks London to address deterioration of the church gardens by seeking to develop a church gardens renewal project	Yr 1-3
Implement the proposals of the 2021 Business Plan to enable revenue maximisation	Yr 1-5
Develop a bookings page on our website with several package options, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 'Weddings' package</li><li>• 'Banquets' package</li><li>• 'Conferencing &amp; Events' package</li><li>• 'Music Video &amp; Photo Shoots' package</li></ul>	Yr 1

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For more information on how this Mission Action Plan was formed, as well as further details of mission and ministry partnerships, please visit [www.sjh.org.uk/map](http://www.sjh.org.uk/map)

We are a Church of England parish within the Diocese of London. We are led by the Bishop of London and overseen locally by the Bishop of Stepney.

We are committed to the Diocese of London's 10 year strategic plan: **London 2030**



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[stjohnshoxton.org.uk](http://stjohnshoxton.org.uk)