**John 1:35-42**

**Unfolding our MAP: Towards 2030**

**The year was 1190**

In the church in England, it had been a tumultuous year for many. The death of the Archbishop of York had robbed us of a respected leader and congregations were wondering what the church would look like under a new leader. And one of the most famous and learned theologians of the period, Peter Abelard, had just been found guilty of heresy.

It was a tumultuous time: what could people believe any more if Abelard was a heretic? What was truth? What do we need to know about God if Abelard had got it wrong?

1190 AD: a monk called Robertus set out from his monastery in Saffron Walden following a call from God on his life. Perhaps he didn’t know exactly where he was going or what God wanted him to do but, in faith, he set out on the journey and ended up in the little hamlet of Enfield. And in this tiny hamlet, he knew what he had to do: he would build a church, he would design a new building, a radical structure, that would meet the needs of the local people in three ways.

First, it would be a place where they could come and worship God.

Second, it would be the primary building in the community – as all churches were back then - where people could socialize, listen to music, encourage local business and trade; a building where people would feel comfortable to build relationships with each other and where God’s glory over the community would be clearly proclaimed.

Third, it would be a building where the local community would be reminded of their heritage as Christians and the link back through the years to Jesus Christ and the social cohesion that the Christian faith brings.

Robertus had a Mission Action Plan. It was bold, it was radical, it was full of risk, but he knew that a building with contemporary design and flexibility was required to meet the needs of the local people.

And here we sit today, in Robertus’ building: a building that has been adapted by every generation to keep it useful for the local community. And our calling is no different…

Towards the end of the Mission Action Plan you hold in your hands is a section called ‘A Located Community’. One of the boldest, most risky – and certainly most financially costly – things about our new MAP is our commitment to raise the millions of pounds we need over the coming decade to completely overhaul and renew Robertus’ building in the same spirit that he had when he built it.

To create a flexible worship space, unencumbered by uncomfortable and outdated furnishings, where people can be led into a deeper sense of God’s love for them.

To create a building that truly is ‘Church at the heart of Enfield’ where people can come to hear concerts, recitals, watch plays and films, where community meetings can be held in a warm and comfortable environment, where people will want to drop in throughout the day either to pray or to sit on a sofa here, drink coffee, open up a laptop, and do some work.

To create a building in which we celebrate our heritage as we use our space to help people engage with the history of Enfield, trace their ancestors’ histories, learn about Henry VIII’s role here, and Thomas Hardy, and John Keats and celebrate the heritage of our monuments and the extraordinary work undertaken by John Tanner with our Roll of Honour.

Robertus’ building – fit for the 21st-century.

**The year was 1350AD**

It was a tumultuous year for many. The Black Death had been ravaging the country for 24 months and was now ravaging the population of London. In Spitalfields, 200 people were being buried each day and the King was on the streets, raging against local Councils for the standards of sanitation that were perpetuating the people’s agony. So much pain across the nation…

1350 AD: a priest called Gilbertus came to be Vicar of Enfield and as he looked at the agony of the people of the village ravaged by death and suffering, he thought to himself, “How can I create a church that will be a pastoral community for this people in so much pain?”

Gilbertus had a Mission Action Plan. St. Andrew’s needed to be a place of pastoral care in the face of a community that knew so much grief and bereavement and loneliness and the agonies of loss.

Here we sit in Gilbertus’ building. And our calling is no different…

In the Mission Action Plan is a section titled ‘A Caring Community’ and we will be focusing overt the next few years on how we can better develop our pastoral care: for the lonely, the sick, the elderly, the young, the dying, those who parent, those who are Carers, those who are hungry and many more.

Gilbertus’ pastoral care agenda – fit for the 21st-century.

**The year was 1504**

It was a tumultuous year for many because only 20 years previously, the Printing Press had been invented and this new technology was transforming the way people communicated and transformed the way communities grew together and learnt together and many people were afraid of what this new technology was doing. In the previous 20 years, more that 20 million books had been pressed and in 1504, in London alone, 1,500 books were being printed each day.

1504 AD: a priest called Thomas Thomson came to be Vicar of Enfield and he had to think through how he would grow a church community that utilized all this new technology in a sensitive way. There would be no turning back the clock; like it or not, the printing press was here to stay and Thomson had to grow his church using this new technology as best he could.

Thomas Thomson had a Mission Action Plan.

Here we sit in Thomas Thomson’s building. And our calling is no different…

We simply have to engage proactively with new technologies: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Video Conferencing, You Tube Streaming, and whatever else is coming on line as the months pass by. If we do not utilize this new media and new technology, we will become completely irrelevant. You may not like that. But it’s the way it is.

In the Mission Action Plan, there is a section called ‘An Interactive Community’ and we are committed to embracing new technologies for the cause of the Gospel. If we do not do that, we will be as irrelevant and useless to Enfield as the people who sat in Thomas Thomson congregation and said that the Printing Press should not be used because we’ve always hand-written things and there’s no need to do it any differently now…

Thomas Thomson’s technological, interactive agenda – fit for the 21st century.

**The year was 1662**

It was a tumultuous year for many. Charles I had been executed in 1649, there had been a Civil War. Oliver Cromwell had risen to power and the Independent Church Movement had thrived through Baptists and Anabaptists and Presbyterians. Then Cromwell had died and Charles II had returned to England and the first priority for him was to reform the worship of the church and so he introduced the Act of Uniformity in 1662, which made the Book of Common Prayer the primary liturgy for worship.

1662 AD: a priest called John Hawkins came to be Vicar of Enfield and his first priority was to think through how worship was actually done here and how he could build a worshipping community that was accessible for people.

John Hawkins had a Mission Action Plan: to build a church that was founded on accessible, useful, worship that glorified God so that the local community could be united around that.

Here we sit in John Hawkins’ building. And our calling is no different…

In the Mission Action Plan, there is a section titled ‘A Worshipping Community’ and the implication for this are as radical as you can get in the same spirit as John Hawkins’ agenda was radical. We need to develop patterns and styles of worship that are fit for purpose for the 21st-century; that reach out to the needs of people who may never have come to church before, that will satisfy the spiritual hunger of those who have been coming for years, that are accessible and useful and meet people’s deepest needs. We need to develop patterns of worship that work for children and young people that work for the elderly, for families, for men, for women, for those across gender orientation and churchmanship and denomination.

John Hawkins’ worship agenda – developing worship that is fit for the 21st-century.

**The year was 1758**

It was a tumultuous year for many. The Church of England, over the last couple of decades had been rocked by the radical and creative ministries of two brothers called John and Charles Wesley. These Church of England priests had developed new strategies for discipling people in the Christian faith by setting up Home Groups and small Bible Study Groups through which people were being empowered into understanding God for themselves and developing their own thinking and ideas about the Christian faith. And now, in 1758, John Wesley had for the first time baptized two black slaves, one of whom was a woman, and they had gone to Antigua to build churches there.

1758 AD: a priest called William Smelt came to St. Andrew’s and his primary thought would have been how to grow disciples and learn from the ministry of the Wesley brothers to empower people in Enfield to discover God for themselves and apply the Christian faith to their everyday lives.

Here we sit in William Smelt’s building. And our calling is no different…

In your Mission Action Plan is a section called ‘A Discipleship Community’ and we will be thinking through and developing new ways to disciple people of all ages, empowering one another to discover God for ourselves and realizing how God fits into our lives seven days a week, not just on Sundays. If we are to succeed in our mission, in our calling, we must disciple people better and empower people more to find their place in the Kingdom of God.

William Smelt’s discipleship agenda – fit for the 21st-century.

**The year was 1870**

It was a tumultuous year for many. Social changes in England were transforming how people interacted with each other and people were learning how to meet different people and embrace people with different views and ways of living.

The first International Football Match took place in 1870 at the Oval between England and Scotland. Devolution for Ireland was agreed in principle. The first Underground train in London promoted social mobility across the capital. The Education Act promoted learning new ideas in schools. And, for the first time, women were allowed to own their own property.

1870 AD: a priest called George Hodson came to St. Andrew’s and he had to think through how to build a church community that would be welcoming to people of difference, people coming with their own agendas and ideas and experiences.

George Hodson had a Mission Action Plan: how to build a church that could be welcoming in the face of new social mobility.

Here we sit in George Hodson’s building. And our calling is no different…

In your Mission Action Plan is a section titled ‘A Welcoming Community’ and we will be putting place many new initiatives over the next decade to increase the sense of welcome that we offer at St. Andrew’s to newcomers, guests, visitors, the lonely, those of different races and religions, embracing those of all sexual orientations and ethnic backgrounds. If we are to succeed in our mission, we must be a place of welcome and kindness towards all who pass through our doors.

So what are we trying to achieve through this Mission Action Plan?

In one sense, we are not seeking to do anything new and radical at all. In one sense, we are merely trying to stay true to our history and do exactly what every generation of St. Andrew’s has done, which is to interpret the Christian Gospel to the community in a manner that is useful for the contemporary context.

But in another sense, the Mission Action Plan is completely radical and new. We will be developing new ideas, new ways of doing things. We will be reordering this building completely. We will be reaching out in ways that we had never thought possible before.

Just as generations before us have done.

What are we trying to achieve through this MAP?

We are trying to do exactly what every other generation before us has done here: to maintain our core values and present them in an accessible and useful way for 21st-century Enfield.

We are promoting a continuity of values within a radical style of presentation.

We are trying to do what every other generation has done here: maintain the core values and make them relevant.

There is a lot of work to do – which is why it is a MAP that looks forward a decade and more. Not everything will happen overnight. We will need time, money, volunteers, passion, commitment and good leadership. But we are committed to making this happen.

And my question to you is simply this: what will your role be?

How can you engage with this radical re-shaping of St. Andrew’s?

How can you best support the ministry here over the coming years?

What does God want from you?

Please don’t sit back and let this happen around you.

And please don’t sit back and just criticize while this happens around you!

Be engaged – be part of the process of transformation for the 21st-century community of Enfield.

In another hundred years, another Vicar will be standing here unfolding a Mission Action Plan for the 22nd-century and there will be 22nd-century Christians sitting where you are. What will be your legacy? Will that Vicar be able to use you and me as a sermon illustration of a community that was bold enough to take risks, to seize the initiative and grow this church to the glory of God?

Robertus.

Gilbertus.

Thomas Thomson.

John Hawkins.

William Smelt.

George Hodson.

Can we be bold enough to be the next chapter in this unfolding story?

On behalf of myself and the PCC, I commend this Mission Action Plan to you in the firm belief that this is what God wants us to be, in the firm belief that all of us are called to be part of this story, in the firm belief that God will be glorified in 2030 in the same way that he was first glorified here in 1190.

Let’s play our part in the unfolding MAP of St. Andrew’s.

To God be the glory.