



**ST THOMAS**  
**CHURCH LANCASTER**  
SHARING GOD'S LOVE FROM THE HEART OF THE CITY

# VISION 2025



# OUR PURPOSE

As a church, we exist to share God's love from the heart of the city.

# OUR VALUES

In response to God's love for us, we believe we're called to be a people who are:



**Welcoming home**  
where God is at the centre



**Deeply rooted**  
in Christ, in the church and in our city



**Radically compassionate**  
sharing the love of God to all of God's world



**Generously sent**  
in the power of the Spirit

# VISION 2025

## FURTHER AND DEEPER

As we look towards 2025, we believe that God is calling us to go further and deeper with the ministries he has given us, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

# OUR VALUES

## Welcoming home

where God is at the centre

When Jesus described the love of God, he told a story of a Father who scanned the horizon waiting for his lost son to return, then ran to embrace him and threw a feast to celebrate (Luke 15.11-32). We want to be that kind of church - where people walk in and know they have come home. We want to be a church marked by welcome and hospitality, fun and friendship, forgiveness and laughter - where God is at the centre of it all. We want people know a sense of belonging and security as they come to know Jesus for themselves and find their place in the family of God.



# OUR VALUES

## Deeply rooted

in Christ, in the church and in our city

Like a deeply rooted tree which is able to withstand the storms of life, and bear much fruit, (Psalm 1.1-3):

- We believe God is calling us to put down deep roots in our relationship with Jesus – through worship, prayer and Bible study.
- We believe God is calling us to put down deep roots in the church, where we know and are known, are well supported in open and honest relationships, and invest in serving the needs of others through using our gifts in ministry.
- We believe God is calling us to put down deep roots in our city. We are blessed with a city-centre location, and God has called us not just to run a church but to reach the city. We are here for a reason.



# OUR VALUES

## Radically compassionate

sharing the love of God to all of God's world

When God looked at the world he had lovingly made but which had turned away from him, he responded with radical compassion by sending his only Son (John 3.16). Jesus had compassion on desperate individuals and hungry crowds. He healed them, he taught them, he fed them, he washed their feet, and ultimately, he died for them and for us. We want to be that kind of church, where the radical compassion of Jesus leads us to include outsiders, offer friendship to the lonely, heal the wounded, feed the hungry, and work to restore the integrity of creation. Most of all, we want to introduce people to a life-giving and life-long relationship with Jesus, in whom alone we find ultimate healing for our wounded spirits.



# OUR VALUES

## Generously sent

in the power of the Spirit

When Jesus had completed his earthly ministry, he sent his disciples out in the words of the Great Commission: 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28.19). God loves Mondays, when the church scatters into our life-places, workplaces, homes, and neighbourhoods. He sends us to be his ambassadors and witnesses on our frontlines to his radical saving grace made known in Christ. As a church, we want to be generous in sending our people and our finances to play our part in God's work of mission throughout our city, our diocese, and throughout the world via our mission partners.



# VISION 2025 FURTHER AND DEEPER

As we look towards 2025, we believe that God is calling us to go further and deeper with the ministries he has given us, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

## **Further**

extending our reach to see lives transformed by Jesus

## **Deeper**

deepening the impact of our ministries, to see lives transformed by Jesus

# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**1. Discipleship.** To become deeply rooted in Christ, the church, and our city, we will develop our culture of discipleship. To do this, we will:

- Appoint a Discipleship Coordinator.
- Develop a discipleship strategy which is easily accessible to all church members.
- Develop a 'Growth Track' course - focused on basic Christian discipleship and welcome of newcomers.
- Invest in Life Groups, mentoring and prayer triplets. Our goal is to see 75% of adult members of St T's in an effective small group by 2025.
- Instil confidence in sharing the Christian faith through training, resources, and mission opportunities.
- Provide deeper Bible teaching and theological resourcing through offering a Theology Track.





# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**2. Heart of the City Project.** To help us be a welcoming home, we will develop our Heart of the City Project by:

- Completing and moving into The Centre at St Thomas', aiming to pay off any remaining costs within a year.
- Developing our strategy for using the new centre, to enable it to become a hub for Christian hospitality in the city centre.
- Planning for Heart of the City Project Phase 3. We will draw up plans for additional works needed on the main church and pre-school and submit these for planning approval by the end of 2025.

# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**3. Establish the Family Life Centre.** To help us respond with radical compassion, we will reach out to families under pressure by:

- Establishing PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) to help parents / carers grow confidence and skills to interact with their children.
- Establishing a Listening Service to support families under pressure.
- Providing parenting courses.
- Start a therapeutic play group focused on supporting children in care / recovering from trauma.
- Investing in networks and partnerships, e.g. Home for Good, Safe Families for Children, Transforming Lives for Good, NHS ICC and Lancaster CVS.
- Establishing a secure financial base for the work of the Family Life Centre.
- Appointing a Parish Nurse to provide integrated medical and spiritual care for children and families.
- Developing a Community Café in partnership with CAP Job Club and Life Skills, to be run as a social enterprise to train and provide work experience to assist people in gaining future employment.



# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**4. Develop our online presence.** As part of our commitment to be generously sent, we will develop our online services, blended with in-person worship. To do this, we will:

- Train volunteer teams to operate effectively on these dual platforms, including tech teams, service leaders, preachers, and worship bands.
- Support our online presence with excellent publicity and communications, graphic design, and social media presence.
- Develop effective strategies for reaching out to those joining us online, including pastoral care, evangelism, and welcome and integration of newcomers.

**5. Eco-Church.** As we respond with radical compassion to the growing climate emergency, we will:

- Work towards gaining the Eco-Church Bronze Award by autumn 2021, Silver Award by autumn 2023, and the Gold Award by autumn 2025.
- Implement our 3-year action plan (2021 - 2023) with a further 3-year plan to follow.
- Plan for year-on-year carbon reductions in order to be carbon-zero in our operations by 2030.

# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**6. Invest in ministry to young adults.** As part of our commitment to be a welcoming home for young adults, we will:

- Empower young adults to reach and support one another – through social events, online presence, and clusters of young adult Life Groups.

**7. Raise up new and mature leaders.** As we become more deeply rooted in Christ, we want to develop confident leaders by:

- Signposting lay training opportunities available in our diocese.
- Offering an annual leadership training course to help train and equip lay leaders.
- Helping lay leaders reflect on how they are leading their groups, and linking new leaders with a mentor.



# VISION 2025 FURTHER

**8. Serve as a Resource Church to plant new congregations as part of our diocesan vision.** As we commit to being generously sent, we will plant new congregations, by:

- Planting 2 new local St T's congregations, including:
  - midweek service with lunch club;
  - new family service for those we reach through the FLC, Little Fishes, and pre-school.
- Working to revitalise nearby parishes, in partnership with the diocese and deanery, with the aim of sending leadership and church members to renew at least one other parish by 2023, and discuss additional possibilities by 2025.

# VISION 2025 DEEPER

## 1. Worship, Teaching, and Prayer. We will:

- Invest in the health of our Sunday Congregations at 9am, 11am, and 7pm through excellent Bible teaching, inspiring worship, effective newcomer welcome, supportive pastoral care, and well-resourced children and youth groups.
- Continue to train and release worship leaders, service leaders, and tech teams to enable us to worship God in the power of the Spirit.
- Continually renew our focus on praying together, including:
  - regular prayer, including daily online prayer and prayer in Life Groups;
  - worship and prayer events, including 24/7 prayer weeks, Retreat in Daily Life, Godspace, and Thy Kingdom Come;
  - teach and release people into their spiritual gifts.



# VISION 2025 DEEPER

## 2. Mission and Outreach. We will:

- Teach regularly about mission as our core purpose, as a church called to reach a city.
- Provide regular opportunities for people to come to know Jesus for themselves – e.g. Alpha Courses, CAP befriending, Olive Branch support, and mission trips.
- Reach out to the businesses in the city centre, so that each business owner within the parish knows that the church is available and ‘for’ them.
- Mission Support:
  - Give regular opportunities to our mission partners to share about their work;
  - Continue to give away 10% of our donated income to our mission partners through the Mission Support Group;
  - Make use of Tearfund Sundays and Mission Partner Sundays to promote a global perspective on Christian mission.

# VISION 2025 DEEPER

## 3. Children and Family Ministry, including pre-school. We will:

- Establish stronger links with the pre-school by appointing a Children and Families Pastor with a focus on working with children under 5 and their families.
- Work closely with the pre-school and Family Life Centre to provide a cohesive approach to outreach, discipleship, and pastoral support for children and families.
- Work with the Discipleship Coordinator to create all-age as well as age-specific contexts to help children experience deeper Bible study, prophetic ministry, creative prayer, growing confidence in sharing faith, and hearing and contributing to testimonies of how God has changed people's lives.
- Work with pre-school and Family Life Centre to develop a daytime Alpha course supported by creche / JAM club.
- Work with the clergy team to plant a new family service for those we reach through the FLC, Little Fishes, and Pre-school.





# VISION 2025

## DEEPER

### **4. Youth Ministry. We will:**

- Raise up a 'Joshua Generation' - instilling courage and confidence amongst our young people to reach out to their peers to share their faith.
- Create an effective small-group ethos within the youth ministry.
- Help the young people to become more integrated into the life of St T's through serving and through attending the 7pm service.
- Work to reach the 95% of young people who have no regular connection with church, e.g. schools work, creative use of the new church centre, STYLE invitational social events.

### **5. Student Ministry. We will:**

- Build a dynamic student ministry to raise up confident Christians on Lancaster's two university campuses through:
  - provision of good quality student teas before the 7pm service;
  - thriving student Deeper Bible-study Groups;
  - a welcoming home with host families;
  - learning to serve in ministry within the church, and
  - support in sharing their Christian faith with their friends.

# VISION 2025 DEEPER

## **6. Third Age Ministry. We will:**

- Extend our ministry amongst seniors, including:
  - Establishing a midweek service, along with a lunch club and chair-based aerobics;
  - Supporting the establishment of a national franchise of Lyrics and Lunch groups in churches around the country.

## **7. Loving and Serving those on the margins. We will:**

- Work to deepen our commitment to those on the margins of our city, including:
  - Providing short-term wardened accommodation for Asylum Seekers and Refugees to help them get established and prevent homelessness;
  - Offer courses on basic cooking skills to guests at the Ark as they recover from homelessness;
  - Work with the Roofbreakers team to offer an inclusive welcome to our church for those who face challenges with accessibility;
  - Promote the work of other agencies and services in the city including The Olive Branch and the Christians Against Poverty debt centre.

# VISION 2025

## DEEPER

### **8. Become a centre of healing and wholeness in Christ. We will:**

- Respond with radical compassion to welcome people home to Christ, by
  - Exercising regular pastoral care through Life Groups, the pastoral care team, and prayer ministry teams;
  - Developing counselling and listening services, and extended prayer ministry;
  - Offering relevant courses, e.g. Hope in Depression, and the Marriage Course.

### **9. Be a safe and well-resourced church. We will:**

- Do all that we can to ensure that our church is a safe community, with a proper commitment to Safeguarding, Health and Safety, etc.
- Promote a culture of generosity, so that the finances of the church are well-resourced to enable all of these ministries to thrive and be effective





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