



Leadership Away Day

Saturday 24 September 2022

As you received Christ Jesus as Lord,
continue to live your lives in him,
rooted and built up in him,
strengthened in the faith as you were taught,
and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2.6-7

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What happened?

The wardens, PCC, Readers, staff, and others involved in leading various groups and ministries met at St Paul's Convent (Selly Park) on Saturday 24 September 2022. We were also joined by Guy Donegan-Cross (Diocesan Director of Learning for Discipleship and Mission).

Before the day, Ben asked everyone attending to:

1. Think about how they are thankful for God's provision and faithfulness to Christ Church over the years, to be shared during a time of prayer at the start of the day. (page 4)
2. Prepare a single sentence answering the question 'what one thing do we need to do to be more effective in discipleship?' (page 18)

The day was a mix of prayer and praise, up-front teaching from Guy on discipleship (page 6), and group discussions round tables. The material and ideas used and produced on the day, along with feedback gathered afterwards, are collated in this report.

Thank you to everyone who gave their Saturday to meet, pray and discuss the future of our church – and to those who couldn't come for your prayers.

Who was there?

Adrian Jones, Allan Bartlam, Amanda Smart, Ann Fasham, Becky Parnell, Ben Green, Bobbie Frere, Cath Wheeler, Cathie Bartlam, Chris Turner, Dan Parnell, Ellie Wallace-Howell, Elsie Lanchbury, Graham Chalmers, Graham Romp, Janet Chalmers, Jess Green, Joanne Rose, John Lanchbury, Judy Ward, Kate Routley, Martin Garrod, Pat Clayton, Peter Frere, Phil Banting, Rach Fasham, Sam Haynes, Sarah Crooks and Susan Haynes – with apologies from Cheryl Homer and Jane Clarke. Miriam Banting has also contributed to the giving thanks and 'one thing' pages.

Opening worship

We give thanks to God for –

Leaders past and present

John and Jenny Mason and rest of team who planted the Church Centre.

Good leaders in the days of the Church Centre.

Ben and all the other curates, priests in charge and vicars who have led us. Bishop Sentamu going against the flow and establishing us as a separate parish.

Toddler Club, which has been a way in to church for so many families over many years – indeed, for generations.

Our mission links, which have grown out of personal contacts rather than being ‘top down’ and have been strengthened through so many personal visits, most recently that of Walter and Adela from Bolivia.

Mission links around the world

The links with our Mission Partners and the richness of our relationships with Christians around the world.

All the children who have grown up through our church groups over the years, whether or not they are currently walking with God.

His faithfulness throughout the years of the Building Project: that the old building stayed up as long as it did, for the provision of the funds for the

The provision of our building

new building and especially for the sense of unity and purpose that was deepened at the time.

Our Church building and the way in which it can be used as a resource for the local community.

Christ Church being a church where it's OK to not be
It's ok not to be ok OK – for the help and support received particularly in
 the past when I first joined (in a 'not OK' state).

Christ Church being such a welcoming and caring place; the welcome we
 received and all the care we and others have received over the years – and
 that these are expressions of God's welcome and care for all.

The CAP debt centre and all the other new things God
 has done and will do – Isaiah 43.19 'See I am doing a
 new thing.'
Doing new things

Being in this church with people who are wanting to learn to love and serve
 God more and more.

The generosity of members of the congregation past and
Generosity present for monetary gifts to the parish; we are blessed,
 thank you Lord.

All those on the leading and preaching rota who stepped up during the
 Covid pandemic and lockdowns and put themselves in front of the camera
 to keep Christ Church services going – and in particular, our church
 wardens during that time, Cathie Bartlam and Graham Romp.

Those people who stepped outside their comfort
 zone during the pandemic and served us so well.
*Those who led during
 the pandemic*

The wonders of technology and specifically for the
 gifted and hardworking tech team that had
 enabled us to 'meet' though the pandemic and still worked very hard.

Sustaining us through COVID and vacancy and for sending us a vicar.

Bringing Ben & Jess to Christ Church after so much searching.

What is discipleship?

God grows the church, we join in with His mission.
Our task is given in Matthew 28:

Jesus said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'

Being and making disciples is the Church's central task. Disciples pray with passion. Disciples worship. Disciples love the church and serve her with energy and joy. Disciples give lavishly. Disciples care about the poor and bring about justice. Disciples take risks for the kingdom of God

So, if we focus on being and making disciples first, the rest will follow.



The best way to grow the church is to grow disciples

Every church needs to ask itself two questions:

What is our plan for discipleship?

And, is it working?

Some key thoughts and ideas:

Information is not enough. We need information, modelling, sending out, accountability.

Discipleship is caught, rather than taught. 'Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I'll remember. Involve me, I'll understand.'

A plan must be open enough for newcomers, and offer high accountability.

Discipleship is largely about developing habits which form you over time.



Our shared language of discipleship

After Guy's introduction to discipleship we collected our shared language of what 'discipleship' means to us:

Serving where God has sent you.

Having our identity in Christ – being rooted in him.

Acting and looking like Christ, being authentic as individuals and church.

Intentionally seeking to follow Jesus in every aspect of our life.

Being willing to learn from others and be accountable to them.

We seek to follow Jesus because of everything he has done for us; he is our primary influencer.

A follower is not just about activities but a growing relationship.

Learning to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength – and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Learning and growing and changing our perspective on life.

Adopting appropriate spiritual disciplines that transform us.

Taking steps of faith to help extend God's kingdom.

Deciding to follow Jesus and then continuing with a daily decision to keep on following Jesus.

Seeking to be involved in Jesus' ministry and mission – serving others (inside and outside the church) – empowered by the Spirit.

Intentionally following Christ.

Whole life joy, surprises, challenges, security.

Being led by the Spirit – a Spirit-filled life.

Where are we now?

SWOT analysis: making disciples

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Genuine welcome and hospitality</p> <p>Connections with many groups and individuals who use the building</p> <p>Alpha / START (and equivalent)</p> <p>Use of building drawing people in</p> <p>Access through Zoom, recordings</p> <p>Teaching</p> <p>Gospel shared in most sermons</p> <p>All groups regularly have slots</p> <p>Members involved in wide range of situations / activities outside church</p>	<p>We do not make the most fruitful use of our connections</p> <p>No visible invitations to finding faith</p> <p>Lack of people coming to Christ</p> <p>No clear discipleship pathway, nurture groups, sporadic follow-up</p> <p>Demographics, growing older, disconnected with culture / society</p> <p>Seeking to satisfy questions in topic-based sermon series</p> <p>Not much prayer?</p> <p>Complacency, insular / not going out</p> <p>People conflicted between inside / outside church activities</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Equipping members to respond well to those seeking answers</p> <p>Opening church during financial crisis</p> <p>Maximise links to spread gospel</p> <p>More sharing of stories</p> <p>Knowing our communities</p> <p>Connecting with external schemes / groups e.g. HMO, Kensington</p> <p>Small groups sharpen and consistently encourage evangelism</p> <p>Welcoming place for new people</p> <p>Ethos appealing for outsiders (e.g. environment, recycling)</p>	<p>Ensuring we discern the right opportunities – not putting people off</p> <p>Fear of doing evangelism</p> <p>Fear of change</p> <p>May lose people</p> <p>Loss of confidence in the gospel</p> <p>Lack of confidence in being able to answer questions satisfactorily</p>

SWOT analysis: growing disciples

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Challenges given in sermons</p> <p>Home groups (listed several times)</p> <p>Links with Anchor – His Story etc</p> <p>Series such as Resurrection – hope, life, joy</p> <p>Variety of preachers / leaders</p> <p>Mature Christians</p> <p>All ages catered for</p> <p>Good Bible teaching</p> <p>Fellowship</p>	<p>No organised discipleship plan involving intentional accountability, going deeper, learning, next steps for those who make a commitment, mentoring</p> <p>Don't go deep in conversations (e.g. after services)</p> <p>No training in leadership roles</p> <p>Not a culture of learning</p> <p>Messages can feel doom & gloom</p> <p>Follow-up when people don't come</p> <p>Tricky conversations avoided</p> <p>Home groups are not missional</p> <p>Lack of response to individual needs</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Welcoming place</p> <p>People who have valuable spiritual relationships outside Christ Church</p> <p>Create groups for follow-up and intentional discipleship</p> <p>Small groups – meeting together</p> <p>Disciple home-group leaders</p> <p>Sharing lives</p> <p>Mentoring / one-to-one</p> <p>Point of contact for those who need discipling / with questions about faith</p> <p>Easter / Christmas events</p> <p>Good relationships</p>	<p>People over-committed (maybe to wrong things?)</p> <p>Resistance and reluctant for change</p> <p>Older congregation</p> <p>Leaders / carers – who cares for them</p> <p>Busy-ness of those doing a lot</p> <p>If people aren't getting fed they fall away</p> <p>Rotas?</p> <p>Too much emphasis on job not service</p>

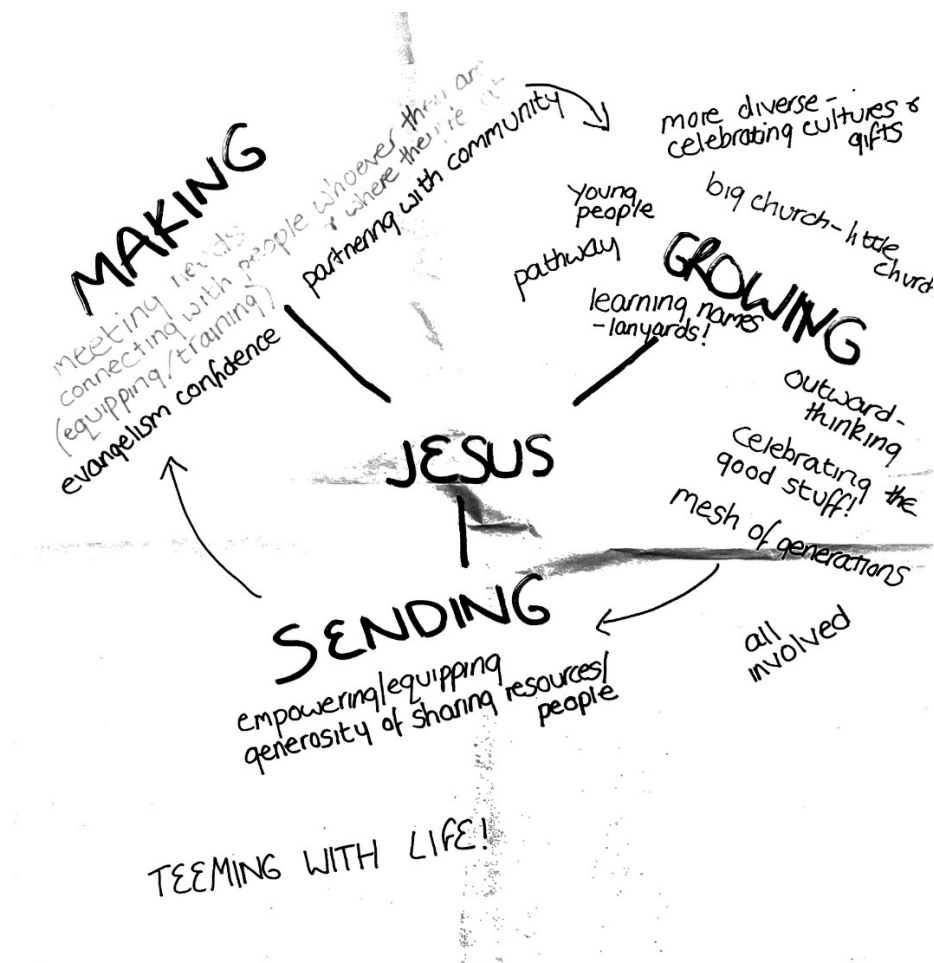
SWOT analysis: sending disciples

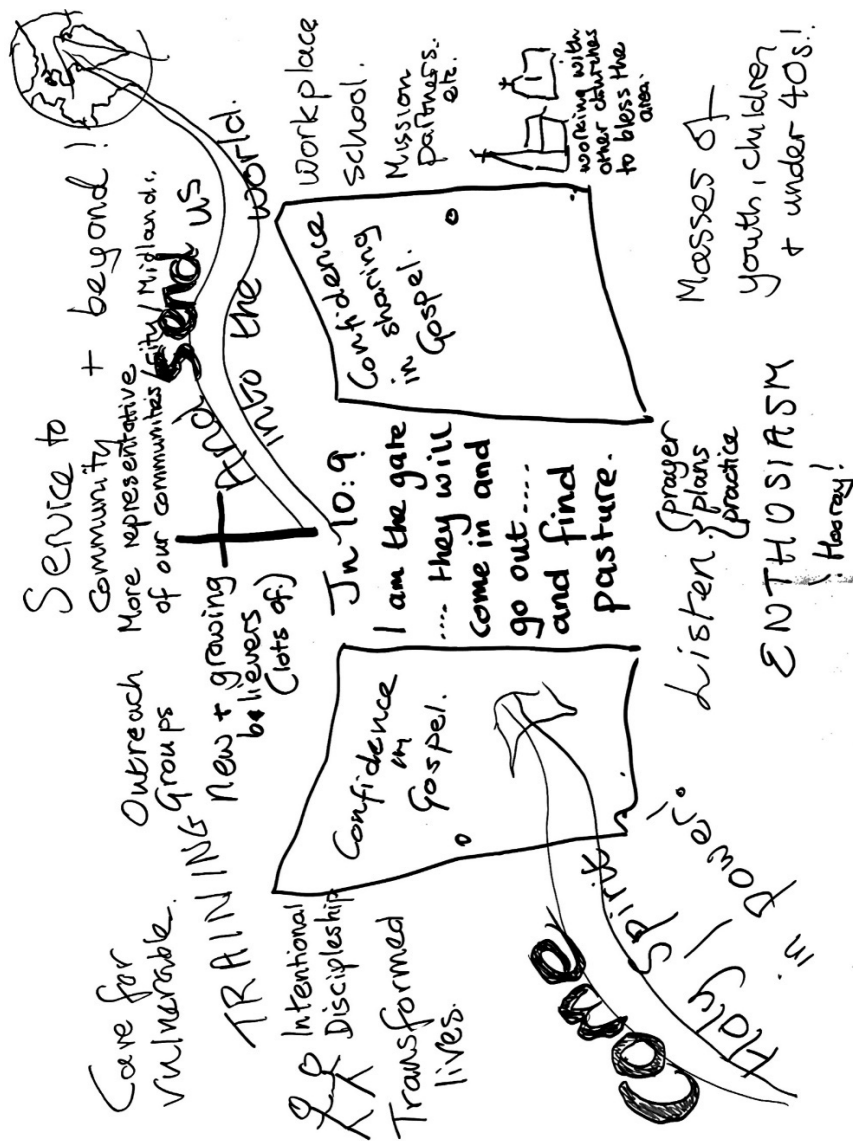
Strengths	Weaknesses
(Overseas) mission trips and partners Number of young people who have gone into ministry We have (sent people out!) Emphasis on mission in our context Giving Everyone gets stuck in Lots of community meetings in building Collaboration with Baptists & Anchor	Not equipping people to grow as disciples in the workplace Costly financially to go on overseas trips Don't seriously address poverty Not much invitational opportunity Not much confidence-growing activity Little direct contact with parish
Opportunities	Threats
More attractive ways of drawing people in rather than formal church Equipping those in the workplace Support other organisations Use connections within church Extensive personal networks	Becoming increasingly insular Ageing congregation Resistance to change Loss of confidence

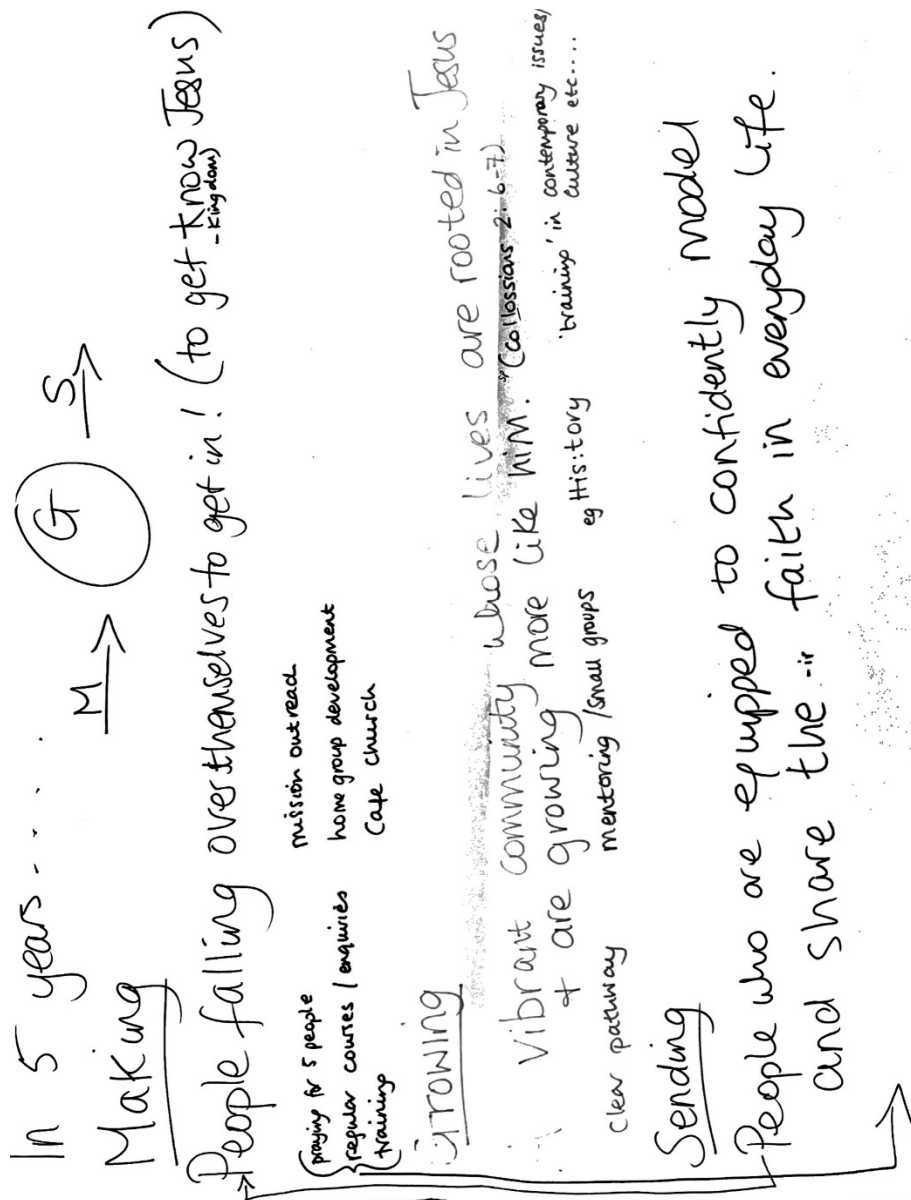
What could be?

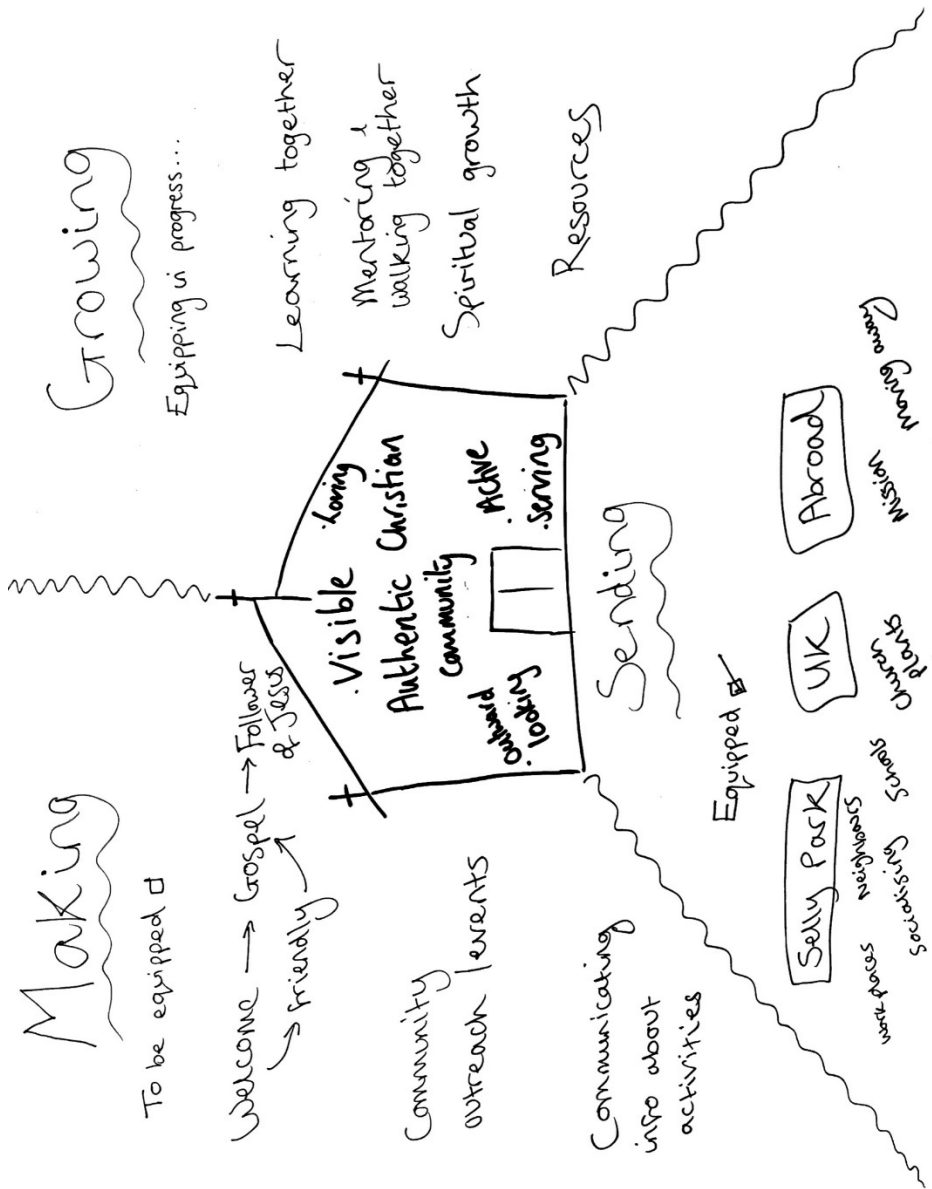
Flipcharts

Each table was asked to dream and write down or draw what they thought could be for Christ Church five years from now...











Notes from the dreaming

Jesus in centre – m-g-s going round

Authentic Christian community – visible, loving attractive, outward looking, serving

A church teeming with life – people receive what they need – where they are at – connecting with people whoever they are – where they are at – (need equipping and training in that)

Partnering with the community – using their strengths too

Evangelism confidence

People falling over themselves to get in (to know Jesus & his kingdom)

Praying for 5 people – regular courses/enquires training

Welcome – gospel – friendly become follower of Jesus

Active in community with outreach events to attract non-believers

Communicating about activities

More diversity – celebrating cultures and gifts

Young people – 20 regularly joining, 14 confirmed, 4 baptised.

Vibrant community rooted in Jesus and are growing to be more like him – clear pathway, mentoring and small groups – courses – training in contemporary issues/culture

Big church – little church – moving away from homegroups?? Change shape of small groups.

Pathway – for people to get to next “stage”

Names – lanyards? More intergenerational getting to know each other

Outward thinking – not always about ourselves

Learn together as community, mentoring, spiritual growth

Mesh of generations with all involved

Empowering and equipping people – generosity of sharing gifts with other churches/community

People are equipped to confidently share their faith in everyday life

Sending not always geographical, but equipping to be useful in places they are – Selly Park, UK abroad, workplaces, neighbourhoods, church plants, socialising, moving away

John 10:9 –Come Holy Spirit and send us into the world – dream in 5 years' time people will really want to come to church – enthusiasm – Holy Spirit to come in power – prayers based around us listening to God – plans and practice based round that – growing in confidence in the gospel and sharing – intentional discipleship – transformed lives – training – different people groups – care for the vulnerable – masses of youth children and under 40s – lots of new and growing believers – more representative of community, city and midlands – social class – accents – colour – education – going out into the world – school, college, workplace, mission partners

Family unit – trust – honesty – knowing each other, caring – no judgement – openness – differences didn't matter

Food – feeding community, school children, each other – more times together where we eat

Going deeper – theology prayer worship, visible in the community, relationships

Intergenerational – every age worshipping together, young serving each other, awareness of needs, older people mentoring young people, if we didn't have Sunday services how would we function as a church?

What will be?

‘One thing’

Before the Away Day everyone was asked to prepare a single sentence answering the question ‘what one thing do we need to do to be more effective in discipleship?’

Here are those sentences...

Share more stories from the front of discipleship in action, to encourage each other, so short testimonies/examples from the congregation, as part of our Sunday services.

Audit each activity including individual house groups: are prayers being answered, how are they meeting Matthew 28.19-20, is there fruit, should we continue with it?

Prioritise our quiet time with God in order to deepen our relationship and grow in knowledge and understanding of the gospel.

Participate in activities/projects alongside non-members away from our building.

Develop and strengthen 1-2-1 ministry.

Ask ‘who is catching what from whom?’ (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 1.6-7, imitators and models).

Encourage the pattern of discipleship in 2 Timothy 2.2 in small groups and 1-2-1 relationships.

Ensure all the things we do within the church are aimed at and successful in making, growing, sending disciples.

Spend more time with God as individuals in personal devotion / quiet time, getting closer to God, hearing from Him.

Have more conversations about Jesus with others – so to promote that how about some regular/frequent testimony slots in morning services.

Help individual members of the congregation grow in their personal discipleship journey.

Engage in Spiritual Warfare.

Meet people where they are at.

Help us understand who we are as a result of who God is and what he has done to enable us to live by faith and overcome personal struggles.

Encourage everyone to intentionally read their Bibles regularly during the week in some structured way (e.g. using notes or a Bible study scheme) so that we are all listening to and growing more like Jesus frequently, not just on Sundays.

Support house group leaders and groups as safe places with the focus on growing as disciples.

Encourage/challenge those who are just continuing on with God, who are not high maintenance so might get overlooked.

Be more confident in our faith.

Possible next steps

Tables were asked to come up with possible next steps (based on those sentences) that could be achievable in the next 16 months.

Action	By	How we will know it's working
LICC – Fruitfulness on the Frontline / 6 Ms	Sept 2023	Testimony segment on Sunday services after doing it
Resources for newcomers / new Christians	Early 2023	Are they being taken? Do we have new Christians?
Personal prayer & Scripture	Dec 2023	Resources to help us pray and read by ourselves / together
More shared food, e.g. breakfast, lunch, evening	Aug 2023	Are we all gaining weight? People are coming (and inviting friends) to the meals People are happy having conversations with a wider group of people

Action	By	How we will know it's working
Encouraging and helping members to have regular time with God	Ongoing	Accountability in small groups Compare with a survey in 3/6 months
Deeper relationships and fellowship post-COVID (e.g. socials, work projects)	6 months	Shared events are well attended
Reintroduce mentoring	2 months	Regular mentoring happening, including training for mentors
Small groups have more disciple making emphasis	3 months	Each small group leader is supported / has a mentor

Action	By	How we will know it's working
Resolve to move towards being a church that discerns the will of God in the Spirit	Easter 2023	United minds People hearing similar things
Do research to find out about neighbourhood and organisations	2025	Create a 'Community Regeneration Team' Feedback from the community
Do Way of Discipleship course		Feedback to rest of church

Action	By	How we will know it's working
Audit of church groups and activities – do they make / grow / send disciples?	Dec 2022	
Form team to walk beside others, to be available and help them grow	Dec 2022	
Story about God moving in people's lives in every service	Next week (!)	

Action	By	How we will know it's working
Review all ministries	12 months	
Launch church and community 'food' events	October half term	
Focus on 'going deeper' services and events	ASAP	Review at end of 2023
'Formalise' accountability and make part of culture	ASAP	

Feedback

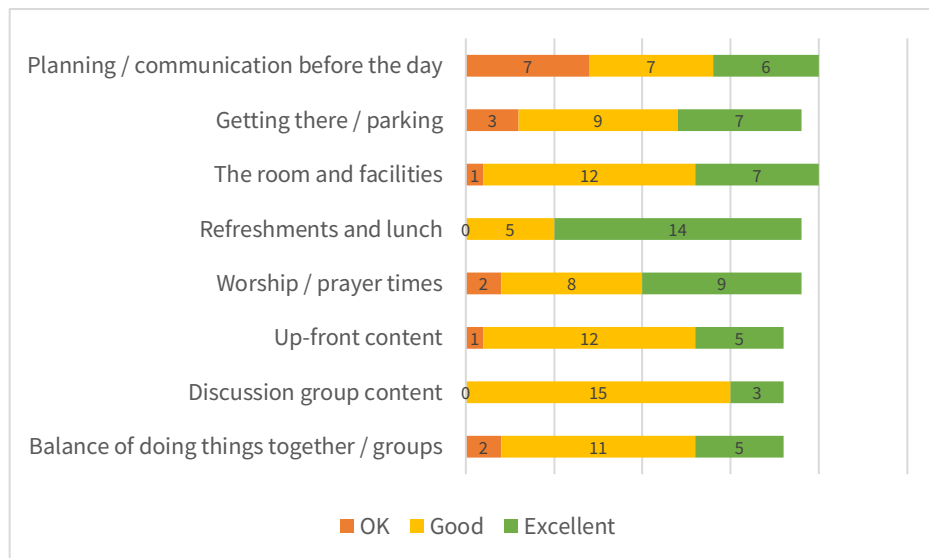
1. Overall, do you think the Away Day was a positive or negative experience?

😬	8	40%
😊	8	40%
🙂	4	20%
😐	0	0%
😞	0	0%
😡	0	0%
😭	0	0%

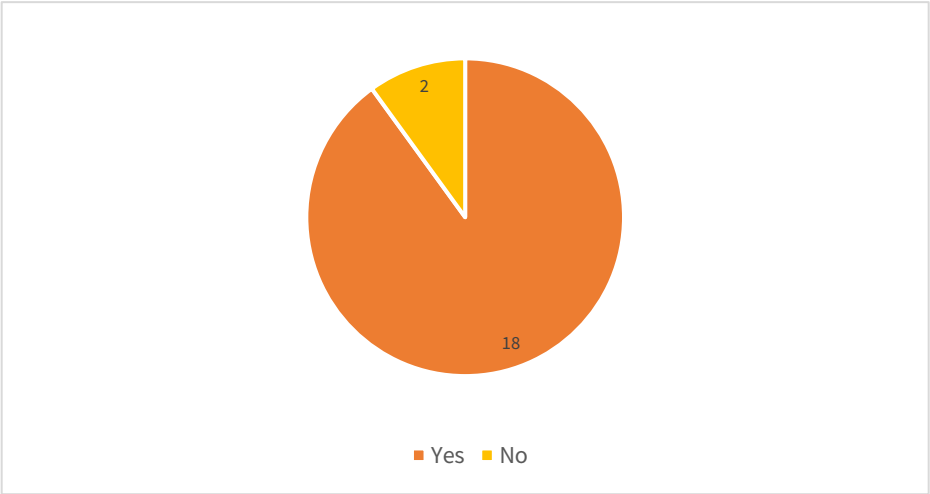
Average response: 😊 (6.20)

2. What did you think of...

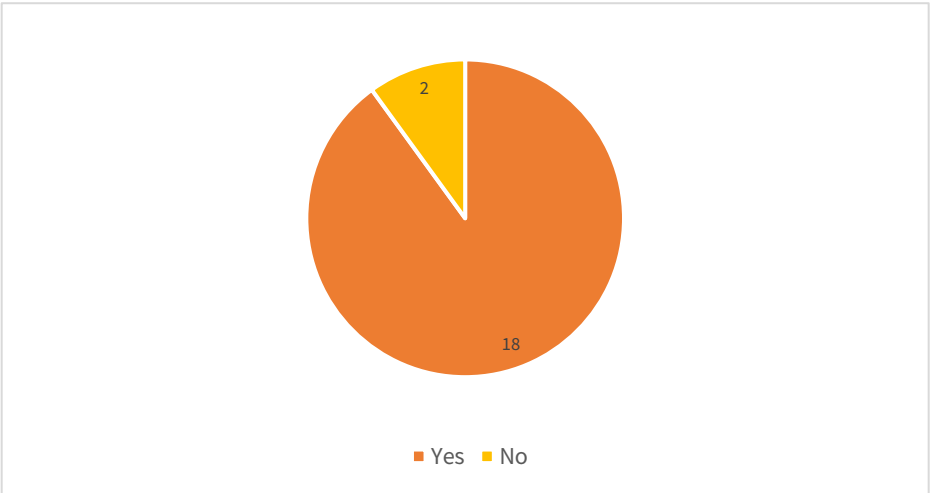
No-one rated any of the areas 'Awful' or 'Poor'.



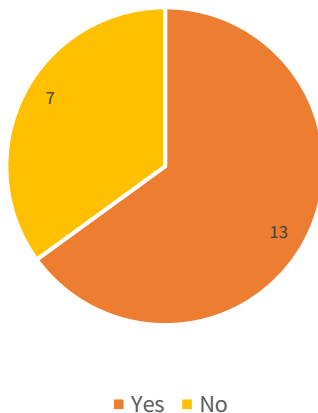
3. Outcomes: Are you more encouraged in how God has provided for us in the past?



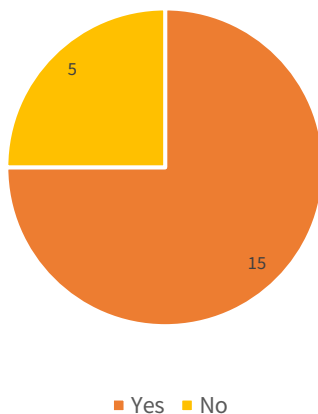
4. Outcomes: Are you more inspired with a fresh sense of purpose and vision of how God is leading us?



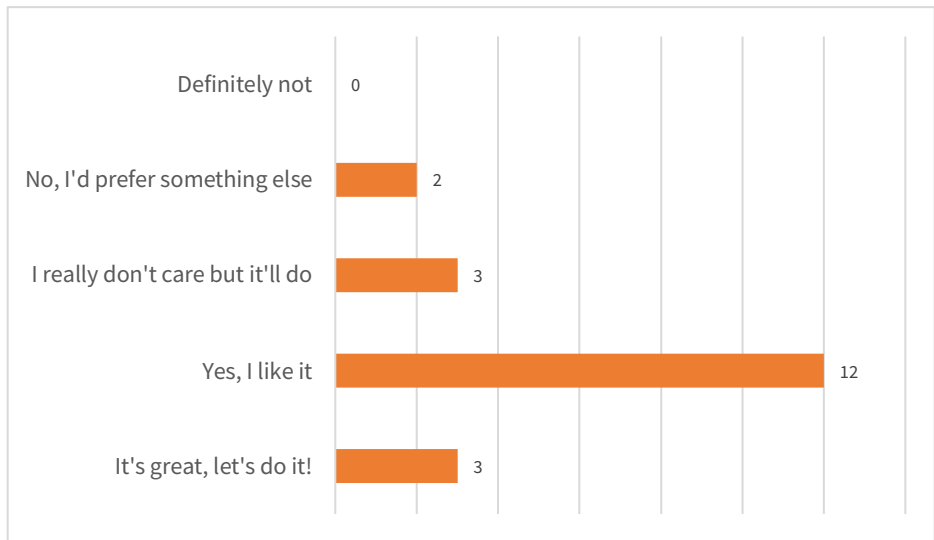
5. Outcomes: Do you have a greater understanding of what's going well and what our challenges are?



6. Outcomes: Do you have a greater sense of what our next steps might be for making, growing and sending disciples of Jesus?



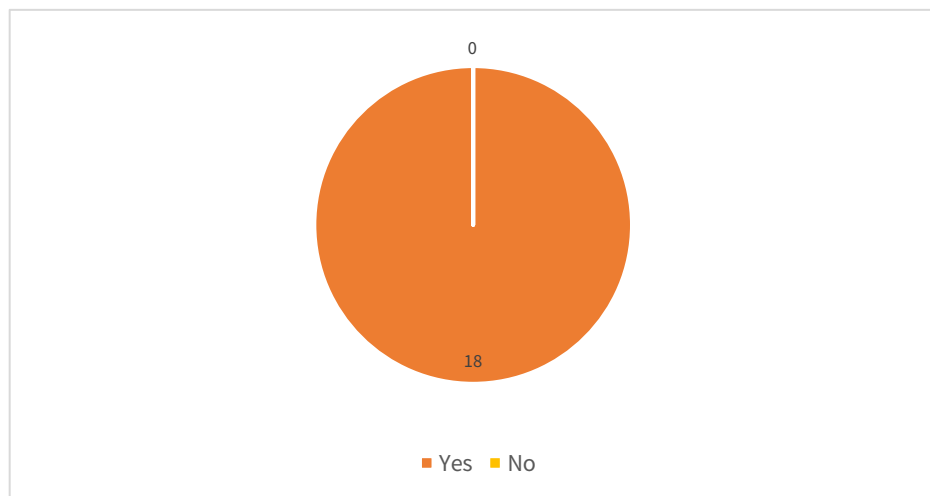
7. Do you think we should adopt ‘making, growing, sending disciples of Jesus’ as our mission statement?



When asked ‘if not why not’ some of the comments mentioned...

- ‘Disciple’ is an unusual word that requires explanation (maybe use ‘follower’ instead, though that loses some of the nuance) – people unfamiliar with the church may not know what it means.
- I feel something more directly Jesus focused would come across better (e.g. to know Jesus better and make Him better known).
- Does the church family want to be involved in personal discipleship?
- Sending implies being sent elsewhere but some disciples are sent to the places where they already are. It sort of implies greater value to the traditional sense of sent - missionary, vicar etc which I think is counterproductive.
- It is a perfectly good statement but I don’t feel I own it yet.

8. Are you glad you came?



What's next?

A small working group will meet several times to read and pray through this material: that group is Allan Bartlam, Ben Green, Graham Romp, Judy Ward and Susan Haynes.

Their report will be presented (with this full one) to the next PCC meeting.

What happens after that is the PCC's decision – it will almost certainly require an audit / review of church activities, as a couple of the groups mentioned in their actions (see page 20).

Please continue to pray for discernment and wisdom – we need to ensure that we make the most of the Away Day and the time and effort everyone put into coming.

Appendix – Prayers

We used the following prayer at the start of the day:

**Loving heavenly Father,
we meet as your people,
in the name of Jesus your Son.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit:
build us up in truth and love,
help us stand firm on your Word,
inspire us with your grace and wisdom.
Not by our own strength, but by your Spirit
may we bring you praise and glory
today and every day.
Amen**

We used the following prayer at the end of the day:

**Father, as we go
may we know your presence,
be filled with your Spirit,
and follow your Son,
that we may be a blessing,
as you bless us.
Amen**