

BathAbbey



Bath Abbey Mission Action Plan

2020 - 2025 Vision

www.bathabbey.org





1. Welcome from the Rector

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this “Mission Action Plan” for Bath Abbey. Each of those three words is important for us, both as a Church and as individuals. We need clarity about our part in God’s *Mission*; about priorities for putting it into *Action*; and about how the range of our objectives fit together into a co-ordinated *Plan*.

The Mission Action Plan that follows is a working attempt to ‘MAP’ God’s vision and calling, as best we can now see it, as we enter the next 5 years here at Bath Abbey. It succeeds similar plans drawn up in 2006 and 2015, and is the fruit of a wide process of prayerful consultation during 2019, set up by our Abbey Church Council (PCC), inviting wisdom and insight from our congregations of all ages, our staff and our volunteers.

Please read it prayerfully, and ponder how you might be a part of God’s unfolding plan in this place ...

2. How do we picture Bath Abbey?

What is our Mission? What do you & I picture Bath Abbey being *for*? It is a question that can be answered in many different, yet overlapping ways.

Our ancient forebears would have said Bath Abbey is a Benedictine community for prayer, learning and hospitality; then later reframed as a Cathedral, fitted for beautiful worship and as the seat of the Bishop’s regional ministry.

Since 1572 the answer has been Bath Abbey is a Parish Church for the city centre, home to congregations of many styles and sizes.

At the same time it has always been many other things too : the natural host for important civic (and academic) events; a daily tourist attraction for thousands of visitors; an extraordinary forum and resource for proclaiming afresh the Good News of Jesus Christ; a glorious home and venue for concerts and the arts; a precious refuge for pastoral care and prayer in the city; the spectacular Christian landmark contribution to this world heritage site, with all kinds of educational possibilities; an oasis for quiet contemplation at the heart of a bustling shopping and leisure hub; and much more besides.

At whichever point you and I choose to start defining the Abbey, it soon invites us to sample its other identities too. I hope you will experience that warm invitation as you read this document, bringing together as it does many perspectives and priorities into one place - and that we all may find the bigger vision of the Abbey encouraging and inspiring us to belong, and to flourish as we play our part in fresh and creative ways.



3. Our Guiding Vision and Purpose

These multiple identities of the Abbey explicitly trace to the multiple dimensions of its mission. Following wide consultation and prayerful discernment during 2019, the PCC have re-expressed that mission in a fresh 'Vision and Purpose Statement'.

This now explicitly aligns the mission of Bath Abbey with that of the Diocese of Bath & Wells, and of the Church of England as a whole, to which of course we belong :

The Vision of Bath Abbey:
Living and Telling the Good News of Jesus
with the City of Bath and its visitors

The Purpose of Bath Abbey:
To pursue our Vision through

1. THANKSGIVING : Worshipping and praying
2. TELLING : Proclaiming the Gospel
3. TEACHING : Growing as followers of Jesus
4. TENDING : Caring as a church family
5. TRANSFORMING : Pursuing justice & peace in society
6. TREASURING : Sustaining and renewing creation





4. Sketching the Abbey's Future

Using broad brushstrokes under each of these headings, *what would we like Bath Abbey to look like by 2025?* We believe that, in applying our purposes, we are called to shape a community of ...

Thanksgiving

A House of Prayer for all nations
through an everyday rhythm of stillness, prayer and worship

Telling

An Attraction helping visitors and locals encounter God's presence and truth
through people, words, music, arts, building & bible

Teaching

A Forum for learning and discovery, at every age & stage of maturity
through exploring our heritage, & what it means to follow Jesus Christ today

Tending

An Oasis refreshing lives with hospitality & fun, healing & peace
through welcoming, including and nurturing all who come

Transforming

A Beacon for public engagement with peace and justice, in city & Diocese
through serving others and raising a "voice for the voiceless"

Treasuring

A Landmark known for outstanding care of our built and natural environment
through pursuing beauty, accessibility and a deserved eco-friendly reputation



5. Colouring in the MAP

A. Headline Goals

Of course Bath Abbey already carries out many and various tasks and ministries, taking forward each of our six purposes. Conducting this vision exercise provides a helpful opportunity to map what is currently being done in each of these areas of our calling, as well as to suggest many new possibilities.

It is the role of the PCC and Abbey leadership team to turn priorities & possibilities into a detailed business plan, that enables us to focus and measure impact through the Abbey's mission - and which will be reported upon at the Annual Church Parochial Meeting (held in May every year).

In a place as active as the Abbey, it is easy to be overwhelmed by too much detail; as a result, instead of listing everything we do and value, for each calendar year we will highlight one key headline goal, for each of our six purposes. Thus we aim prayerfully to identify (& publish as an insert for this document) a set of focused & memorable goals that take us "purposefully" towards our Vision together, step by step.

B. Abbey Values

In addition to **what** goals we are focusing upon, **how** we pursue them is paramount for defining our life together. After consulting with staff and volunteers during 2022, our PCC have identified the following key values that we wish to foster and grow at every level of Abbey life. We intend our life together to be characterized by :

Welcoming

"We open our hearts minds and doors to all people, and we offer a warm and inclusive welcome to everyone who visits or connects in any way with the Abbey"

"What you do for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do for me" (Matthew 25v 40).

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3 v28)

Sharing

"We value teamwork and knowledge sharing. We listen to the views of others and are transparent, collaborative and responsible in how we deliver our roles"

"There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12 v6, 27).

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves" (Philippians 2 v3)

Cherishing

"We care for all people, our planet and the culture and heritage of the Abbey. We show this in the way we make people feel, the empathy and support we offer, responding to cultural shifts and challenges, and altering our behaviours to live more sustainably. Not all of us can do the same things but what we uniquely do, we can do with great love"

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3 v18).

"Encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5 v11)

Flourishing

"We encourage people to grow and so look to create a working environment that provides opportunities to learn, innovate and develop so that we can be happy, fulfilled and successful in our roles".

"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4 v15)

"I have come that you may have life, life in all its fullness" (John 10 v10)



6. Joining up across the Abbey

We warmly invite you to help put the Action in our Mission Action Plan. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of Bath Abbey is the way it welcomes and enables a great number and variety of people to be part of its rich and multi-layered life. Everyone is welcome!

To find out ways to be an active member of the Abbey family, please speak to a churchwarden or a member of our clergy.

The Abbey family includes members of our own regular worshipping congregation, and our volunteers and staff who may belong primarily to other churches, or who may have no worshipping affiliation themselves – together with visitors who may or may not worship with us as part of their visit.

All are warmly welcome, and we are deeply grateful for the generous offer of time, talents and expertise from so many dedicated people, paid and unpaid, without whom the whole ministry of the Abbey would simply not be possible. One of the hopes in drawing up this Mission Action Plan is that it will provide a banner under which all may happily find a place to belong, and enhance a joined-up understanding of the over-arching purpose and goals of Bath Abbey.

As a Church, of course our vision will fundamentally and distinctively reflect our Christian faith heritage. We also seek warmly to embrace the partnership and goodwill of all who appreciate and care passionately for our social, artistic, musical and built heritage, and its rich impact upon the wider community. Our PCC (and this MAP) is keen to understand and value, coordinate and synthesize what is happening simultaneously across many different dimensions of our life together.



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7. Moving Forward in Faith

For details of the Abbey's specific 'Headline Goals' for this calendar year, please see the supplement provided as an insert or online at *****

For those of us who pray, I invite you to pray with me for all that will follow from them, both now and in future years by God's good grace ...

A Prayer: "Lord, that we may See!"

The Gospels tell of a blind beggar who, when he heard that Jesus was coming to his city, kept crying out to him for mercy: *"Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may see." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God."*

As we move forward at Bath Abbey, may "Lord, that we may see!" be the heart of our prayer. In answer to the gracious question "What do you want me to do for you?" we boldly seek his gift of vision - that we too may follow the way of Jesus in our city, and glorify God in our lives.

Lord, that we may see!

**For your prophet has told us that where
there is no vision, a people will perish.**

Give us eyes to see

Your great plans for all humanity.

**Give us hearts to beat with passion as
together you bid us follow.**

Give us ears to hear

the cries of those who yearn for a glimpse of you.

Lest we perish

Plant your vision within us, O God -

and that your Kingdom may flourish

Hear our prayer: Lord, that we may see!

In a sense this prayer is already being answered. I believe that in this document we are being shown a glimpse of the extraordinary potential of Bath Abbey in the service of God and his Kingdom, in our own generation.

But I also believe that there is much more to come, as the Lord continues to guide us. May "Lord, that we may See!" be our cry, as we seek to follow - and as Jesus so often had to say to his friends, let us also "Fear not!", knowing he is with us, to lead us as he promised

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