

Speaking Notes for APCM 2020 Vision Talk  
Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020

To be read in conjunction with visual slides – also available via  
<https://www.eastleighparish.com/apcm-2020-papers>

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There's been a lot of talk about vision this year:

- In Jan, began with Prov 29:18 "*where there is no vision...*"
- In Lent, a special series & a **deliberate attempt** to try to hear what God would say to us on this topic

And here we are today.

- Lots of discussion with our Ministry Leadership Team
- Really careful listening
- This is my attempt to feedback to you what we think God is *particularly* saying to us as a parish church at this time

***N.B. 'Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus' (Hebrews 12)***

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There have been many seasons in the history of Eastleigh

- If you know your local history, there's been regular debate about where our boundaries are [slide]
- And even what we should call ourselves
  - Even mentioned in the Domesday Book

Not so long ago, much of the land here in Eastleigh would have looked something like this [slide]

- and since then, all sorts of seasons have come and gone [pics of old Eastleigh]

Even in the life of the parish church, there have been many different seasons [slide]

In 2014, it was time for another season when the PCC of this parish prepared a 'Parish Profile' in readiness for appointing a new Vicar [slide]

- this is what you asked for... sadly you got me instead
  - you did however get Adrian the same year, and many other great folk have joined us and put their shoulder to the wheel too
- since then, this is one perspective of what's happened in the life of EPC [data on growth]

2 key things to mention here: [slide]

1. God gives the growth
2. We've experienced some setbacks and difficulties
3. This growth that we have been blessed to see has taken place in a tough climate
  - a. Not even including COVID...

- b. CoE figures for same period [slide x 2]

Reminder of those 3 key things: [slide] (God gives growth, etc.)

- and yet...

[slide] “we cannot do anything but thank God for the growth he has blessed us with”

This past year, we reached quite a milestone in the life of EPC: our status as an independent charity

- (see separate document in APCM report)

### **A picture of a hinge –**

- but we’re at a hinge point - thus far looking back
- in the view of the MLT, we’ve come to the end of one season and it’s time to look forwards to yet-another a new season
  - (N.B. a season is not forever!)
  - there’s nothing necessarily wrong with the last season; in fact, it’s been rather good!
    - but hinges can open doors (and close them!)

2020:Vision – **THREE** overwhelmingly clear messages emerged

2 pieces of feedback emerged

1. A desire to develop improved systems for pastoral care
2. A hunger for more opportunities to be spiritually fed and to grow a deeper understanding of the things of God

and 1 recurring theme

3. Discipleship

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**In response to this**, this is what we’d like to offer back to you some key steps forward for this parish in the next season

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> thing we’d like to offer is a Mission Statement**

Our Mission Statement (or ‘why do we exist?’)

- Is it to run services?
- Keep the buildings open?
  - It’s helpful to see these things as different parts of the trellis
  - All important, but not the purpose of the vineyard itself
- The 2020:Vision Process was very helpful to many of us for refining the heart-purpose for this (or perhaps any) local church
- [slide] “EPC exists to make disciple-making disciples”
  - As far as I’m aware, we definitely want to keep on running services and to keep our buildings open, but never at the expense of this mission

### **2ndly, we’d like to offer a Vision Statement**

It’s all well-and-good having a mission statement, but what is our vision, or:

- What do we particularly hope to achieve?
- 2 key feedback points from 2020:Vision Process
- The Spitfire & the Roundels
  - It's a big plane, with lots of moving parts, but as your Vicar, ***for a season – and in response to the 2020:Vision process*** I'm inviting you to help us to focus particularly on one specific part
  - N.B. 'Fix our eyes on Jesus' – what was his particular method for making disciples?

Our vision statement: or what we hope to achieve:

- **“In the next 3 years, Eastleigh Parish Church aims to become a community of Discipleship Groups.”**
  - That rather than DGs being something 'we also' do, they would become central to church life
  - That were we to try & describe EPC we wouldn't necessarily say something like *'we meet at the St Francis' building at 10am on Sundays'*, but would instead say something like *'we have this wonderful community of small groups, all a little bit different to each other, but all of them supporting & encouraging each other as we try to be disciples & make disciples of Jesus'*

making disciples (mission) & becoming a community of discipleship groups (vision)

How will we go about this? (More to follow in due course; much refining to do as we go (this is evolution rather than evolution), **but how?**:

- Much greater support & encouragement for our DG leaders
  - Useful training
  - Helpful suggestions for group life, including:
    - teaching material
    - ways to be outward-focussed (e.g. quiz night or social events)
    - and very importantly, pastoral care
      - DGs are small enough to care
      - but when greater resources are needed, a better way for joining up the personal support of DG with what the wider church can also offer
- Through regular content Outlook & short videos, we're going to reintroduce the ancient practise of catechesis
  - I couldn't find a better word... can you suggest one?

Conclusion

- There have been many seasons
- We're at a hinge point
- We've no intention to miss the even bigger picture; but a particular focus on DGs for the next 3 years

