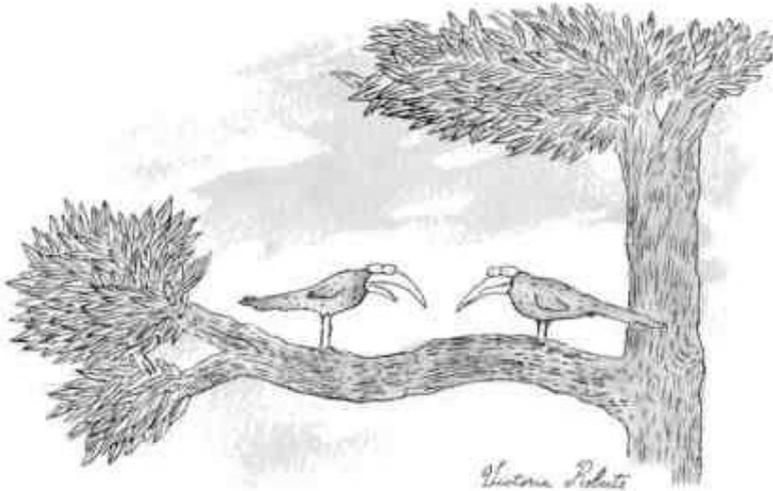


Vision 2014



“What I don’t remember is why, once we fly south, we don’t just stay there.”

Thank you for taking the time to read through our Vision for 2014.

Why have a Vision Sunday at all? Because amidst all of the things that we *do* as a church, it’s so easy to forget *why* we do them, and to forget *who* we are as God’s people, and *what* our priorities should be.

So whether this is the first Vision Sunday you’ve been part of or the fourth (we’ve only done four!), I hope that it will...

“I think it’s very clear in our mission statement that as a church our aim is to glorify God in everything we do.” Vision 2014 Online survey

Reconnect us to the gospel and what God has done, and is doing in our lives,

Refocus us onto who God is calling us to be, and

Re-energise us with joy in Christ, and desire to serve him.

What's gone into Vision 2014?

Assessing

Before looking ahead to next year, we've been looking back to see how things have been going. So Ed, Matt and our leadership team (the "PCC") have been praying, thinking and discussing about our life as a church.

"a church...full of people who want to praise, love, serve and glorify their Heavenly Father. Everyone seems to have this aim."

For instance, in the past year we've had a big focus of energy and effort in how to grow more as a "Sending Church", in particular in how to identify, send and support people to serve Christ across the world. Of course, we can still be doing more, but it is a great encouragement to see the growing number of mission partners who have gone out from CCE.

By contrast, we felt that it was time for a renewed focus on how we can reach out with the good news of Jesus, especially at an individual level. Between us, we have hundreds of connections with people with whom we work, live and meet regularly.

Also, it feels like there is a lot going on at CCE on Sundays and through the week. Rather than thinking of new ministries to start, it seems right that we try to build and consolidate on what is already there.

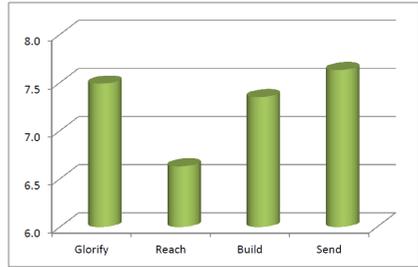
Asking



We often talk about how we are a church *family*, each with something important to contribute. So we wanted to hear from everybody. So this year we also had a "Vision 2014 Online Survey". Thank you so much to the 50 individuals and couples who filled it

in—they have already been so valuable. You can see some of the comments in the quote boxes throughout this document.

One thing we asked was for people to 'score' how we were doing in our fourfold vision aims of glorifying God, reaching out, building up and sending out. Here too there was a general feeling that reaching out was where we are weakest.



“Corporately I think we need to focus more on equipping and encouraging individual outreach, and perhaps invest less in church outreach.”

There was also an opportunity to make comments about specific ministry areas. These are being pulled together so that those involved can hear all the comments and suggestions.

Improving

We’ve also tried to learn lessons from our previous Vision and Partnership Sundays.

In particular, we wanted to have a greater simplicity this year.

Last year, we ended up with twelve ‘priorities’, each with a few practical ideas as sub-points. I doubt if anyone could remember even half of them (including me, and I wrote them!).

Having such a wide ‘focus’ is actually no focus at all.

So this year we want have one major focus:

Reaching Out (especially one-to-one).

That doesn’t mean we stop all our other ministries at CCE, or support for our mission partners and the worldwide church. But it will mean that we all know what we’re about in the year ahead, and God willing can make real progress in this key area.

“I feel that making the step to invite friends to read the Bible with them is hard and thinking about how we can support and encourage people to do this would be great.”

Overall Vision

Our overall vision as a church is that we...



Glorify God—living in light of who he is and what he has done for us, and helping others to do the same.



Reach Out—giving opportunities for people to discover Jesus Christ for themselves, and making a positive contribution to people's lives.

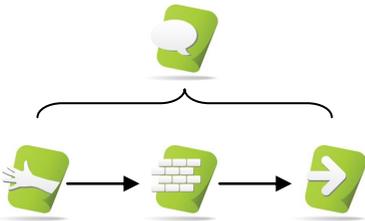


Build Up — each other in our knowledge and love of God, using the gifts and resources he has given us as individuals.

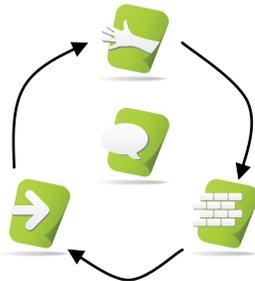


Send Out—people to serve God in their workplaces and their communities, and to support the mission of the worldwide church.

This general vision remains the same each year—Vision Sunday is about remembering this vision, and then thinking where to focus in the year ahead. However, it is helpful to think about a **change of emphasis** in how these four aims relate to one another:



In the past, we have rightly seen glorifying God as an overarching aim. Then there has been a natural progression from reaching out (calling people to turn to Christ), to building up (helping people to know Christ), to sending out (going out to serve Christ).



But a better way keeps glorifying God as central, but then sees reaching out, building up and sending out as interconnected.

So for instance, we will reach out most effectively only when we are sent out to live and speak for Christ in our everyday situations.

Vision 2014—The Headlines

(More than any other, this is the page that we hope will stay with us throughout the coming year)



One-to-one Outreach

We believe our main focus in 2014 should be on Reaching Out.

Within this, there will be a particular emphasis on encouraging one another in personal evangelism.



Consolidation

In order to be able to focus on reaching out in this way, we would like to have a year of consolidation for our “building up” ministries.

The next double pages explain a bit more about each of these in turn.

Reaching Out...

We're not all called to be Bible teachers, but we can all be Bible sharers. So we want to be thinking about the people God has placed around each of us in our lives, and the struggles and opportunities we face in witnessing to them about Jesus.

Bible Teaching

Ultimately, it is the encouragement and instruction of God's word that we need. Only when we are passionate for God will we be ready for the work of evangelism. And so we'll have series on evangelism in January, and on Matthew and Luke's gospels through the summer.

“We're aware that our church struggles with reaching certain groups within our local community”

Resourcing



“Uncover” is a new resource allowing people to look at Jesus for themselves in Luke's gospel. A number in the church family have already been using Uncover, and we'll be able to hear from them about how it's been going. We'll have all

the resources available each Sunday, and hope that many will be able to share the Bible's message with someone one-to-one.

In the run up to Easter, we'll be joining with the national Passion of Life initiative (which also has an emphasis on personal evangelism this year).



Supporting

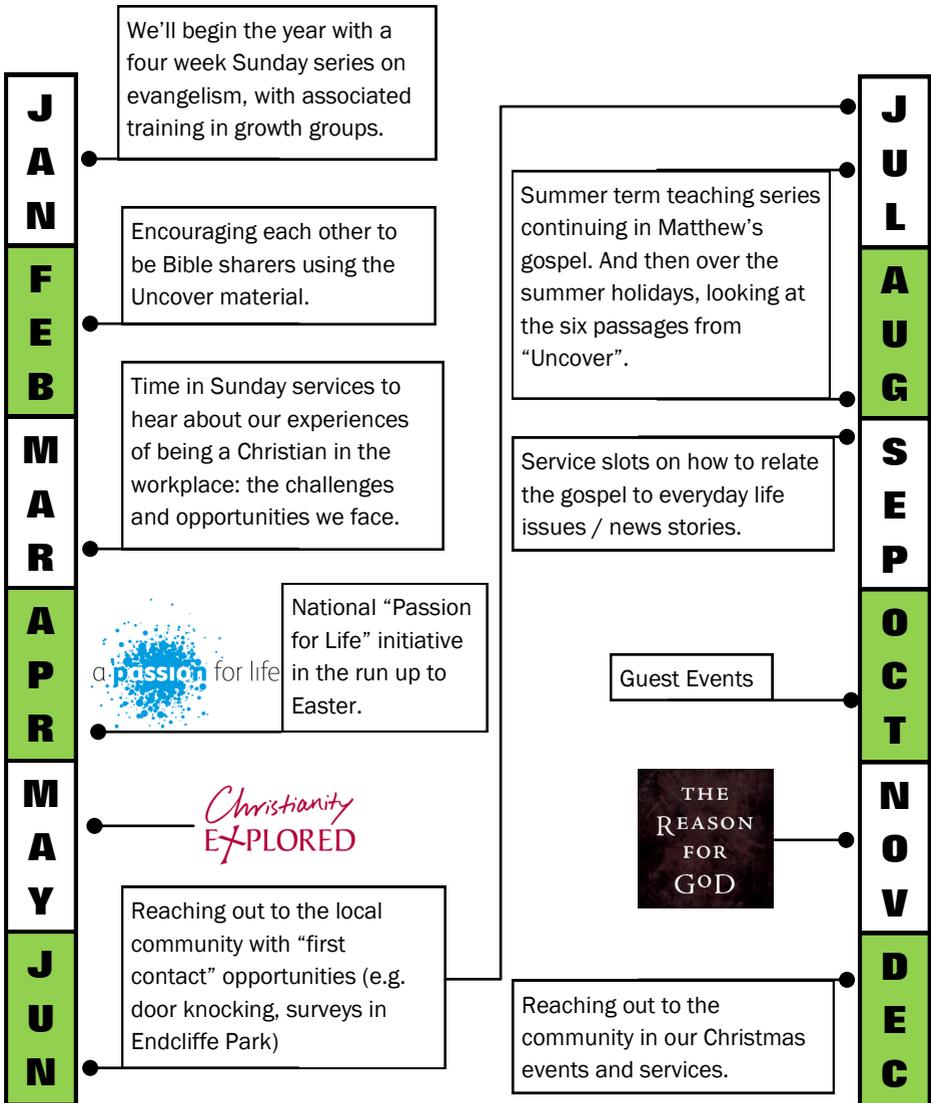
Having a focus on reaching out one-to-one doesn't mean that we can't support and encourage one another! Growth groups will start the year with some evangelism training, and we can all be praying for one another.

“The Bible is always central to our gatherings and we talk about giving God the glory. May it always be our theme and motive!”

...through the Year



It's easy to start off enthusiastic, but then trial off. So how can we keep Reaching Out as our focus throughout the year? The timeline below shows some initial ideas...



Building Up...

“encourage one another, and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” 1 Thess 5:11

There are loads of ways in which we are building each other up as followers of Jesus. From individual conversations and opportunities to meet up and pray, to our growth groups where we can grow and serve alongside others, to the many ministry teams which serve the church family.

How can we be consolidating this great work in the year ahead?

Teaching Programme

As well as the sermon series on evangelism and Matthew and Luke’s gospels, we will have two further series focussed on building us up...

First, from February through to Easter we will be having a series on the 10 commandments, thinking about how we are called to live in response to all that God has done.

“We’re looking at wide and varied parts of God’s word, and getting to know him better as a result.”

And then in the autumn terms we will be beginning 1 Corinthians, a letter written to help the church to recapture the gospel and live in light of it.

Ministry Teams

We hope as well that the year will allow the teams that serve in our different areas of ministry to...

- Get to the right size
- Have everyone owning and being committed to the specific vision of the team
- Develop through training and experience

...consolidating



One of the issues for our ministry teams is that many of them need to have lots of people involved. For instance, we don't want people who serve in children's church, sparklers or our crèches to have to be 'out' of the main service more than once a month. But that means that we need about 60 people to be involved just in these ministries.

And that's just one area of our 'building up' ministries! It shows that there is room for everybody to get involved in using the gifts God has given them, and that as a church family we need to share the load together.

"a proportion of our church family are feeling a little stretched and I worry that this might impact energy and enthusiasm for building each other up and reaching out"

But having such large teams in turn means that it's easy to lose our vision of why we do these ministries. And potentially serving alongside different people each time can make it feel not much like a 'team'!

So we want to work hard at this in 2014.

Outside of CCE

Of course, there are also lots of ways in which people serve in ministries outside of Christ Church Endcliffe. But our church family is still the place where we should be building people up, equipping and encouraging them.

"it would be great to hear more encouragements, testimonies and stories of how God is moving in the lives of the church and people in it."

What next?



Vision Sunday

Please take home the Vision Packs so that you can read, pray and discuss with others.



Partnership Sunday

Next Sunday is Partnership Sunday, It's where we ask "Given our vision for next year, how can you be involved?"

A big part of this will be thinking individually about the people we can be reaching out to, as well as thinking about ministry teams and financial giving.



Church Prayer Meeting

On Wednesday 20th November we'll have a special Church Prayer Meeting to be praying about the year ahead.



Response Sunday

And on Sunday 1 December there will be space in the service for us to bring our responses to Partnership Sunday (the partnership packs will have some forms to help us think and respond).

Please be praying for the year ahead.

Ultimately it is not our efforts, or our evangelism that can bring people to know and experience the forgiveness and new life that Jesus offer us. God alone can draw the hearts of men, women and children to respond to the cross and resurrection, and to turn to and trust Jesus as Lord.

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." Revelation 5:9

*To God be the glory, great things he has done.
So loved he the world that he gave us his son,
who yielded his life, an atonement for sin,
and opened the life gate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord!*

“we feel that each ministry needs clear consistent leadership and its own vision. Some already do this well, and we see those ministries expanding and reaching out whilst others, we feel, need a vision to aid them in fulfilling their potential.”

“I love that it feels like CCE does reach out to international students and makes a big effort to include and encourage people from all nations.”

“We think CCE encourages and gives people lots of opportunities to serve God and the church family.”

“It’s very easy to become ‘busy’ at church and focus on work rather than relationship. We’ve had helpful reminders in recent services, but need to continually reminded!”

“I love it that I can get to know and share with people I don’t normally see day to day, who are different to me.”

“We talk a lot about reaching the local community but the congregation is spread over a wider area, and so gospel opportunities are often located outside CCE’s ‘local’ community.”

“I think we could be more fruitful by looking at who makes up our church family, what does life look like for us, what are the opportunities we have to share the gospel, what are the ways in which we are tempted, how have we seen God at work in us?”

“praying within ministry teams and into our specific situations is certainly helpful.”