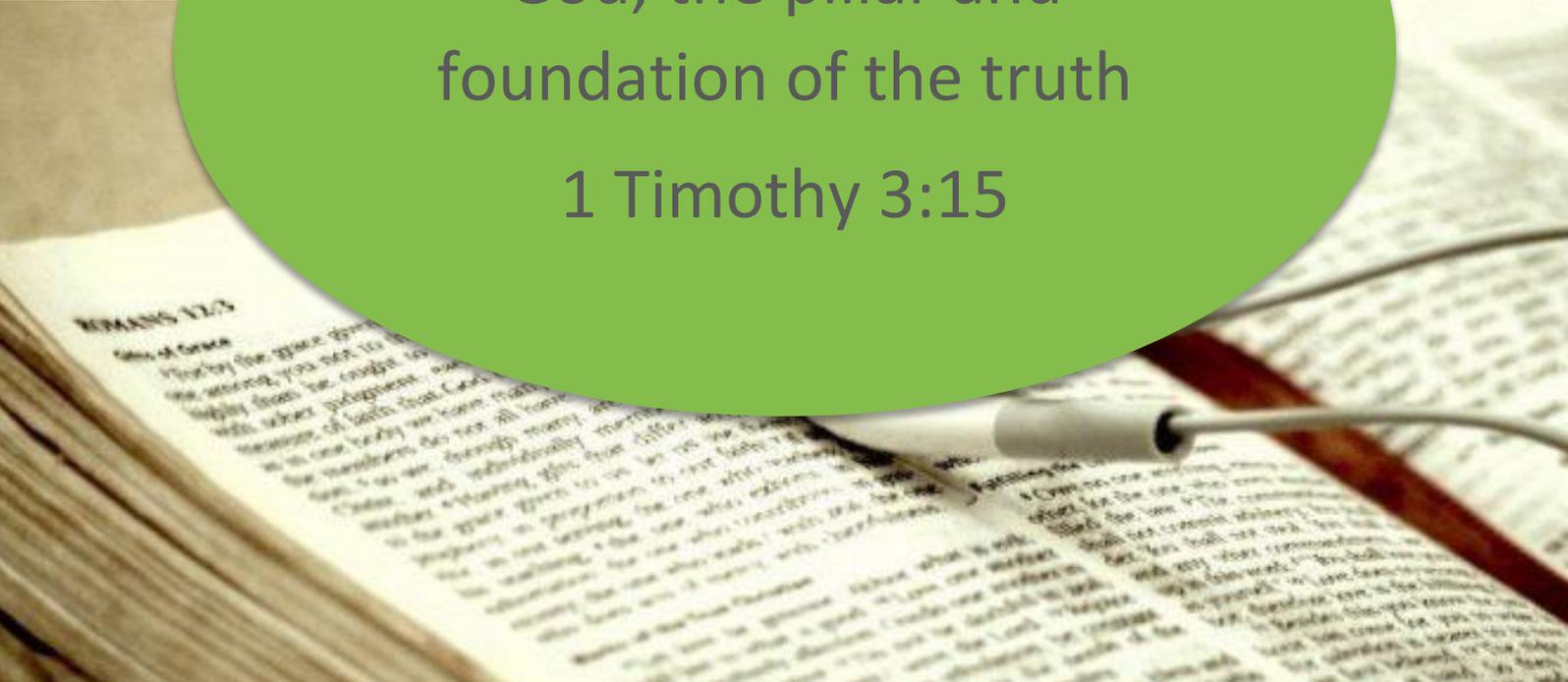




**all saints**  
going for growth in christ loose ⊕



the church of the living  
God, the pillar and  
foundation of the truth  
1 Timothy 3:15



## Introduction

This booklet explains the All Saints' Loose vision in the context of our convictions as a church. The starting point for our vision derives from Jesus' commission:

*<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28 NIV1984

Our Vision:

Going for Growth in Christ

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## Our Vision

Christ Focused



**CHRIST FOCUSED** – Our vision explicitly seeks to place Jesus Christ at the centre of who we are as a church. To ensure we do not drift from our moorings in Christ we seek to maintain the importance of Jesus Christ, and proclamation of Him as the central heart of what All Saints’ is about.

We seek to ensure that Christ is the purpose, the terminus as to what we’re about. We’re encouraged to ask ourselves as individuals and therefore as a church: “How big is Christ in my life, in my Christianity?”

*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*  
*Colossians 3:2,3*

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Evangelism

**EVANGELISM** – Our vision has evangelism at its core. The Church is formed **OUT OF** the proclamation of the Gospel, and the church is purposed **FOR** the proclamation of the gospel. That’s the DNA of the New Testament. There is a gospel imperative. We are the church. We are primarily called to be Gospel proclaimers. In Matthew 28 vs 18, 19 Christ “sends” his followers into the community and the world. If we are followers of Christ that is each of us sent out to glorify God and share his love in the Gospel. A question to ask first of ourselves and then secondly of us as a church is this *“How Gospel driven am I/are we as a church?”* *“Do we as a church embrace the New Testament gospel imperative?”*

Discipleship

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Evangelism

## MATURE DISCIPLESHIP FOR EVERY MEMBER

When Paul prays for the Ephesian church there could have been any number of things that he could have prayed for them, circumstances in life, opposition from pagans, even their gospel witness. But his starting point for a church: **get to know God better.**

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup>I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may **know***

*him better.* <sup>18</sup>I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Ephesians 1

Striking is the first priority for Paul to pray for the Ephesian church: deepening knowledge of God. He prays that they would have wisdom and revelation to know God better.

“The eyes of your heart enlightened” – the heart: the decision-making centre of the human – The eyes of their hearts: Paul knows the way we see this world is informed by the affections of our hearts.

He wants them to ‘see’ with the eyes of faith, trusting that what God has promised He will do.

Jim Packer writes this: *“We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. God is the source of the deepest satisfaction and joy to his adopted children.”*

That's why discipleship is so vital. It's about stirring our affections, not with our careers, our homes, our seeking comforts, but stirring our affections with the glorious hope that's ours in Christ. When every member is all about Jesus Christ, everything changes. That is the powerhouse for our prayer life, for our purpose, for our evangelism.

That grows the more we know and understand Him, and so that's why Paul prays that for the Ephesians. When our hearts are captured by God, everything else falls into place.

So, a good question to ask might be *“How serious do I take my personal growth as a Christian, how active am I with my discipleship? Am I passionately seeking to know and love God more?”* A yearly spiritual MOT check that asks, “Do I love Jesus more this year than I did last?” The call is to be spiritual self-starters. For this you will need to be active in it, not passive.

## Our Convictions

**The Bible – The Word of God does the work of God through the Spirit of God in the people of God.**

The church down the ages has been formed on and by the Gospel, God’s message of salvation. It is founded on Jesus Christ as preached by the apostles and prophets. It is the Word of God that the Spirit of God uses to shape the lives of individuals, and so the church. The work of God in the individual is a growing Christlikeness. Our vision’s aim of mature discipleship for every member requires the Word of God.



**Expository Preaching – Consecutive expository preaching is the best normal diet of the local church.**



Consecutive preaching through books of the Bible ensures it is God who sets the agenda for the teaching God’s people receive. It keeps the

balance of timeless truths in God's word rather than the favourite hobby horse(s) of the pastor. Likewise, lectionaries that 'butterfly' around Scripture, flitting from one passage to another, fail to adequately feed a church with God's glorious timeless truths.

Our conviction is that expository preaching is much more than conveying theological truths, but must be thoroughly applied so that it stirs the hearts of us as a church to change, to love God more, to serve him more fully.

Of all the various opportunities All Saints' Loose can provide to nurture our spiritual growth as members, the Word preached on a Sunday is invested with the most significant effort and time in prayer and preparation on the part of the preachers. Our conviction, therefore, is that every member, committed to be a self-starter in their own spiritual growth, will see the Sunday sermon as a non-negotiable in their weekly spiritual diet. So, where they are serving in a group, or away, then catching up online would be their desire.

**The Sunday Gathering – gathering as church on a Sunday is the highest weekly priority for its members.**



Many believe we gather as church to worship God. But the New Testament teaches that our whole life is worship (Romans 12). We meet as Christians, because that is church. Church is not the building or an institution, it is a gathering of Christians. We are not members of a church if we do not gather with our brothers and sisters in Christ as church. Just as we're not a member of a football team if we do not play football matches with that team.

We gather as church so that we may encourage one another.

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another. Hebrews 10:23-25*

It is primarily an ‘other person’ focused motive. We meet to encourage our brothers and sisters to persevere in the faith and ‘toward love and good deeds’. It is not a difficult question to answer: *Are we encouraged when we gather and the church is full or when many are missing?*

So, it is not difficult to see that we are responsible for that encouragement. It also means that when a yet to be Christian guest is brought on a Sunday, they experience something vibrant and exciting. As part of our vision we can be evangelistic by simply committing to every Sunday possible, and ordering our lives around that priority.

Our meetings are corporate worship, but we don’t start worshipping when the service starts and stop when we leave. The gatherings are for two purposes with no sharp distinction: Edification and evangelism. We often make a distinction that a Sunday service is for building up Christians, and other events for introducing yet to be Christians to Jesus. That is not a distinction the New Testament makes. There, people are

evangelised by being taught the truth, and people are pastored by being taught the truth.

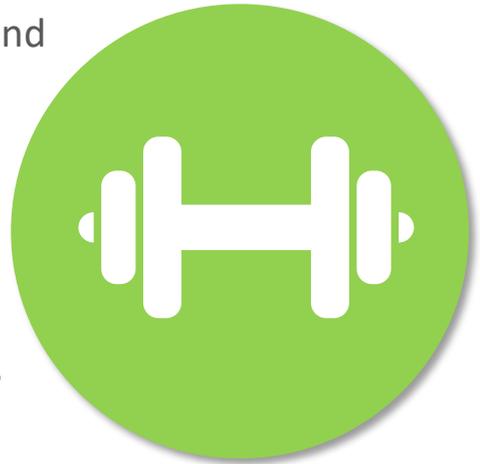
This means in our meetings we deliberately ensure we are as accessible to those not familiar with church as possible. Either end of the churchmanship scale can be inaccessible and effectively veil the gospel. A very ceremonial, liturgical service can be boring and difficult to understand, likewise a very charismatic service can seem just plain weird to the visitor. Hence, we choose a 'middle of the road' expression of our corporate worship, and musical style.

Our music is every bit a part of our vision as it aids our hearts to be stirred by God's truth. So, we seek to achieve the highest quality of music, and to ensure we're singing songs with words that encourage.

Sermons and services are always planned partly with the non-Christian visitor in mind. This will govern how things are introduced, and to a certain extent the content of a service so that a visitor is not embarrassed or made to feel awkward.

This is how we contextualise the vision of both evangelism and mature discipleship in the context in which God has placed us in Loose and Maidstone.

**Prayer – Prayer lies at the heart of the church, it is where the heavy lifting takes place.**



Prayer is the place where God's Spirit gets to grips with our spirits. It is both conversation and encounter with God. We must know the awe of praising his glory, the intimacy of finding his grace, and the struggle of asking his help, all of which can lead us to know the spiritual reality of his presence.

Our conviction is that our prayers arise out of immersion in scripture. Through scripture we hear God's voice. Prayer is then our response to that. The wedding of the Bible and prayer anchors life down in the real God. So, for every member the habit of regular personal daily Bible reading and prayer is the primary way that God will use for mature discipleship.

Prayer is the way we know God, the way we finally treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and be in life. The infallible test of spiritual integrity, Jesus says, is your private prayer life.

The church prayer meetings are the engine house for the mission of the church, reminding us that all that we plan and do is entirely in God's hands and dependent on his sovereign grace and will.



**Partnership – The New Testament sees gospel work as a partnership between believers. We are in partnership in the vision of All Saints' Loose if we are members of the church.**

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel . . ." Philipians 1:3*

The New Testament expectation for partnership touches on many areas of our

vision: Our evangelism together, our commitment to help one another towards Christian maturity, our responsibility to look out for one another pastorally, partnership with our mission partners around the world.

But it must ALSO mean the practicalities; the mechanics to enable our church to run. For example, the cost of gospel ministry, or to put it in simple terms: ‘the church’s bills’ are ‘your bills’, ‘my bills’, every member’s bills, because you ARE the church. So partnership does have impact on our lives, in that we contribute to the cost of Gospel work at a sacrificial level – asking the question *“What significant thing am I going without week by week, month by month because I contribute to the costs of my Gospel ministry through All Saints’?”*

Partnership is vital in a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christian faith. We need the support of other Christians. There are also many ways we struggle in life and we need the loving support and care of strong and deep friendships. Partnership is that.

## Our Strategy

### Mature Discipleship for Every Member

The starting point will be each of us growing as Christian believers. When we're each individually on fire for God, all else will fall into place. We need each to attend to our spiritual growth, and work to avoid getting flabby spiritually. Which in practice is by being spiritual self-starters. To do this:

- Members of All Saints' will be those committed deeply to Sunday mornings; making every effort to prioritise gathering as a church. If a sermon is missed, making time to catch up online.
- Members of All Saints' will be those committed to a Homegroup. And as with Sundays make every effort to gather with the group, from the perspective of encouraging others by being present.
- Members of All Saints' will seek to take up opportunities to attend appropriate conferences and courses where possible to further help their spiritual growth. This would include

men's and women's conventions, Kent Gospel Partnership days, and in-house training courses.

- Be daily Bible readers and prayers, setting aside some time every day for personal Bible reading and prayer. We can help anyone get started or re-started with this through 1-2-1 time.

In addition to these, we would encourage members to strongly consider forming 'Prayer Triplets' (or squares) to meet regularly with two or three others to support one another in life, pray for one another, to be accountable to one another spiritually, and to encourage one another to keep personal evangelism on our radar.

## Evangelism

### Personal evangelism

The most common way for anyone to come to faith is through the loving and gentle witness of a Christian friend or family member. You are that person for your friends and family who are not yet Christians. We don't have to guess what God wants us to do, that is it. It is hard work, it is time consuming. It involves

investment in spending time, deepening friendships, supporting, and building a natural relationship, which is the only legitimate way we can earn the trust to share our faith. Evangelism used to be focused on events, big events with a speaker to which you invited a friend. Then it moved into courses such as Alpha and Christianity Explored. More recently there are significantly longer lead in times before an event or a course is appropriate. This is because we are increasingly in a post-Christian era. The prevailing thinking is moving further from our Christian roots as a culture.

There remain some 'easy' invites we can work towards, such as the Candlelit Carol service, Messy Church, men's breakfasts, ladies' events, Toddler Praise.

### Partnership in evangelism

*Picture the scene: your friend you've been talking to for many years about your faith and your church says they'd like to come with you to church next Sunday. What would you like them to experience? Would it be something like this: a vibrant full church building with a buzz of people present, friendly welcome from*

*those there, good engaging and stirring preaching, enjoyable music?*

*Obvious straight away is how commitment to being present on a Sunday IS an evangelistic activity. We, each of us, contribute to that vibrancy by being present. We are partnering the gospel.*

Likewise, this is true of Messy Church, men's breakfasts, ladies events etc. A list of current ways you might partner in evangelism:

Unite Café

Messy Church

Toddler Praise

Men's breakfasts

Ladies activities

Hog Roast

Christmas services at YMCA, and Candlelit carols

Easter holiday club and Easter Sunday

Mother's Day

Christianity Explored

Marriage Prep

Baptism requests – CE

## Church plant

God willing, we aim to plant a new congregation or rejuvenate an existing Church of England congregation to begin meeting in 2022.

Planting new congregations is proving to be one of the most effective ways God is using for Gospel advance and to build His Kingdom at the moment. It is exciting to be involved in this kind of ministry, both as the planting church and the planted church.

Details of the nature of this plant will be separate to this document.

In summary we will need to augment the existing team with a specific church planter, who will lead a core planning team, and then go on to lead the plant. From within the All Saints' fellowship we will be seeking for twenty to thirty adults to be a part of this plant, and any family they may have.

We will be seeking to raise the necessary funds to recruit onto the All Saints' Team the church planter.

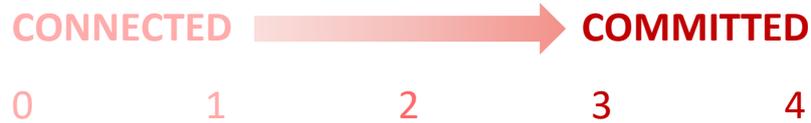
### **“How do I respond to this vision?”**

This is an exciting and challenging vision that is for us all AS All Saints’ Loose. We are each needed, gifted and enabled by God to play our part in this. We are All Saints’ and so this vision necessarily affects us all. This must mean us each as individuals acting, responding and prayerfully playing our part.

We are in a culture that has increased our connectedness. We are connected to many things and people through online presence and links. But connected and committed are not the same thing. Committed requires investment of ourselves. Be that in true friendships, or things we are passionate about. Commitment to our friends is costly and is not the same as a social media friendship which all too often is more a connection than a commitment. But real blessing is found through commitment over connectedness. When we commit, our experience is far richer.

The answer to the question “How do I respond to this vision?” has commitment at its core.

So, a question for all of us to ask ourselves might be this: **Where do I see myself on this scale from connected to committed?**



Five specifics for us each as individuals, from the vision that can move us up the scale:

I respond to this vision by a

1. **Greater commitment to Prayer.**

Pray for the ministry of my church and the church plant. Giving time to the Central Church prayer meetings as well as in private prayer.

2. **Greater commitment to Gospel advance.**

The great commission at the end of Matthew's gospel to be disciple makers (Matthew 28:18-20) won't happen by default. I need to resolve to be deliberate about this task and take specific action to think about how I can play a part in bringing my friends or family that are yet to be Christians to faith. This is God's purpose for me on earth! This is vital to both build the

planting church and the planted church.

**3. Greater commitment to Sundays**

Make Sunday's service a priority, for the reasons set out in our convictions. I must prioritise meeting to encourage others and by being present on a Sunday I can be part of what makes church a vibrant experience for visitors that leaves them wanting to find out more. I can play a part in 2) above through commitment to Sundays.

**4. Greater commitment to Home group**

Many speak of the enormous value, love and support of their home group, or daytime group. Being part of a smaller group within the wider fellowship plays a significant part in my support of others in their Christian life.

**5. Greater commitment to sacrificial giving**

The New Testament sets out a pattern of sacrificial giving, committing ourselves to God's mission such that we feel the cost on our lives. Many have found the Biblical model of a tithe (Using 90% of what God gives us for our lives, and

setting aside 10% for gospel ministry). If every household committed to giving a 'tithe' we would have more than enough funds for this and be able to do much more. It would more than double our current income. Our church has more than enough funds for this exciting vision to be realised, but those funds are not in the central church bank account, but in our individual ones. If we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, that every person needs to come to faith in Christ, then how we choose to spend our money will reflect that.

*I need to consider prayerfully to what extent my giving is genuinely sacrificial and whether I could make a change to my giving to realise this exciting vision.*

# my response

My response:

Having read through this, you might find it helpful, as a mark of commitment, to sign against these responses and keep this among your daily Bible reading notes and prayers as a reminder of that commitment.

I commit as a member of All Saints' Loose to:

- Prayer
- Gospel advance
- Sundays
- Home Group
- Sacrificial giving

Signed:

Date:

All Saints' church is committed to going for growth in Christ in Loose and beyond. Our growth has one focus: Jesus Christ. He is our Lord and Saviour, our passion and joy. Through His Spirit we know God as our Father.

We long to grow...

1. ...more Christians (by evangelism) and
2. ...mature Christians (by discipleship).

We are convinced of these Bible-based priorities for growth:

- Praying to God persistently
- Proclaiming God's word faithfully
- Gathering together regularly
- Partnering together in ministry
- Loving God and people deeply

This booklet explains what this means.

