



2025-2028 Church Vision

Introduction

As we look back on the past four years, we can see how God has continued to bless GSBC and remained faithful to us. We set out in our 2020-2024 vision the challenges we faced and our goals as a church. We have faithfully followed God's leading as we have implemented the vision and inevitably this means some aspects of the vision have changed, others have not been taken forward for various reasons, and we have followed new paths, all led by God.

Set out in this document is our vision and strategy for the next four years at GSBC, this has come from a review of our previous vision, prayer, and discernment of what God is saying to us, the core question being, what is God's purpose and will for GSBC today. As we grow spiritually and numerically as a church it is clear the vision outlined in this document will require a further commitment from volunteers and potentially additional paid staff.

May we continue to give all the praise and thanks to God for what we have achieved in His name and in His service. We pray that you feel a sense of joy as we continue to follow God in all that we do, into 2025 and beyond.

Please read and pray about our church vision.

In the love of Christ,
Rev. Gavin Walter and Deacons of GSBC
21st November 2024

Who we are

As we continue to look toward the future, we need to ensure our mission, values, and ethos clearly outline our purpose, role in the Kingdom of God and way of living. In addition, we should be able to express these easily to the people we meet.

Short mission statement

To faithfully follow Jesus and make Him known in our community.

Full mission statement

In God's strength, we will be united by a deepening faith and knowledge of Christ. We will be a multicultural, multigenerational church, committed to sharing the love and message of Jesus with those who don't know Him as Saviour, across our community.

Our Values

As we carry out our mission, we are guided by values that form the foundation for our efforts. They define the life of the church and must be evident in all we do.

Faith

We are dependent on prayer. (Psalm 25:4-5) All our works are steeped in prayer. We are committed to our neighbours, people with whom God brings us into contact in our day-to-day lives. (Matthew 22:34-40) We want to be known for our service to those across our town.

Hope

We are grounded in the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Everything we are, is based on what we learn from the Bible. We are inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit. (Philippians 4:13) We seek the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit in all we do.

Love

We are generous in caring for others. (Galatians 6:10) We value, love, and serve those in the church and warmly welcome new people. We are culturally accessible. (James 2:1-5) non-Christians coming to GSBC feel included and embraced.

Our Ethos

The ethos of GSBC is the spirit and culture which drives and becomes our motivation for all our service and work; it is the reason why we do what we do. It is to work together to extend Jesus' model of the Kingdom of God on earth by living out a lifestyle of love, truth, justice, mercy, and forgiveness, according to his teaching.

All our relationships, with each other and those whom we seek to serve are a demonstration of our ethos as they are rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and in his love. In this way who we are and what we do, our activities, are an outworking of our faith; that our 'doing' derives directly from our 'being.'

Vision Focus

We are grateful to God for providing the building we use for our ministry. We wish to be wise stewards of this resource, and we will continually pray for God's guidance on how best we should use the building for advancing His kingdom; whilst maintaining the church building and Manse. We

will continue to priorities utilities that are sustainably produced, minimise the use of paper products, purchase fairtrade products and recycle.

We believe that our vision can be achieved by continuing to focus on two ministry principles the need to grow and the need to reach out.

Grow - To continually grow spiritually as disciples in our walk with God, to be transformed through the Holy Spirit individually and as His church so the gifts and fruits of the Spirit we receive, are used to serve Jesus as his disciples.

Reach – To live out our faith with a mission focus which shares the good news, that eternal salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ. As we meet people and build relationships may our witness and actions reflect this truth and lead them to a relationship with and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Grow

1. Make room for all

Revelation 7:9 reminds us that all who follow the Lamb, will be rescued, we are to welcome everyone who comes to the church to hear the gospel and experience the love of Jesus. We will work hard to include newcomers into the life of the church, beyond our initial welcome. With an emphasis on building relationships and communicating church life clearly. Our diversity is to be encouraged, embraced and celebrated, with our different social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds seen as a strength as we learn from each other.

Action points

- Continue to encourage fellowship feedback / ideas through church meetings and discussion.
- Witness our different cultural heritage to one another through worship and testimony.
- Hold newcomer lunches twice a year.

2. Operate as a Community

Acts 2:42-47 reminds us of the importance of building community, we are to continue to build a culture of belonging and growing together in relationship with God as His church and with each other.

Action points

- Our gathered worship will be Spirit led and reflect the diversity within our fellowship. With Gods word, prayer and sung worship remaining central to our worship time together. Our two distinct styles of service, morning and evening are to be maintained.
- We will look to increase the number of our home groups to include new people and to deepen relationships, nurture a culture of acceptance and growth in faith and service.
- We will host quarterly bring and share lunches.
- All teams serving GSBC will be encouraged to include a social gathering for their group a couple of times a year.

3. Energised by faith

We must be a church which continually desires and seeks God for our purpose and direction. In addition, and fundamental to our growth is the transformation we receive through the Holy Spirit as a result of a close relationship with the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This relationship brings us great joy as we are assured of God's presence in our lives, whilst enabling us to be spiritually resilient. Our relationship with God and our desire to be changed by the Holy Spirit, brings an energy to our worship and service which overflows and reflects our unity found in Christ as we encourage, support, and empower one another. As a result, being energised by our faith affects and influences all that we are and do as disciples of Jesus. Celebrate our unity found in Christ in all that we do.

Action points

- In worship we will share testimonies and stories of Gods action and blessings in our lives.
- We will engage with scripture through our home groups and Sunday teaching in ways that connect us to and relate us with, life today.
- Nurture faith in Jesus across the church through our bible teaching and home groups. Helping people spiritually grow and share their faith with others.
- Motivate each other through modelling and teaching the biblical principle to 'serve one another.'

4. Discipleship

Home groups are one of the main avenues of discipleship at GSBC. We want to ensure as many people as possible in the fellowship, have access to a group to spiritually grow together; whilst having an emphasis through teaching on living out our faith in our communities and to our immediate neighbours.

Action points

- We will actively seek to start new home groups, enabling new people to grow and others to change home groups to bring a different perspective and build different relationships.
- Hold four all age services each year, different worship styles help us understand our worship is not about personal preference, but on exalting and focusing on the Triune God.
- Invest in a growing leaders programme, encouraging people to explore and grow in their leadership skills.
- Share resources with each other, that have been helpful in our journey of faith, prompting growth and a wider understanding of our faith and relationship with Jesus.

5. Develop Children's Work

Having recently re-established the Sunday teaching for children and formed a Friday night church youth group (transferred from Boys Brigade and Girls Association); we want our children to flourish and grow in their relationship and understanding of God.

Action points

- Encourage volunteers to support our children's work.

- Integrate the Arise church youth group into the life of the church, be it on a Sunday morning or through activities which help local people.
- We recognise the work of Churches Together and BCY (schools and colleges), and we will look to involve both at times, to support our children's work.
- Run a youth Alpha once a year.
- Run a 'Holiday Club Day' twice a year for children.
- Through teaching and relationship, empower our children to contribute to the life and mission of GSBC. We will listen and value their ideas, and be challenged to incorporate these into our worship, mission and ways of being church.

Reach

1. To have an outward looking focus

We will be a church which is passionate about justice and peace, invitation, and mission to the local community, 'beyond the church building.' Mission which transforms lives, makes a difference and brings opportunity for people to come to faith.

Action points

- Actively look outward as a church, making connections between our faith and daily living by establishing, empowering, and supporting a small team from the fellowship who will solely focus on new mission initiatives and events which bring opportunity to build relationships, witness our faith beyond the church and share the gospel.
- Explore new ways to engage with the community, including businesses, clubs and households.
- Through our worship and Sunday teaching we will continue to show through Gods word the importance of living out our faith in all areas of life.
- Invest time as a fellowship in exploring our gifts of the spirit through discussion and teaching. Seeking to better understand how we may use / grow our gifts as a church; to bear fruit for the Kingdom, as we share the good news and love of Jesus.

2. Embrace change

Change is a sign of life and growth, each new person who worships with us changes the culture of the church, as they bring their cultural background, life experiences, fresh energy, gifts and new ideas to GSBC. With Gods guidance and through prayer we will actively seek fellowship led missional initiatives, which create new and different ways to engage with our local community.

Action points

- Continue to be bold and change when that change is prompted and led by God.
- Be willing to listen, hear and respond to new ideas from the fellowship.
- Monitor and review what we do; admitting successes and failures and recognising that there are seasons for our activities. Learning together and celebrating positive experiences of change at GSBC which enable our community to better relate to us, and us to them.
- Use social media and other platforms to regularly communicate our activities and events to the local community.

- Advertise the opportunity for charities and organisations to hire our premises. Seeing this as a chance to build relationships.

3. Mission

GSBC will continue to support through prayer and financial giving worldwide mission. In addition, we will encourage individuals to share news of particular charities and their missional work for prayer in our services and other activities.

However, we are called to be witnesses to our neighbours and local community. Therefore, we will intentionally support more local charities and organisations. We remain passionate about justice and peace, invitation and compassion, and pray we display these in a transformative way through the missional opportunities God provides for us locally.

Action points

- Seeker courses (e.g. Alpha / Youth Alpha / Bible Project) will continue to be held annually.
- Explore and take opportunities to share the gospel message with and in our local community, through the Arise church youth group activities and other events.

What will we need to get there?

1. Prayer and Discernment

We recognise that GSBC is first and foremost God's church, and in the past couple of years we have wrestled with what God is saying to us as His church. Prayer remains the foundation stone for seeking, discerning, and receiving guidance from God. We will lay a strong foundation for all we do as a church by focussing on the crucial nature of prayer as we seek to achieve what is laid out in this vision.

Action points

- We will create a prayer room, a space for people to be still and pray after our services.
- Continue with our prayer services, which will be held quarterly in the evening.
- River of prayer to remain as a quarterly focus in our morning services.
- Prayer letter each month, written by people within the fellowship, on different subjects.
- Leadership to send out prayer points after Deacon and Church meetings to encourage the whole church to pray about the points raised.
- Host a prayer picnic in the summer.

2. Staff and Volunteers

Our resources are the most flexible aspect of our ministry. We need a building to gather, worship, pray, eat together, and listen for God and His guidance. However, the remaining resources we need to fulfil our vision are very much human resources. It is important to step out in faith, to be bold as we follow God's leading. However, we must accept that without the people to serve through volunteering in all aspects of our vision, we will not be able to fulfil all that we want to do, this is a challenge to us all.

Action points

- Through teaching, encourage people to explore their gifts and how they might use them to serve as part of a team at GSBC.
- Actively seek to appoint a volunteer Church Administrator to support the leadership team.
- Review all GSBC ministries regularly to discern where we might need additional paid staff / volunteers to further develop our God led activities.

3. Media

We have improved the visual and audio aspects of our worship in recent years. Having a digital presence in all areas of the church is important as we move forward. From communication via ChurchSuite, social media platforms and the use of media in our worship services.

Action points

- Produce quarterly promotional video clips to share on social media platforms and our website.
- Review and maintain the church website, at least two times a year, keeping it current and relevant to our on-going mission.
- Invest in a smartboard to aid Sunday Club teaching and use of the lounge by outside organisations and church led initiatives.