

Imagine a church whose mission is to Make Jesus known and...

- where **worship** of the living God is the prime driving force.
- which gives prime place to the **Bible** as the authoritative account of God's self-revelation to humankind.
- where **prayer** surrounds and permeates everything we do.
- where the work of the **Holy Spirit** are welcomed, encouraged and celebrated.
- where the whole church actively embraces **God's work**.
- where **people** of all ages are encouraged to grow to **love and follow Jesus**.
- which demonstrates God's love and grace through extraordinary acts of **care and service**.
- which **connects** strongly with the wider church and the local community.
- which is a lively, joyful, **welcoming** family.
- where we are constantly **ready for God to surprise**, thrill challenge and change us.

Sunnyside aspires to be a church like this. Join us in our quest to make it happen.

Imagine appendix. A fuller expression of our vision.

Imagine a church . . .

- **whose mission is to Make Jesus known**
 - which is a fellowship of people, focused on Jesus.
 - which shines like a star in a crooked and perverse generation as we hold out , and live out, the word of truth.
 - which is committed to the serious, life-long work of making disciples in a post-Christian society.
 - where the structures are lightweight and flexible in the service of God's mission.
 - where we talk confidently and naturally about and with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - where everyone feels part of the overall church community, but also has the opportunity to enjoy the close fellowship and encouragement of a small group.

- **where worship and encounter with the living God is the prime driving force.**
 - where we see worship as all that we are responding to all that God is.
 - where worship is a transforming and renewing experience.
 - where adherents seek to express their worship unconditionally in every facet of their life.
 - where public worship is primarily a time set apart for meeting together with God.
 - where personal testimony is freely shared as a witness to God's grace.
 - where we seek to please God, not ourselves.

- **which gives prime place to the Bible as the authoritative account of God's self-revelation to humankind.**
 - where scripture guides what we are to believe about God.
 - where our engagement with scripture is intelligent and searching, and equips us for the situations and challenges of everyday life.
 - where each of us expects to receive spiritual insight through interacting with others as we explore our faith together.
 - where every person at every age or stage of faith is helped to know God better and to grow in wisdom, through an ever-deepening grasp of scripture.
 - where we seek to explore and present the good news in creative ways with which all can engage.
 - where scripture is allowed to critique and address our life experiences and the culture we live in.
 - where our faith is deepened rather than threatened by facing difficult questions.
 - where those who find spiritual concepts hard to grasp are treated with consideration and are cherished.

- **where prayer surrounds and permeates everything we do.**
 - where each of us – individually and together – is growing in our spirituality and life of prayer.
 - where each encounter and meeting is prayerful and open to God.
 - where our personal and public prayers reflect a healthy balance of praise and adoration, thanksgiving, confession, lament, intercession, and listening.
 - where we naturally offer and ask to pray with each other.
 - where we pray with faith for what is beyond our own power or imagination.
 - where we expect our thoughts and lives to be re-shaped by God as we pray.

- **where the work of the Holy Spirit is welcomed, encouraged and celebrated.**
 - where the gifts of the spirit are sought, valued and humbly received, and where we seek, above all, the spiritual gift of love
 - where our human talents are discerned, nurtured and exercised for the building up of the body of Christ.
 - where we discern and celebrate the work of the Spirit in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary.
 - where we each seek God’s calling on our life and pray for his Spirit to equip us, especially where, in our own strength, we are weak.
 - where the presence of the Holy Spirit within us directs us to put to work in the world the salvation we have so richly received.

- **where the whole church actively embraces God’s work.**
 - where we seek to ensure that all we do is God’s agenda and not our own.
 - where we respond willingly to God’s call by the sacrificial use of talents, time and resources in carrying out His tasks.

- **which connects strongly with the wider church and the community.**
 - which plays a full and committed role in the deanery and diocese.
 - which is deeply conscious of its ‘parish’ and begins by listening to its needs.
 - which pro-actively engages with the other churches in Berkhamsted in ways that enrich the whole church and demonstrate unity and ministry to our changing town.
 - which listens hard to God’s calling to serve the neighbourhood and networks to which we all belong and learns from the experiences of others
 - which graciously shares its resources with other Christian communities.
 - which knows its limits and works in partnership with other specialised organisations. (e.g. working with Relate, Cruse, etc.)

- **where people of all ages are encouraged to grow to love and follow Jesus.**
 - which provides an exciting, motivating environment that appeals to children and young people and their friends.
 - where adults can gain a fuller understanding of the Christian faith through, for example, Alpha courses, house groups and Spiritual Direction.
 - which treasures and values the wisdom and experience of the older members of the fellowship.
 - where those called to full time Ministry, Readership or vocational service are given encouragement, guidance and opportunity to explore their calling.
 - where those having difficulty with their faith are not abandoned, but listened to with love and understanding.

- **which demonstrates God’s love and grace through extraordinary acts of care and service.**
 - where people do things for each other in the same way as they would for their close family.
 - which gives time and resources to give help and care for local people
 - which moves beyond a simple awareness of world problems to providing both financial and practical help to third world projects.
 - where it is clear that its generosity in time and money springs not from a sense of duty, but as a natural response to God’s love.

- **which is seen to be a lively, joyful family where anyone is welcome and no one feels left out or neglected.**
 - where the life includes a range of activities that provide fun and fellowship and are accessible to anyone regardless of their beliefs.
 - where everyone is encouraged to join in and helped to recognise their worth to the fellowship.
 - where everyone feels him/herself to be a called and chosen child of God’s family, and whose joy and responsibility it is to make others feel welcomed, loved and valued just as they are.
 - where responsibility for the fellowship is shared, and all have a voice.
 - where friendship enhances people’s sense of belonging and leads to their exploring further their relationship with God.

- **where we are constantly ready for God to surprise, thrill and challenge us.**
 - where faith steps out beyond what is reasonable to hope for, towards the miraculous, “beyond-earthly-reason” power of God.
 - where the vision of the church as it could be is not merely dreamt of but grasped at and claimed.