

## STEP BY STEP

I love music, perhaps almost as much as cycling, and most of you will know that I play the guitar. It's not something I particularly set out to learn, I never had a big dream of playing stadium tours with a world-famous band and I never really even thought about playing in church. I just quite liked the sounds I could make and whenever I could, I would borrow someone's guitar and figure out some chords. My ability to play grew and eventually reached the point that I knew enough chords to do a whole song! I've led worship in various places and with all manner of people, but that was never the plan, it just emerged.

I see a very similar thing happening with Christ Church. There have been several points at which we've attempted to take steps towards a grand, defining vision, but to date nothing specific has held. It's been quite frustrating for many of us; we just wish we could put out a punchy statement and reel off a few paragraphs of certainty about where we're going, but it's just not worked that way.

What has been happening is an evolving way of being and I believe that our direction will continue to emerge under one condition: obedience to God's Spirit. For me, that means first listening for His guidance and then saying "yes" to the steps on the way. To make sure that we were taking steps faithfully, the elders met for a Saturday morning, sharing our thoughts for the future and praying together. In the space of three hours, we covered a fair bit of ground, not pushing for the new and radical, but affirming much of our life together and trying to spot those areas which might be the next bit of the puzzle to emerge. A number of things seemed pretty clear. In the next ten years...

1. Christ Church is committed to being a local church, immersed in our surrounding community.
2. We remain committed to ministering from the two sites of Burnage and Parrs Wood Road.
3. We all felt the need to expand the opportunities for discipleship and learning. A good start to that will be a six-week group exploring faith, life, church and membership. Details of this are still to be confirmed.
4. Parrs Wood Road Building Development Scheme should be taken further and pursued within the budget.
5. Worship is emerging and changing, just like everything else, and we recognised the increasing need for more than one style of worship. The growing popularity of Parade and Messy Church is fantastic, but should not be at the expense of a calmer worship with more traditional roots.
6. The array of youth and children's work is to be praised, affirmed and supported as much as possible.
7. The annual calendar needs to be made a much higher priority to bring a better flow of events across the year and to give everyone a greater opportunity of getting involved in things coming up.
8. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we are committed as elders to improving our communication with everyone at Christ Church. We really want to encourage everyone to feel part of this emerging church life. As one example, that may mean facilitating better discussion at church meeting, where everyone feels more at ease to share what's on their heart. We really want to enable a wider spread of people to join in the ministry of the church, seeking to do everything with more people included, young and old, long-serving and those just visiting.

That's a very short summary of a good morning with the elders! Please feel free to chat that

through with any of us and, if you're not even sure who we all are, make sure to get us to introduce ourselves! The Spirit of God remains in our midst and urges us forward in the growing of God's Kingdom.

**Andy Hall**