



Loughton Methodist Church

Life · Mission · Community

Calling and Vision

2022-2027



Sharing **Life**



Doing **Mission**



Building **Community**

Our Calling

At LMC we are committed to sharing life, doing mission and building community. We believe this honours Christ's call, builds God's kingdom and brings transformation.

Our Vision

Our vision is to see our calling fulfilled over the next 5 years as we encourage, enable and equip individuals, the church and the community to share life, do mission and build community together.

Background to our Calling and Vision

In 2015 the whole church community contributed to an in-depth review of Loughton Methodist Church (LMC). Over 3 months, we collected 1,000 individual views to look at what was going well and what we needed to develop. We started work on a 5-year Development Plan to enable LMC to fulfil God's plan and purpose here and to help guide the church to where God wanted LMC to be. Areas of focus were 'Reaching Out', 'Nurturing Faith', 'Enriching our Resources' and 'Developing Leadership and Organisation'.

The Development Plan led to the introduction of contemporary worship on a Sunday evening; the appointment of a manager for LMC's café; a new sound and vision system; changes in the role of stewards; and holiday club being redesigned and relaunched. It also led to a comprehensive communication survey across the church and building users, asking for people's thoughts on how we communicate internally and externally and how we might improve. This led to LMC's new branding, with a new logo and a new Life Mission Community strapline; to new signage internally and externally, including the outdoor digital screen; to *LMC Life*, the church's monthly newsletter; and to a new website.

In January 2020 we held a Vision Day to celebrate the Development Plan and its successes and to look at how we might develop a new plan for 2020-2025 based on our Sharing Life, Doing Mission, Building Community calling. The development of a new plan was

delayed due to Covid-19, but early in 2022 the Life Mission Community Steering Group pulled together outstanding areas from the Development Plan, considered suggestions shared at the Vision Day, looked at changes brought about by Covid-19, and reviewed information shared through discussions across the church. The result is a new calling and vision, shared at the General Church Meeting on 8 May 2022, with feedback and suggestions added to this final document.

Why A Vision?

In his book *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*, Aubrey Malphurs says a vision: ‘... is a preferred future rather than whatever future happens to roll along. It’s a picture of what should be if you act, rather than what will be if you don’t’. LMC’s vision will be the framework for working together not towards LMC’s preferred future, but towards God’s preferred future for LMC.

As you read the calling and vision, are you willing to join the adventure? Can you support it, pray for it, offer ways to see it fulfilled? Some words from 1 Corinthians 3:9: ‘For we are co-workers in God’s service.’



Sharing Life

We share life through worship, small groups, rites of passage, pastoral care, listening, encouraging one another and social activities.

Over the next 5 years we are committed to...

1. Appointing a Sharing Life representative who will:

1. Be an advocate for the Sharing Life aspect of LMC's calling.
2. Work alongside and encourage other groups, individuals and meeting representatives as we develop our Sharing Life vision.

2. Emphasising the importance of Christian teaching, spiritual growth and discipleship through small groups. This will include:

1. Setting up a task group to look at current opportunities, and to identify new ways of providing faith, spiritual growth and discipleship across the church community.
2. Holding an annual membership group for those exploring discipleship within the Methodist Church and those who would appreciate a refresher.
3. Offering faith discussion groups three times a year, during Lent, Bible Month and Advent.

3. Developing opportunities for worship. This will include:

1. Holding a quarterly worship meeting to review worship so that we continue to be relevant, inclusive and diverse.
2. Encouraging informal conversations before each worship meeting between meeting representatives and members of the worshipping community for wider input.
3. Developing rites of passage (weddings, funerals, baptisms) as a means of outreach; producing guidelines to ensure these services are inclusive, welcoming and a positive experience for all who attend; and developing ways to further engage with those involved.

4. Developing LMC as a Listening Church. This will include:

1. Providing training for all pastoral visitors, leadership team members, staff and volunteers in level 1 Listening Training.
2. Organising training for volunteers to professional volunteer level.
3. Setting up a listening team to offer listening spaces.
4. Developing the café and welcome area as a place for informal listening.

5. Providing more opportunities for Sharing Life across all ages and life stages. This will include:

1. More social and faith activities that can engage all ages and life stages and more intergenerational sharing.
2. Continuing to develop our ministry among children, youth and families through employment of a Children, Youth and Families Worker, with support from across the whole church.
3. Developing groups or activities when and where there is specific need – for example a ‘mental health group’, a ‘men’s group’ or activities for those who are newly bereaved, those who live alone or those who feel they are not represented in other areas of church life.

Doing Mission

We believe in God's mission of justice, hope and peace for the world. LMC listens and responds to God's call to bring change and transformation.

Over the next 5 years we are committed to...

1. Appointing a Doing Mission representative who will:

1. Be an advocate for the Doing Mission aspect of LMC's calling.
2. Work alongside and encourage other groups, individuals and meeting representatives as we develop our Doing Mission vision.

2. Employing a ministry team who, alongside a range of volunteers, will enable and equip the church's mission. This will include:

1. Carrying out an annual review of paid and volunteer ministry roles to ensure that all roles continue to fulfil the church's Life Mission Community vision.
2. Developing a 3-year budget in line with LMC's financial plans in order to resource the roles and ensure effective financial oversight.
3. Encouraging and equipping volunteers to work alongside the ministry team.

3. Developing outreach at LMC and within the local community.

This will include:

1. Exploring ways to use our whole premises, in particular the front windows, forecourt and welcome area, to be more visible as a welcoming, vibrant and inclusive Christian community.
2. Finding ways to share our faith both within and beyond the walls of the building.
3. Developing the welcome area as a place for people to explore faith, Methodism, spirituality and church.
4. Continuing to support, encourage and partner with Trinity Debden.
5. Developing our digital inclusion by providing a full streaming service for worship, hirers and church activities.

4. Supporting transformational initiatives and charities.

This will include:

1. Further development of LMC as an Eco Church, working towards gold standard.
2. Continuing to support our main charities, CDRC, Action For Children, Christian Aid, Teams 4U Shoebox Appeal, Whitechapel Mission and any charity nominated by PALS, and responding to other needs as they arise.

Building Community

We believe in the importance of building community through welcome, respect, acceptance, tolerance, inclusivity and providing a sense of belonging.

Over the next 5 years we are committed to...

1. Appointing a Building Community representative who will:

1. Be an advocate for the Building Community aspect of LMC's calling.
2. Work alongside and encourage other groups, individuals and meeting representatives as we develop our Building Community vision.

2. Developing the café and welcome area as a community hub.

This will include:

1. Upgrading the café and welcome area to make it more welcoming, accessible and user friendly for all ages, committing to fundraising and grant applications where necessary.
2. Providing local community support information for people with specific needs (CAP, Citizens Advice, Age Concern etc.) and being a first point of contact for signposting.
3. Offering social activity and support groups for a range of visitors, for example isolated adults, new parents. This might involve linking with outside community groups to offer such activities.
4. Providing IT facilities in the welcome area for community use.
5. Developing a listening ministry (see Sharing Life).

3. Building links with Churches Together in Loughton.

This will include:

1. Liaising with and enriching the links between CTL churches.
2. Planning, implementing and supporting community activities across CTL.
3. Encouraging preaching in each other's churches.
4. Ad hoc worship/events for church members across CTL.

4. Use of LMC premises. This will include:

1. Updating our policy for building use to ensure that all building users and their activities are sympathetic to our Life Mission Community vision.
2. Annual review of our premises to ensure that they continue to offer safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces in line with our Life Mission Community vision.
3. Reviewing the vision and purpose of LifeWorks.

Enabling Life Mission Community

We cannot live out our Life Mission Community calling without committing to the six priorities below. They will underpin, equip and enable our vision.

1. Prayer. We will:

1. Pray regularly around the church premises, and prayer walk around the perimeter of the church.
2. Commit to praying for specific events, activities, times and seasons in the life of the church and encourage and enable fuller participation.
3. Continue to pray for specific concerns across a range of media (following GDPR and confidentiality guidelines).
4. Pray for the Life Mission Community vision generally and the work carried out on each area within it.

2. Methodist Church of Great Britain. We will:

1. Continue to recognise and value our Methodist Connexionalism and heritage.
2. Work with the Circuit, the District and the Connexion, recognising our mutual accountability and the importance of sharing ideas, resources and information.

3. Communication. We will:

1. Ensure that effective communication remains a priority across all media.
2. Review communication annually.

4. Leadership. We will:

1. Promote and encourage new leadership across the life of the church.
2. Equip, train and support new and existing leaders.
3. Work towards collaborative working, the strengthening of teamwork and the sharing of responsibilities.

5. Finance. We will:

1. Develop a 3-year budget to enable the fulfilment of our Life Mission Community vision.
2. Look to present accounts to correspond with our Life Mission Community vision and framework.

6. Property. We will:

1. Prioritise capital projects and spending in line with our Life Mission Community vision.





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