

StJ

Becoming
Who We
Are

VISION 2024

We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ
Romans 8:17

Who are we?

St James in the City are a homegrown Diocesan Resource Church, commissioned to 'Resource the Next Generation'. We are passionate about passing on the baton of faith to others, and to help other Churches and ministries in our city grow and thrive. Our life and ministry are part of the realisation of a wider Diocesan Vision to grow a Bigger Church to make a Bigger Difference - more people knowing Jesus, more justice in the world.

Celebrating What God Has Done

Last year, our vision statement was 'Into Deep Waters', a reflection on the invitation in Ezekiel 47 to go further into the river of God's Spirit; recognising that God has much more for His Church, both locally and nationally. We prioritised the calling to deeper discipleship and to Church plant. What a year it has been! Through the year as a Church, and in the schools and the universities where our teams of paid workers and volunteers serve, we have been able to regularly disciple over 500 people. If you are a member of our Church, contributing with time, energy, prayers, and finance, then you have made a massive difference in so many people's lives.



Thank You! We also began our first Church plant to revitalise St Mary's Wavertree. Revitalising Parish Churches is key to the future of the Church of England, and it's amazing to be able to play our part. This booklet is a celebration of what God has done over the past year, as well as a look ahead. We hope you find it encouraging.

Becoming Who We Are

As we set out on the year ahead, we would love every member of St James and St Mary's to find ways of engaging with our journey and focus this year: 'Becoming Who We Are'.

For St James', this is about stepping into our role as a Resource Church, supporting the plant at St Mary's and preparing for another plant, potentially in 2025.

For St Mary's, this is about discovering a new identity and finding new ways of being Church and connecting with the local community.



For every one of us, this is about grabbing hold of a fresh vision for who we are becoming under God, and intentionally seeking out ways in which we will grow and ways in which we will help others grow also.

As we launch our Vision for the year, we welcome Revd Mike Hindley as our Associate Vicar for Discipleship and pray for him as he helps us go on these journeys together. Becoming Who We Are means becoming more like Christ, but with our own specific sense of personality and calling. Let's go for it!

Looking back: 2023

God has blessed us as a Church so much. We continue to pioneer ministry in schools and amongst young people, in the universities, amongst families, adults, through Connect Groups and with a focus on Alpha. Here's a snippet of some of what we look back on.

Schools Chaplaincy

The school's team have enjoyed a fruitful year full of faith exploration sessions and discipling many in our Christian Union groups across the three schools. We have been so encouraged



in working alongside young people in delivering assemblies and services both inside and outside of Church. We have been blessed to see school students

attending larger StJ Youth events, youth group, weekends away and some even moving into Sunday Church attendance! There are exciting and new opportunities already in the works for the schools chaplaincy this year! The bridge between school chaplaincy and Church has grown stronger this last year.

StJ Youth

StJ Youth keeps getting better and better. Our first youth weekend away happened at Barnstondale, where we had an amazing time together building relationships, watching the leaders get pied and of course, exploring faith further. This led us well into summer as we took 13 young people to Focus where they encountered the Holy Spirit. God was surely on the move. In September we launched youth+ for youth in Yr10 and above, running at the same time at youth group but giving our older youths their own space to build relationships and journey together. We went to the new Merseyside Youth Prayer event, where two of our young people became Christians! It was amazing to see under 18s pray for the



youth of our city on stage. In November 4 young people got baptised/renewed their baptismal vows. We are thrilled with all that God has done and are excited for all that is in store for our StJ Youth and the team in 2024.

University Chaplaincy

2023 was a great year for the University Chaplaincy. During the spring and summer terms, the team enjoyed meeting many



students on campus and inviting them to events at StJ. Faith Express became more attractive to students as we offered free coffees, Mindful Art, board games and a safe place to hang out and chat. We opened Faith Express 4 times a week and saw more students engage with us during 'Feel Good

February'. We continued to support events at DWELL Student Accommodation and engage in Refreshers Events. During the Autumn term we saw more students visit Faith Express than ever before, with new students coming each week! One highlight was seeing two international students from Faith Express do Alpha at StJ and become part of the student community here. It has been amazing to see the community growing there, faith conversations happening and friendships forming in this space.

StJ Students

We started the year with a Relationship Series on Monday evenings which covered topics like friendship, dating and marriage. We created small groups which helped students share confidently. Lois did a great job leading our students but felt it was right to move onto other things at the end of the academic year. Bethan has worked so hard to gather new students in the autumn term and we are seeing the largest numbers at Student Connect than



we've seen since before the pandemic. Highlights this academic year have been the night away in the Lake District, a wonderful Christmas party, existing and new student leaders stepping up and supporting Bethan, and seeing many new students serve on Sundays.

Families

We really enjoyed time with families in Church and in our local community last year. Our Easter Egg Hunt, Coronation Picnic, and meet-ups in the park were highlights. Our light party was brilliant time - we had games, crafts, food - there has been so much to celebrate! Some of our families went to Focus in the



summer and had a really good time. One child said that Focus was even better than StJ Kids (they must have been joking)!

On Sundays we've had a great time learning and playing together in StJ Kids. In Autumn we were looking at Jesus being the vine and us all being the branches from John 15. We hope to continue growing in our faith this year as we hopefully grow in team and share the love of God with our wonderful families. We are very grateful for our amazing team who have worked so hard to make StJ Kids fun and safe, and have helped to make all the family events so special.

Minis

This year at Minis we have had so much fun engaging with lots of new families. Our community has changed and adapted as we said goodbye to little ones going to school, but we have welcomed lots of new families through our doors and seen



some of our regular families grow even bigger. We have seen varying numbers attend Minis over the last year and been unsure of the way forward at times but our Minis Christmas Show day (a huge highlight) saw the greatest number of families at Minis and several expressed interest in joining us more regularly! Our Minis Extra is always a special time of community, honesty and discipleship - we read scripture together, share testimonies, struggles and triumphs of parenting and pray together. We are open and excited for where God will guide us with Minis this

coming year – we are already excited to see some of our Minis families come to Quinta!

Alpha

We ran three Alphas in 2023 – January, May and October with a total of 48 completing the course. Alpha is one of our main ways of growing new disciple. We shared a hot meal every week at each Alpha, provided by people



from our generous Church family. It's good to see some people now part the church family that joined us at Alpha, and we have been privileged to see some bless other Church communities too. A lot of people helped to make Alpha run, from cooking, to



welcoming and facilitating great conversations. Each course is like an adventure that the team are on together – have a think about which Alpha course you might like to serve on this year, we'd love for more of our Church family to get involved this year.

Connect Groups

We encourage every member of our Church to be part of a connect group; it's the primary way we look after each other and strengthen our friendships. Our groups have people from different walks of life all sharing and learning from each other. We enjoyed studying Ezekiel & Luke alongside the sermon series. A few connect groups have found it fruitful to read a book



together, a particular favourite was 'a deeply formed life' by Rich Villodas. Looking forward, we would love to see more connect groups form as we continue to grow in number, and for them to keep

meeting regularly. If you are not yet in a connect group, now is a great time to join, let's grow deeper in faith together.

Liverpool Citizens

We want to mobilise as a Church to seek justice in our city and our world; ***citizens*^{uk}** and we have had different expressions of that over the years at St James. One of the main ways this is taking shape now is through our engagement with Liverpool Citizens, a broad-based organization which seeks to affect social change together. We have committed financially to this as church, and as a deanery, and have sent around 15 people for training.

In 2023 we took part in a listening campaign along with other organisations to hear the concerns of people in our church and local area. In 2024 we hope to work towards addressing some of these key issues and we would love to see our team grow as we continue to campaign for justice.

Some other significant events from 2023

- We ran sermon series' on Ezekiel (Into Deep Waters) with Instagram Live during lent, 1 Thessalonians (One in Christ), Parables in Matthew (The Kingdom of Heaven is Like...) and Luke (Baptised into Christ and our Advent series 'Be Part of the Story').
- We dedicated 2 children and celebrated 5 weddings

- Students, Adults and Youth all had weekends away!
- We held three Half Nights of Prayer & hosted the IJM Prayer for Justice tour
 - We partnered with Freedom Church, providing a safe space for the Iranian community bible study group



- We ran a week of Easter events (football, music and dance workshops) for families, youth and all-age services

- We hosted a Eurovision party
- We watched the HTB Leadership Conference together
- We celebrated the King's coronation with a picnic
- We baptised 7 people
- We ran The HTB Marriage Course
- We attended and celebrated Jerome's priesting



- 68 of us went to HTB Focus in the Summer
 - We hosted the Together for the Harvest 'In Conversation with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel'
 - We continued the Hopeful Influence Podcast
 - We hosted the Liverpool Sleepout in aid of The Whitechapel Centre



- The men went on a Sunrise Trip up Moel Famau and the women had a drinks and nibbles social
- We held a Light Party in November
- We hosted a community Fireworks event that welcomed over 500 people
- We hosted an AI seminar

- Our Youth took over leading our services four times!
- We began the Church plant at St Mary's Wavertree and helped with their Sunday services throughout December
- We enjoyed celebrating Christmas with our Christmas Party, Carol Services and Nativity and Christingle service



Staff

Our staff team has seen a few changes this last year; Lois started a new job with IntoUniversity at the end of July and Charis joined us to assist with finance in August. We welcomed Gaby and Luke as a new Ministry Assistants and Bethan as our new Student Pastor in August, along with Tom and Samantha as University Chaplain Assistants. Matty & the family stepped into leadership at Cottage Lane Mission Church and we are welcoming Lydia this year as a Schools Missional Chaplain.

Looking ahead to 2024: Faith, Hope & Love

Our current sermon series is focused on the wonderful gifts of Faith, Hope and Love. These are gifts from God to restore us in relationship with



God and with others and to help us live out the fullness of life that we are invited into. If you give energy, time, prayers, or money to our shared life at St James', then you are playing your part in making this possible; LIFE in community, spiritual GROWTH, SERVING others, BUILDING the Kingdom and all as an act of LOVING worship to God. Thank you for being part of our Church; please do celebrate all that God has already done and prayerfully think through your part in our wider vision for the year ahead.

1. Church Planting

- We want to become a Church that is regularly planting other Churches. This means stepping more fully into our identity as a Resource Church for the Diocese
- We want to enable everyone to participate in Church planting. We need people to help the process of re-launching St Mary's Wavertree. Could you use your gifts and talents to serve occasionally on Sundays or at other times during the week?
- We want to put money aside and start building a team later in the year for a possible second Church plant in 2025.

2. Discipleship

- We want everyone to become more fully who they are in Jesus Christ. Our Faith, Hope, Love sermon series and CG resources are intended to be a launchpad for your journey this year.
- We need each other to grow; our aim is for everyone to be part of a Connect Group.

- Our Faith is something to share; could everyone help on at least 1 Alpha course this year?
- Mike Hindley will be helping us explore fresh ways of being Church (e.g. adults ministry, new CGs etc).
- Quinta: exploring our identity as 'Image Bearers'
- Worship and Encounter to pursue and meet with God (e.g. lent worship nights, half night of prayer etc).
- Seeking justice: deepening our engagement with Liverpool Citizens to pursue positive social change.
- Saturday 'Disciples' Gathering: April 20th.
- Discipleship SHAPE course in autumn.
- Focus Church holiday and weekends away.

3. Improving our Heating & Church Grounds

- The heating system for our main space doesn't work adequately. The system was installed as part of larger building project a few years ago. It utilised pioneering hydro-electric technology, that was environmentally friendly, but has since proved to have been too early to market. Our architect has designed a new solution that will enable our main space to be warm during the winter. We will be applying for grant funding but will need to make our own financial contribution towards it.
- For too long, people have walked or driven past our building and assumed it was closed. We will be implementing illuminated signage to be installed in our grounds.
- As well as the signage, we will be developing a master plan for our Church grounds which will include some

external lighting, an initial phase of which we would like to implement as soon as we can.

- As we move toward 2025, the Quarter Millennial celebration of our Church being built, we would like to explore the development of some additional children's, break-out and storage space and potentially a Church café. Whilst we won't begin any works this year, we do intend some consultation on what this might look like as we grow and extend our reach as a Church.

Financial Challenge

As we partner with St Mary's Wavertree, continue our focus on the 'Next Generation', and step more fully into our role as a Resource Church for the diocese, we are praying for more people to come to know Jesus and more justice in our city and world.

We are seeing remarkable growth in our Church and in the ministries we oversee. As we grow, to sustain all that is happening, we want to see a significant increase in the financial giving across our Church family. Every Church is self-funded, and this is a good moment for everyone to prayerfully review their giving.

We want everyone to give by regular standing order where this is possible. This makes it much easier to financially plan and run the Church in a sustainable way.

If you are a member of St James' and you don't yet give, then perhaps now is the time to have the necessary conversations and start regular financial giving.

If you already give financially, then perhaps now is a good time to review your giving in the light of inflation, your financial circumstances, and in response to what God is doing in our Church.

Under God this year, we would like to increase our giving as a Church by £19,500. This will enable us to grow, and includes the additional areas of expenditure mentioned above, as well as increases to our parish share contribution (how we contribute towards the cost of our ordained ministers) and cost increases due to inflation. The additional costs for the year are included below:

1. Heating system contribution: £7,500
2. Lighting and grounds contribution: £3,500
3. Associate Vicar/Discipleship Resourcing: £3,000
4. Inflation: £3,000
5. Parish Share increase: £2,500

Total additional cost: £19,500

However, it should also be noted that we have significant expenditure coming in 2025. As well as potentially some building development works, we also come to the end of our grant funding for LNG (Liverpool Next Generation) School and University ministry. To ensure our staff and the wider ministries they lead continue to happen, we will need to increase our giving in a significant way next year and in the years ahead. Any extra money raised this year will be used to help achieve this in 2025.

This year we need an additional £19,500 of regular giving.

However, to continue our work in School's and across the Universities beyond 2025, we need to increase our giving base significantly as a Church family. We would like to increase our giving beyond the target for this year, so the step next year isn't beyond our reach.

Whilst £19,500 might seem like a lot, it is giving that will be spread across the whole Church family. For example:

- If 8 individuals or families each started/increased their giving by £200 a month that would provide £19,200 per year.
- If 16 individuals or families each started/increased their giving by £100 a month, that would provide £19,200 per year.
- If 32 individuals or families each started/increased their giving by £50 a month, that would provide £19,200 per year.
- If 64 individuals or families each started/increased their giving by £25 a month, that would provide £19,200 per year.

No doubt it will be some combination of the above that will help us reach or even exceed our target. However we do it, let's pray for generous hearts and for God to provide the resources we need for our Church to grow and to reach financial sustainability.

For 3 Sundays, Sunday 11th Feb to Sunday 25th Feb, Jude and the team will be laying out our vision for the next year and giving more details to the new initiatives outlined in this booklet. We are asking each member at St James to prayerfully consider their giving and to give as generously as possible.

There are two key ways we can respond at the start of this year:

1. We want to encourage existing givers to consider increasing their regular monthly standing orders and perhaps also making a one-off donation.
2. We want to encourage members who aren't giving to start giving regularly.

We are aware that some members have only just recently increased their giving, and others are simply not able to increase their giving, so please respond carefully and prayerfully.

Ways to give:

1. New Standing Orders:

This is the best way to give to STJ, for both yourselves and for us. It is really helpful for us to know that we have regular amounts coming in each month, it helps our cash flow, and it is really easy to set up. This can be done via this QR code, your online banking or via Churchsuite (App or website).



If you would prefer to set up your own standing order with your bank, you can use our bank details below. Please make it clear who is giving by using a reference, your name and giving.

Account number: 6567 2855

Sort-code: 08 92 99

Reference: Surname Giving

2. Increasing an existing Standing Orders:

If you are already a regular giver to STJ you can either increase your current standing order via your bank or set up a new standing order via Churchsuite and cancel the one via your bank.

3. One off amount:

It may be that you would like to make a one-off donation. This can be done using the QR code, via Churchsuite (stj.org.uk) or you can write a cheque. Please make cheques payable to 'ST JAMES IN THE CITY' and post to 4 Lady Chapel Close LI 7BZ

Gift Aid:

A considerable contribution to our giving is recovered from the Inland Revenue by way of 'Gift Aid' – an extra 25p per £1 donated. Anyone who pays any Income Tax should fill out a Gift Aid form for their donation which can be found at the end of the booklet, you can also do this as part of any of our online giving options.

Notes:

- Any surplus made in 2024 will be carried forward to offset the large increases in expenditure we are expecting during the next few years.
- At the present time 14% of all donations received from St James' members is given away to great causes both locally and further afield.

Prayer

Prayer is the most important thing that we can do as we contribute to our Vision for 2024 so please so pray in this Vision!

God of mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.

God of life, breathe on us afresh, that we would resonate with the songs of heaven and find our own this year as an act of worship to you.

God of salvation and renewal, help our Church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our city, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



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