



Spring 2017 – **Annual Meeting Address**
(30 April 2017, Paul Langham)

Reading: Isaiah 54:2-3

² *Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.*
³ *For you will spread out to the right and to the left;
your descendants will dispossess nations
and settle in their desolate cities.*

The significance of this passage will not be lost on church family members – it describes what’s happening at Christ Church in this season, as we respond to the Lord’s vision and call; and also expresses the Lord’s desire for expansion and growth for his church. Essentially the same as the ancient promise to Abraham

² *I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*
³ *I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.’* Genesis 12:2-3

- people
- territory
- influence (blessing)

This is also echoed in Jesus’ final words to his followers ...

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ 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 28:18-20

We need to be careful that we think not in ‘human’ categories of success, numbers and power – but rather in terms of pursuing the growth of God’s Kingdom in lives saved, culture transformed, and an influence which comes from being a humble, servant-hearted blessing to the communities in which we live.

PEOPLE, TERRITORY, INFLUENCE

3 examples of growth this past year:

- Trailblazers (the older group in our Kids Ministry) have outgrown Linden Gate and are now meeting in Christ Church Primary ...
- 20s & 30s are multiplying groups and seeing people come to faith – they’ve moved upstairs to accommodate this growth

- our midweek gathering (the 11 on Wednesday mornings) has seen steady growth this past year – and we believe this can be a significant part of our outreach especially to our local community

For the coming year, some of our priorities:

New Youth Pastor

- 11 applicants
- 3 shortlisted (asked why they applied, all spoke of being attracted by our church vision & values)
- The interview process began on Friday and ended at the church family lunch on Sunday
- please pray for the panels' decision ...
- will let you know (once we have let the teams know)
- huge vote of thanks to Kate Moreton and Meeting Point Team, Emeleye Chanot & Pathfinders Team

[One of the panel member's children (aged 8) suggested the following questions ...

1. *Do you believe in God?*
2. *Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead?*
3. *Are you good at looking after children?*
4. *Are you good at playing games?*
5. *Do you know how to make stuff?]*

Thy Kingdom Come – Praying for people to come to faith

- Archbishop of Canterbury's call for a prayer focus on evangelism from Ascension Day (25 May) to Pentecost (4 June)
- EVANGELISM IS WHEN SOMEONE KNOWS MORE OF JESUS WHEN THEY LEAVE YOU THAN WHEN THEY MET YOU
- Please watch the Archbishop's video call to prayer: <https://vimeo.com/203435700>
- YOU decide how to respond – take flyer, visit website, look at resources
- We will organize some things centrally – Ascension Day (25 May), Sunday 28 May & Sunday 4 June (Pentecost). SO NO PRAYER MEETING ON MONDAY 8 MAY
- but you decide how to respond
- please let us have testimony of answered prayer ...
- Small groups: prayer walk your area
- Individuals: pray for 5 friends (knotted cord)
- Children: resources to help you
- Ruthy and kids teams, and our youth teams, will be looking at how this works out in their areas
- Jacob's Well – could we have people praying in there daily for those 11 days, at 7.00 am / 12 noon / 7.00 pm?
- Could we, either centrally or in smaller groups, arrange a 24 hours of prayer?
- Please come back to us with ideas ...

RENEW Phase 1 & 2

- Focus for last 9 months has been on Phase 1 – The Spire Coffee Shop
- Thanks to John Barratt, Janet Lee, Jan Tyrell, Mark Orris, Mark Parsons, David Troughton, David Daniels, Karie Howard (our first manager), Hannah Bottom (our current, interim manager), all the volunteer baristas ...
- Coffee Shop Manager Role now re-advertised ...
- Phase 2, which we believe will involve the complete refurbishment of the Crypt, will go as a proposal to PCC next month

New Gathering times

- As far as we are concerned, going very well indeed ...
- Sense of the Lord's presence
- Midweek growing too ...
- Review of how it's going: hard copy forms available today, everyone will receive these forms by email this week
- Very simple questionnaire: last Question: What do you see God doing? Please pray and give that some thought

Christ Church Fresh Expression for Creatives and Artists across the City and beyond ...

Paul introduced: The majority of you will know that Erica is a member of the clergy team here and licensed as Pastor for the Arts both at Christ Church and across the Bristol Diocese. She has some exciting news to share with us today.

Erica made the following announcement: Since last September I have been sensing the Lord place a new calling on me, to serve artists and other Creatives across the City in a new way. I am grateful to Paul who has given me space and time to listen to the Lord and pursue this to a conclusion.

Part of our vision as a Church family is to see the Church move out, and also to serve our city and be a resource centre – and the Lord's call to me resonates with that. So we are setting up a Christ Church Fresh Expression of Church for artists/Creatives.

Some of you may ask what is a Fresh Expression of Church?

Fresh Expression of Church is a national movement found in the Anglican Church and other denominations. A Fresh Expression intentionally forms Church and seeks to serve a specific people group or community. It exists outside the traditional structures of the church i.e. outside the church walls but bears the recognisable hallmarks of Church – worship, discipleship and mission.

This ministry will dovetail and inter - connect with my work within the Bristol Diocese and as leader of the Bristol Arts Sphere: a Creatives network within the ecumenical ministry and under the umbrella of 'Together for Bristol'.

We will meet weekly and monthly for worship & discipleship in various venues; and our mission activities will centre around the newly formed Diocesan '3 Crowns' performing arts team and visual arts gallery.

We're grateful to share the news of this Fresh Expression at today's Annual Meeting. If you would like to know more please contact me or speak to me after the meeting.

I will still be around, about monthly, at one of our worship gatherings; and Richard will continue his roles as part of the worship team and as one of our safeguarding officers. I will continue to be involved with the CC Creatives group.

I pray we prepare the way for future Fresh Expressions who will serve other people groups.

Paul then commissioned Erica and various members of the Core Team

- Nathan Palmer
- Clive Colledge
- Jane Lee (from the Arts Sphere)
- Karie Howard, Mark Orriss & Pat Simmons (CCC)

My address concluded with a brief time of remembrance for those members of the church family who have died in the past year – Beryl Davey, Joan Hodgson, John Warne, Liz Wright – and their families.

Neil & Caroline, Elizabeth & James Buckland

Over lunch, we also prayed for and ‘sent out’ Caroline & Neil, Elizabeth and James Buckland, who are temporarily ‘moving’ church so that Caroline, who is pursuing a sense of vocation to ordained ministry, can do an extended placement at St Martin’s Knowle, with the Rev’d Becky Waring, until Christmas. We will still see the Bucklands at Christ Church during this period, but sadly not as often as we are used to doing! Please do pray for them as a family.

Paul Langham, April 2017