Riverside Vision, Values & Planning for 2020 and beyond





Our Mission

Growing Followers of Jesus

Our Vision

To be an intentional community of grace by worshipping, praying, caring, sharing Jesus and going deeper with God.





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Our values

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A church with the cross of Jesus at its heart

A church which believes that only the Cross makes us acceptable to God. The Cross shows us how loved we are. The Cross shows us how we are to love.

A church that values the Word of God

A church which believes that to grow we need to feed on God's Word and apply it to our everyday lives. We need to help one another, encourage one another and hold one another accountable. Everything we believe and do should be tested against the Word of God.

A truly trinitarian church

A church that upholds the doctrine of the trinity and believes we are loved by God the Father, brought into relationship through Jesus the Son (who continues to intercede for us) and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

A church where the fruit of the Spirit is evident

A church which exhibits 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' (Galatians 5:22-23)

A church of prayer

A church which offers a variety of opportunities to both pray and be prayed for. A Church that encourages corporate and personal prayer as both a discipline and a joy. Praying for the needs of individuals, our local community and our neighbours around the world.

A church committed to sharing Jesus

A church which includes the training (discipleship) of our own members to assist them on their 'frontlines', but also includes organising, involving ourselves in and helping to resource initiatives that seek to introduce people to Jesus.

A church of small groups

A church which meets regularly to build community, develop discipleship and reach out beyond the confines of our own fellowship.

A church that invests in Young People

A church which sees young people as an integral part of the church, investing in their discipleship and providing opportunities for them to serve the wider church and community.

A whole-life church

A church of disciples who see all of life as an opportunity to honour, worship and serve our Lord.

A generous church

A church committed to giving our time, possessions and finances to help those in need.



A church that cares for creation

A church which makes wise use of our resources, being environmentally sensitive and doing all that we can to be good stewards of God's creation.

A church committed to restoration and recovery

A church which is a community of intentional grace, a church of second chances, a church that welcomes, loves and values everyone (especially those who find it hard to value themselves), a church of holistic care and concern.

An outward-looking church

A church that is committed to loving our neighbours – near and far; learning from their experiences and seeking to meet practical as well as spiritual needs. Building partnerships (or alliances) at home and abroad in order to serve holistic needs.

A church committed to one another's inclusion, welfare and growth

A church that practices hospitality, that intentionally looks out for those 'on the edges' and seeks to ensure that they are included. A church where members recognise their responsibility to care for one another and pray for one another.

A church leadership that equips

A church which is committed to encouraging and assisting members in testing and fulfilling their calling by practical instruction, demonstration and encouragement.

A church committed to planting and growing 'churches'

A church which, in order to see people coming to Christ and becoming established in Christian community, will be creative about how we can plant small churches/ groups in communities where people belong.

A welcoming church

A church generous enough to adjust our habits, style and structures to help 'outsiders' and the next generation meet with and develop a relationship with Jesus.

Five year plan Where do we want to be?

With our vision in mind, we have produced the following 5-year plan for many of the areas of church ministry, life and facilities.

We will look to establish and grow ministry teams within each area of this plan. The elders will work with these teams to develop action plans and set appropriate milestones. These will be monitored and reviewed regularly, and an annual report will be made to the church.

Of course, over this time, the final destination will be reviewed and adapted as progress is made, but we believe setting out this initial vision is key to developing these areas of Riverside.

Gatherings and ministry

Teaching

Where are we now?

Bible teaching is mainly delivered via our Family and Evening Services. There is a mix of systematic preaching through books of the Bible and a more thematic approach. Bible study is a key element of our Small Groups and sometimes follows the same topic as the respective Sunday services. Children and young people follow their own curriculums.

We also run occasional 'short courses' where people choose to meet up regularly to study a particular topic together, e.g. 'Transforming Work' (LICC).

Keswick Ayrshire is an annual event organised by local Pastors. It brings Bible teachers of international renown to Ayrshire.

Why invest in this area?

The Bible is God's gift to us, pointing us to Jesus, and equipping us to live as citizens of his kingdom.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

If we are to live lives that are godly and which attract people to Jesus, then we need to both know God's Word and know how to apply it. The Word of God is to be understood and lived out in community.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

Our Morning Service will remain a key time for expository and thematic teaching and preaching.

Small Groups will become increasingly important not only for studying God's Word together but for helping each other to put learning into practice.

We will run a range of 'short courses' throughout the year. Some of these will be clearly designed to build biblical and theological understanding, others will tackle particular hot issues, and some will be very practical in nature (e.g. parenting, entering the workplace, preaching/ communication). These courses are likely to include 'up-front' teaching, but will essentially be participative and interactive.

We will continue to invest in our youth and chiildren's work - helping to develop a biblical worldview from a young age. There will be more opportunities for young people and adults to learn and serve together.

All theology should be 'practical' theology; we want to encourage and support learning communities to foster mutually supportive practitioners.

We will continue to work with other churches to provide opportunities for teaching, worship and service.

Music and Worship

Where are we now?

We are grateful for the group of talented musicians who give of their time, energy and forethought into leading our corporate worship.

Through their guidance and leading, we have been able to introduce new worship songs to the congregation, while also retaining the best of the more traditional songs.

There has been a culture in our worship teams of including young people. This continues as they participate in the band, lead songs and occasionally lead services.

Why invest in this area?

Since the foundation of the Christian church, corporate singing has played an important role in congregational life. By singing these songs together we worship, confess, lament and commit ourselves to God. We encourage each other by singing of the truth of God together, and remind ourselves of the hope and security we have in his promises.

In addition to this, sung corporate worship is an important part of our gatherings where we seek to encounter Jesus, and spend time in his presence, taking the focus away from ourselves and onto him.

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Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We will strive to continue to enjoy Jesuscentered, scripture-based worship together.

We would like to continue to see the integration of young people into our worship team, acknowledging that this doesn't just happen and requires the capacity for planning, support and development.

We would like to provide opportunities for training of new worship leaders and development of our existing team, particularly in the area of theology and theology of worship, enabling them to grow in love for God and for leading his people in worship.

Additionally, we would like to improve the overall planning of our Sunday services, so that there is a closer link and better flow between worship, teaching and response.

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Where are we now?

We encourage corporate, group and individual prayer. The main opportunities for corporate prayer are our weekly Prayer Gathering, monthly Prayer Breakfast and at our Sunday Services. The Prayer Gathering is attended by 25-35 people, and Prayer Breakfast by 12-18. Small Groups generally include time for prayer. In the past we have sought to encourage people to form informal 'prayer triplets' or DNA groups (Discipleship, Nurture & Accountability) – response hasn't always been great but a number of church members do meet together to pray for and encourage/support one another.

In recent years we have run a 24–7 Prayer Room week and hosted a Prayer Mission team from South Korea. These opportunities have been valued by those who participated in them. We encourage prayer as a personal spiritual discipline largely through our teaching programme. Some groups have also undertaken 'The Prayer Course' (24–7 Prayer). A Prayer Update is produced each week – encouraging people to pray for church ministries, outreach activities, individuals in need of prayer and world events. This has encouraged personal prayer and pastoral engagement.

Why invest in this area?

A healthy prayer life is fundamental to a spiritually healthy church and Christian. The Bible teaches that a healthy prayer life is important for a church (James 5:13-20), and theological studies suggest that growing churches tend to have a well-attended corporate prayer life.

Our Prayer Gathering attracts very few people under 50. Initiatives, such as the Prayer Room, attract a more varied age range, but the overall proportion of church members participating remains low.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

- To have a programme of discipleship which includes training in prayer.
- To have people trained to pray with others in pastoral situations and during/after church services.
- To make it easy and accessible for people to be prayed for and/or with, e.g. at end of services.
- To encourage 'informal' prayer but also to help facilitate others who would like to be part of a 'prayer triplet' type group.
- To have a larger proportion of the church actively engaged in corporate prayer.
- To help Small Group leaders develop the role of prayer in Small Groups.
- To be a church where prayer is core to all we do.

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0–18 years

Youth Work

Where are we now?

We are grateful for an established youth ministry within the church and for the current volunteers and previous staff who have enabled and facilitated this work. We are blessed with a group of young people who are committed to attending the different activities provided for them, including Youth on Sundays, Bible Studies, joint youth worship nights, social events, residentials and Magnitude festival (replacing Soul Survivor). We love the spiritual depth of our young folk and desire that they go deeper and experience more in their relationship with Jesus.

However, we have noticed a lack of confidence in our young people in sharing what they believe, and in helping one another grow through exploring faith together. We also believe that the youth work has become separated from the church as a whole. As a result, no real relationships are developed between different age groups, which can lead to isolation and little appreciation of their needs, there's no real integration of our young people into the other activities of the church, and our young people have no real influence in the life and growth of our church.

Why invest in this area?

Investing in today's youth is necessary in growing the body of Christ. Teaching young people in the church to grow in their relationship with Jesus prepares them to serve him in all they do, and prepares them for living as a Christian. As a result, this also nurtures the congregation and allows the church to flourish.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We long to see a properly integrated youth programme where our church and young people develop and grow together through vibrant teaching, all-age worship, prayer support and the provision of opportunities to serve.

We want to equip our young people to be able to express and share their faith with their peers, to be encouraged to contribute to the spiritual growth of one another and encouraged to contribute to the church family through serving.



Develop Young Leaders

Where are we now?

We continue to benefit from the involvement of young people in Riverside, particularly in the areas of Children's work and worship.

However, once in these roles, young people and any new volunteers have to "learn on the job" and with no real support or plan for their development.

There are also many other areas our young people could be involved in, but opportunities have yet to be developed.

Why invest in this area?

The church should invest in young people because these individuals can grow and develop into leaders who are well-rounded, experienced, trustworthy, unique and assured in their faith.

Perhaps even more than that, however, the church can create leaders that have the opportunity to work right here, right now, no matter the person's age.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

In order to grow young (and, indeed, any) leaders, there needs to be a great deal of intentionality, organisation and adaptability.

Our vision is to see a structured program which encourages young people to participate in church service and supports their growth and development as they do so.



Children's Work

Where are we now?

We are blessed with a great children's team, who enjoy good fellowship, care for each other and who are passionate about the children they serve. We believe this sets an atmosphere of Christian love and care in which the children don't just learn about God's love but see it modelled as well.

The curriculum is structured, systematic and delivers teaching which covers the Old and New Testaments. The rota is well organised and allows everyone opportunity to participate in adult services too.

Recent creative and craft sessions have been well received and feedback from children and families has been good. The Wednesday morning toddlers group continues to be well attended and appreciated by families from the community.

Why invest in this area?

Children are important to a church fellowship and to Jesus. Children need a firm spiritual foundation and we ought to be helping them grow in their walk with God.

They also provide an opportunity for their parents to connect with church. In our Sunday services we can enjoy great worship and engaging messages; if the children are engaged and connected they will want to keep coming, and if they are coming so are their parents, opening up this teaching and worship to them also.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We want to see the social and relational aspect enjoyed by the leaders to also be nurtured among the children, that they too might grow socially. Additional gatherings, particularly age-specific ones, could be implemented to develop this. By deepening relationships within groups, we also believe we will further prepare children for the step up to YF, when it comes.

While our current teaching material serves us well, we will look ahead in order to periodically freshen the curriculum, ensuring that it is replaced with a similar comprehensive collection of material.

We long to see our community reached with the good news of Jesus. To bridge the gap between the children's work in church and the work that we do in the community will require support and input from church staff and volunteers.

We would like to be able to cater for children from the start of a service to its finish, but this would require an increase in volunteer numbers.



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Schools Work

Where are we now?

We enjoy good relationships with Braehead, Newton and Southcraig primary schools and with Belmont Academy. The relationship with Newton has been developed through church staff involvement in assemblies, services in the church, prayer spaces and a supper club.

In addition to this, RCT staff also provide support to the school. With the exception of a small number of helpers, all these activities have been resourced by church staff.

School needs, activities and staff are often prayed for in corporate prayer at Riverside and privately via the prayer update.

Why invest in this area?

Schools are a central part of our local community and therefore should be an important part of our community care and outreach.

In Scotland we enjoy fantastic freedom to play a role in our local school communities. We should not take this for granted nor should we neglect the opportunities we have. Schools work enables relationships to be built up with local children, letting them see who Jesus is.

Finally, there are opportunities in schools to run Christian groups, often sought after by local head teachers.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We'd love to see our good relationships with local schools continue, but in a way which can involve more church members.

To do this, we would look beyond classroom and children's work to creatively be a blessing to our schools; for example, through prayer, by supporting staff, helping with property care and drawing on the skills of church members (such as gardening, hobbies, local history etc.).

Finally, we would like to explore the possibility of running an SU Group in school at lunchtime, if the head teacher was open to this and volunteers could be found.



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Discipleship & Community

Small Groups

Where are we now?

Around 50% of the church members are actively involved in Small Groups, which meet twice a month (September – May/June).

The main focus of the groups is Bible study. However, group members also pray together and take some mutual responsibility for pastoral care.

On occasion, groups have been encouraged to think more missionally, or to take on some sort of 'community project'.

Groups contain a mix of ages and gender. There is one group for upper teens & 20s and also a long-established Ladies' Bible study group.

Why invest in this area?

Small Groups offer a great potential:

- to help people belong
- for mentoring & discipleship
- for deeper fellowship
- for outreach
- for pastoral care
- for church communication, discussion, feedback and suggestions.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

- To have a tried and tested programme of training for group leaders (both male and female).
- To have clearer purposes and goals for our Small Groups and regular gatherings of leaders.
- Small Groups will be integral to the teaching programme and pastoral care of Riverside.
- Some Small Groups will have organised outreach activities and/or be supporting their members in their personal witness.



Mentoring Programme

Where are we now?

It has always been the practice at Riverside to provide discipleship courses for those considering baptism or marriage. Also, from time to time, individual or group courses, such as Christianity Explored or Alpha, have been offered to individuals.

The elders from time to time will establish regular contact with individuals on an informal basis for some form of mentoring/ pastoral support, perhaps for a limited period.

Why invest in this area?

Our vision for mentoring is inspired by the biblical examples: Jesus mentored his disciples during his time with them; as Timothy was developing in his Christian walk, he was mentored by Paul; in Titus 2, older Christians were encouraged to teach their younger brothers and sisters.

As they mature in their faith, all Christians should look out for others, developing friendships in which we encourage one another spiritually.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

Mentoring requires authentic relationships and is a fluid process which happens when we are interacting with others.

We'd love to see more friendships where people are spurring one another on in their faith and are growing and deepening their relationship with Jesus.



Enable New Ministries

Where are we now?

Church members are encouraged to utilise their gifts and respond to God's calling.

In recent years several new ministries have been established (or tried out), e.g. Afternoon Tea, Cookie Club, Women Inspired, Alpha, Shining Stars, ESOL Café, Prayer Room, Korean Prayer Mission and Keswick Ayrshire.

Why invest in this area?

It is good for members who see a need or a ministry/outreach opportunity to feel able to bring that to the church leadership. Grass roots initiatives will often come with ready-prepared enthusiastic leaders and volunteers.

Being able to put faith into action is a vital part of discipleship and growth. To be a growing church, we need to encourage a certain spiritual entrepreneurship.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

- To continue to encourage members to step forward with fresh ideas that advance the church's mission and vision.
- To have a culture that is risk-taking and bold.
- To be more adventurous, determined, thoughtful and bold in our Gospel outreach.

Mission Links

Where are we now?

The church has historically been very supportive and generous to a wide range of mission-related organisations, with core support for OM India, Tearfund and Care & Share/RCT.

The 'Mission of the Month' display board provides a degree of focus and publicity. Funds raised at an Early Communion Service and in the boxes at the entrance area that selected month will be transferred to the selected organisation.

In 2018 following a period of involvement by Linda Hopper, a team from the church spent two weeks at the Kitega Community Centre in Uganda. This link has continued to develop via Linda and other church members. A further team visit is planned for 2020.

A 'Mission Team' was formed in 2019 to help John co-ordinate and promote the work but is in its early stages of development. The plan for each Mission of the Month for 2020 was reviewed, modified and agreed by the team.

Currently, we have the following members or partners involved in Mission work and receiving prayer and some financial support:

- Ravin India (previously OM)
- Linda Kitega Community Centre, Uganda
- Joel & Mayra Latin Link, Mexico
- Cam & Ruth Willett, OM (based in USA).

Why invest in this area?

As believers we are called to support the growth of the church worldwide (Acts 1:8).

We are part of the worldwide church and, with our blessings of wealth and freedom to worship, we should support our brothers and sisters through prayer, financial support and practical support.

In particular, our focus needs to be for situations involving:

- poverty
- emergency/disaster relief
- taking the gospel to the unreached
- believers facing persecution for their faith
- Bible translation and distribution
- homelessness and recovery from addictions.



Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We will have more members involved in Mission either in full or part-time service.

Our 'Mission Team' will be made up of a good cross-section of ages, and will be fully established in leading the work and delivering:

- a new approach to informing the church on mission related activities,
 e.g. the introduction of a 'Mission' area/ corner of the church to display relevant information, take away publicity, etc.
- better integration into the church calendar for church services and events
- improved support (attendance) for mission-related activities
- a review of how the financial support is raised and distributed
- at least one fundraising event per year for a specific mission organisation, e.g. a coffee morning or sponsored event.

There will be continued strengthening of our link with Kitega Community Centre, Uganda, with targeted support for improvement projects and at least one further Riverside Team visit beyond 2020.

'Partnership Agreements' will be established between Riverside, the relevant mission organisation and for those involved in full-time service.

Church planting

Where are we now?

Despite various 'community initiatives', we have seen very few people from these ministries regularly attending or becoming established in Riverside (i.e. Sunday Services, Small Groups, etc.).

While we need to continue to question why this is, we also need to acknowledge that there is a culture gap that can be difficult for both sides to bridge. In order to see people coming to Christ and becoming established in Christian community, we need to think more creatively. Part of the answer must be in thinking about how we can plant small churches/groups in communities where people already feel comfortable.

We also need to look at areas where there is currently no active Gospel presence. Some of our members may live in such communities. Church planting is likely to involve working in partnership with other churches and Christian agencies.

Why invest in this area?

"A vigorous and continuous approach to church planting is the only way to guarantee an increase in the number of believers, and is one of the best ways to renew the whole body of Christ" — Tim Keller.

Visit Keller's document here for a full unpacking of his reasoning: **bit.ly/35P9g0s**

Jesus clearly instructs us to "go and make disciples of all nations". We also have the example of Paul and the other apostles who, by word and deed, spread the good news of Jesus and helped establish new communities of believers around the Mediterranean and beyond.

If the church doesn't grow... it dies.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

Outreach will be recognised as being integral to all church ministries and activities.

Regular teaching and training to equip members to live out their faith on their 'frontline'.

Sharing of stories and experiences to be a regular part of corporate worship.

A church plant project underway in the community.

Riverside Community Trust (RCT)

Where are we now?

Care & Share began in 2008 as a collaboration between Riverside Church and Ayrshire & Arran NHS Trust. It has evolved over the past 12 years into an organisation providing a range of services primarily to people in recovery from alcohol and drug issues and people affected by homelessness. It was formally set up as a charity, Riverside Community Trust, in March 2016.

We are grateful that a number of the charity volunteers, both currently and over the years, have been Riverside Church members. A church service dedicated to informing the church about the work of RCT is held annually in May.



Why invest in this area?

The motto of Care & Share is taken from Micah 6:8, "And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Jesus also tells us to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

As a church we need to demonstrate that we hate injustice, recognise brokenness, show compassion and radically love our neighbour – and all of this without judgement or discrimination.

In Luke 10:36, after telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asked "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."



Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

Increased synergy between the church & RCT as they work together, moving from the practical aspects of RCT to the spiritual aspirations of the church for projects/work in the local community. We would love to see more RCT clients coming to faith and participating in the life of the church.

A Pastor on staff with a remit which includes direct community involvement.

The church is more aware of the issues, challenges, needs and aspirations of the local community.



Pastoral Care

Where are we now?

The pattern of pastoral care is based on a 'whole church' approach where we are all encouraged to play our part in caring for one another. The church pastor and elders seek to visit the housebound, sick, hospitalised and bereaved.

A regular prayer update encourages prayer and practical care. There is an informal team who supply meals to those needing support.

Why invest in this area?

Jesus embodied grace, humility and a determined practical care for others. We are called to follow his example.

The apostle Peter, in his first letter and chapter 5, highlights the responsibilities of the elders to watch, serve and be examples to the flock.

The church family, as a whole, has a responsibility of mutual care & support to one another since we are one body and need each other. If one part suffers, we all suffer (1 Cor 12). The principle characteristic of the church is to be love (1 Cor 13).

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We will be a church that displays Christlike concern for all and have a natural instinct to pray for, love, serve, learn from, give, value and care for each other.

The 'whole church' approach will continue to be developed and encouraged. Small Groups will be at the heart of encouraging and delivering mutual pastoral care.

We will develop a more robust system to ensure that those in need are receiving pastoral support.

A pastoral care team will be set up with relevant training provided.

Development and provision of a counselling service with qualified staff to deal with more complex issues facing people today.



New Member Integration



The general culture of the church appears to be more welcoming and engaging to visitors and new people to Riverside.

Almost 6 years ago we established a team of Ministry Leaders – including a Welcome Team. This has been a significant step forward in intentionally recognising and engaging with new people at church. The two couples who lead our Welcome Team help ensure new people are made to feel welcome and seek to link them up with other members as appropriate.

In recent years, we have held two 'Coffee & Cake Nights' for people new to church. These have allowed new people to hear from the leaders of various church ministries, find out more about the church and mix with members.

Why invest in this area?

It is important that people at Riverside feel welcomed and valued.

It is one thing attracting people to church, but to be a growing church we need to be able to retain people.

We recognise that Riverside will not be the 'right fit' for everyone who comes, but we are called to be a church of welcome, hospitality and diversity.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

A church culture where members are constantly looking out for people who are new to church and are helping to make them feel welcome.

A culture which causes us to be constantly seeing things from the perspective of the visitor.

Communication in church – both spoken and written – will be clear and understandable to those who are new to church. Welcome Packs which introduce the church - and its activities, values and beliefs - will be freely available and given out to 'new' people and visitors.

We will be an increasingly hospitable church. Not just friendly to people on a Sunday, but extending genuine friendship and (as appropriate) inviting people into our lives and our homes.

We will be making better use of ChurchSuite to engage and communicate with new and occasional visitors.

The church building will be designed and laid out in a manner that is welcoming, family-friendly and nonthreatening.

An inclusive church that engages with people and values them.

We will have welcomed more students into our fellowship.

Operations

Church Facility

Where are we now?

We have become increasingly convinced that a significant refurbishment of the main sanctuary is going to be a key part of the overall vision for Riverside.

From a practical point of view, we have reached the point where there are items that need to be addressed as a matter of some urgency (e.g. heating and lighting). However, rather than seeing these as standalone items, they will form part of an overall strategy for the main church space. Key elements of this strategy are listed on the following page.

Why invest in this area?

The church layout has remained the same for over 30 years – the formal, fixed seating and more ornate arrangement was perhaps more suited to the way we did church then; however, we are now at a place where we believe that, in order to implement on a practical level the vision we have outlined, the main church space requires to be more flexible, outward looking and welcoming. A space that reflects the welcoming nature of our fellowship, which serves as a marker for a new era for Riverside and helps refresh people's thoughts and attitudes about the church.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

We will have a more flexible space where seats can be arranged in rows, circles, groups or whatever configuration best suits a particular activity. This will also be a more child, family and visitor friendly space.

There will be a space near the back where families with young children can gather, should they wish to. There will be more appropriate coffee, welcome and display areas, and it will be possible to go down to (or return from) the Church Centre without being seen by everyone! We will have a heating system that is efficient and fit for purpose.

Riverside will be a flexible, inspirational, worshipful and contemplative space.



Redevelopment of Sanctuary

- Moving away from the rigid floor plan with the fixed pews, platform and band area to become a flexible, accessible and inclusive space which reflects our vision for a welcoming and outward looking church.
- Using flexible seating to enable services, events and any other activities to work better.
- New platform location on the left side of the sanctuary, where the band will also be located. A new sound desk will be located directly opposite to remove the need for coming and going for the sound team.
- Space that can be used for children during services – emphasising the need to make families feel welcome. Also an easy, non-disruptive route for children to go downstairs.
- A new, specialist design heating system which would be more ecologically friendly and cost effective than the current system. Adding insulated plasterboard to the inside face of the thick stone walls and replacing the old leaded single glazed windows with new, thermally efficient timber framed windows will also considerably improve the building's ability to retain heat.
- New lighting that will work in conjunction with a new ceiling finish will give the church a greater feeling of volume.
- A permanent coffee area (as permanent as is practical in a flexible space).
- An easily defined prayer zone.

To further enhance the flexible nature of the space, it may be beneficial to obtain a portable baptismal tank.

It is inevitable that there will be a small loss in the church's seating capacity by moving away from pews to flexible seating; however, we believe that this should further encourage a more outward looking missional church-planting attitude.

Participation/Leadership

Where are we now?

In the past, before the employment of paid staff, activities were overseen by the elders and carried out by members. Involvement in church life was actively encouraged, if not expected, and the resulting levels of participation were high.

Currently, we employ a pastor and church administrator. The employment of staff doesn't remove the opportunities for service, but helps ensure the essential areas of service are covered.

Why invest in this area?

Each of us have been given specific spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit to be used for the common good of the 'whole' church (1 Cor 12).

A servant heart and sacrificial giving should be the hallmark of all Christ's followers and our response of worship for what Jesus has done for us. Christ deserves our best (John 13).

It is our privilege to serve, to teach, to encourage, to give, to love, to work, for the benefit of the body of Christ (Rom 12).

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

Through the teaching programme and ad-hoc events church members will be helped to recognise their gifting and find their role within the church.

An increase in the number and spread of Members taking part in all areas of church life.

Members will see service as essential and not optional.

Children and young people will be more actively involved and engaged in the church program and events.

Appropriate opportunities for service will be available for all ages and stages.

The ministry teams will continue to seek and encourage people to engage in service, with newer teams being set up as ministries evolve.

Members will be encouraged and enabled to take initiative and be pro-active in developing new areas of service.







Giving

Where are we now?

Over the years we have been blessed by the generosity of those who attend Riverside. We are grateful to God that the church family has been able to provide finance to enable the completion of major church redevelopments, employ a staff team, give to mission work at home & abroad, and support the main church activities, amongst other things.

The church leadership always aims to be clear and transparent about financial matters. Each year we make our annual accounts available to all members and adherents.

Currently the church spending is just slightly more than its annual income, and we have had to draw from reserves to cover core costs. However, we do have a considerable amount in reserves that have been built up over the years.

Why invest in this area?

Giving is an expression of our thankfulness and praise to God. It comes from a heart of worship that recognises everything we have and give already belongs to the Lord.

God instructed Old Testament believers to give a tithe, or a tenth, because this ten percent represented the first, most important portion of all they had. The New Testament does not suggest a certain percentage for giving, but simply says for each to give "in keeping with his income" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Giving to the church is part of our service to the Lord; it helps ensure that we can fulfil this vision, and contributes to the expansion of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

In addition to continuing to support the dayto-day running of the church, we aim to:

- be able to fully support a church staff team of three Pastors, one full-time (or two part-time) administrator/facility coordinator and a part-time cleaner/ caretaker;
- have raised sufficient finance to complete the redevelopment of the church building;
- continue to support our programme of giving to mission at home and abroad;
- substantially increase the methods of church giving by standing order, online giving, text messaging, and other easier and more convenient ways;
- have the majority of those who give, and are eligible, to have signed up to gift aid;
- have a proactive leadership in providing regular updates regarding income and expenditure.





Administration & Facilities Management/Coordination

Where are we now?

This function is mainly fulfilled by the Church Administrator on a part-time basis. The role has developed significantly over the years.

The Administrator provides support to the Church Staff team, including Riverside Community Trust staff.

The Administrator is also responsible for overseeing the various 'bookings' and groups using the Centre. The Church Centre is very well used throughout the week by church groups, RCT and external groups who provide a valuable support to the local community.

The burden of ensuring that we are compliant with various regulatory aspects of law has increased significantly in recent years, e.g. health and safety, data protection, disclosure, risk assessment, food regulation and staff management, etc.

We also employ a part-time cleaner – who cleans the Church and Church Centre each week.

Why invest in this area?

The world has become a more complicated place, and in order to protect the rights of individuals, including their physical, emotional and material needs, there have been many new laws, policies and procedures introduced to enforce these rights.

As a church we are bound to meet and maintain these standards. To ensure we comply with the regulations, we must have suitably trained staff in place to monitor and control all aspects of regulation.

The legal responsibility of ensuring we are compliant lies with the elders who are also the legal trustees for the church. It would be desirable to remove as much of the practical burden of this as possible from the elders – allowing them to focus on the spiritual health and growth of the church.

We have a vision to increase our staff team. Appropriate admin support will help them fulfil their roles.

To continue to offer our facilities to church groups and external organisations, we need to be able to manage the building efficiently and ensure it is maintained to a high standard.

Where do we want to be in 5 years' time?

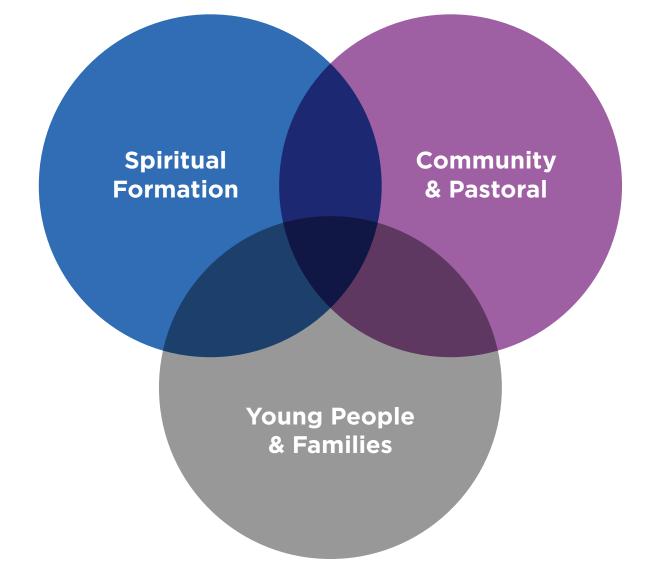
- One full-time or two part-time administrators.
- The admin team will have full responsibility for all regulatory and compliance issues.
- An administrator available every weekday from 9-5 (with sufficient cover to provide for staff holidays).
- Administration tasks, publicity materials, etc. currently performed by church staff and elders will (as far as possible) be devolved to the admin staff or ministry teams.
- To encourage use of existing resources and finding new and innovative ways to reduce administration tasks by way of technology. For example, the church family will be using ChurchSuite more effectively.

Staff Team

After prayerful deliberation and consideration of the needs of Riverside, the elders feel that Riverside requires a staff team of one lead Pastor and two Associate Pastors. Each Pastor will have a particular area of responsibility (see diagram, right), but all three will work very closely together.

We have the opportunity to establish a real pastoral team ministry – pastors meeting weekly, supporting one another, sharing certain responsibilities, determining priorities (with input from ministry leaders and under the leadership/ authority of the elders), holding one another accountable and tracking progress.

We also hope that this set-up will help integrate various areas of church life so that, for example, youth work or community work are not peripheral but central to the mainstream purposes, goals and experience of church at Riverside.



The quality of the individuals employed will be key. Therefore, the lists below may be adjusted to fit with the particular gifts and abilities of the people employed. The following responsibilities will not only be shared within the staff team but with Ministry Leaders and other volunteers. These Pastors will only succeed to the extent that members step forward to work with them and take on responsibilities. All Pastors should liaise with other churches, Pastors and para-church organisations, looking for ways to work together but also to assist with personal and professional support and development.

Spiritual Formation

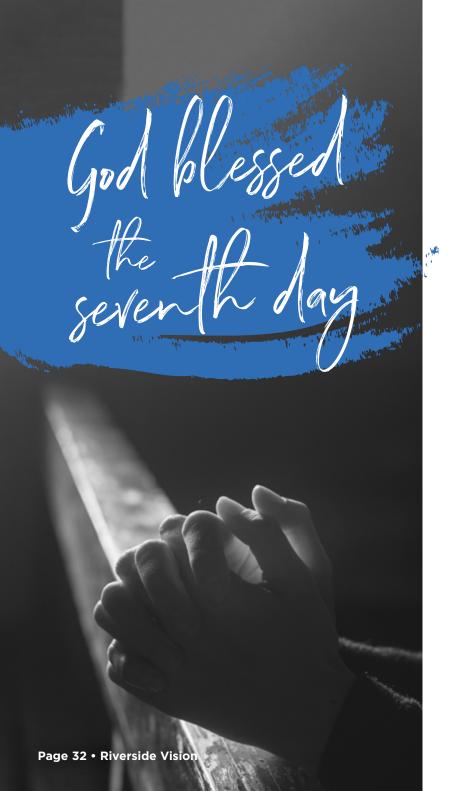
- Teaching Programme/Speakers
- Small Groups
- Coordination of Youth Programme and Volunteer Youth Team
- Worship
- Weddings/marriage preparation
- Facilitating and coordinating the provision of short courses
- Baptism & Church Membership courses
- Whole Life Ministry including visiting members in their workplaces
- Discipling/developing/training new leaders
- Teaching

Community & Pastoral Care

- Developing/training/overseeing a Pastoral Care Team
- Pastoral Care end of life, bereavement, crisis
- Local Community Links/ Outreach Activities
- Liaison with RCT
- CAP Debt Centre
- Prayer
- Funerals & Weddings including marriage preparation
- Alpha, Christianity Explored, etc.
- Link with Ministry Leaders

Young People & Family Pastor

- Oversight of work with Children (0-12)
- Key to delivering and facilitating youth work
- Running additional/occasional events for Children and Young People
- Working alongside those who lead current activities – Crèche, Explorers and Riverside Toddlers, looking to see where value could be added
- Outreach to Parents
- Helping Parents new to Riverside settle in
- Organising Training Events and providing other support for Volunteers
- Schools Work and other Community Work, linking Church and Community ministries
- Supporting Parents & Families, e.g. through personal relationships, facilitating events/short courses, promoting relevant events, etc.



Sundays at Riverside

Sunday is a special day for Christians.

For most of us, it is the day we practice Sabbath. Sabbath is a gift to us from God. Sabbath is about rest and relationship. It is an invitation to rest from work, to submit to God's rule and to enjoy his presence. As well as just getting a rest from the responsibilities of work, Sabbath gives us an opportunity to learn and practice godly rhythms to life that should extend into the rest of our week... helping us to live all of life in a way that honours and pleases God.

How then are we to best organise what we do at Riverside to help one another rest, submit and enjoy God's presence? Unfortunately, there is no definitive pattern for how a Sunday should be organised; Christians in different places and different churches organise their day very differently. Indeed, down through the years at Riverside/Victoria Hall, the configuration of our Sunday has changed to suit the changing realities of life.

For many years, the Family Service has been our best attended Sunday activity. In the last 20 years or more, there has been a growing trend of this being the one service that the majority of members and adherents attend. Traditionally, the primary function of the Family Service was to make the gospel plain to those who did not yet believe. Nowadays, the Family Service needs to be a platform for the gospel but also the main source of corporate biblical feeding, worship and encouragement for many of the Christians who attend.

Communion is celebrated at Family Service on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month and at 'Early' Communion Service on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays. The long-term trend of attendance at our Early Communion Service has been downwards. However. the elders recognise that, for those who attend, this service is a particularly special and valuable one. Celebrating communion - 'the breaking of bread' - is a central practice of the Christian faith. The particular way it is conducted at these Early Communion services connects strongly with the traditions from which Riverside emerged. We propose to continue the practice of an Early Communion service on the same Sundays as present, but from 9.45am to 10.30am. This reduction in length recognises that there are fewer people who now audibly participate. It also facilitates an earlier Family Service while not making the Early Communion service any earlier than we have had previously.

Over several years now, the elders have observed and received consistent feedback that an earlier Family Service would be helpful – particularly to parents with young families. If we are to be a growing church, the elders recognise the need to be as attractive to and accommodating of families as we possibly can.

However, we also see other advantages to an earlier Family Service which:

- facilitates unrushed post-service time together, opportunities for fellowship and an opportunity to extend hospitality to others;
- creates some flexibility for Small Groups who would like to meet during the afternoon and which families are more likely to attend;
- reduces the time pressure on members who are involved in Sunday afternoon and evening ministries (e.g. Creggan Bahn Nursing Home Service, Shining Stars and youthwork);
- is more convenient for those visiting family in nursing homes and hospital;
- reduces the need for children to miss church due to other events;
- allows families to make better use of Sundays for the refreshment of both body and soul.

Previously our main teaching event was the Sunday Evening Service, but attendance has become very variable (from the 20s to, very occasionally, around 60). The Evening Service is predominantly attended by people who are retired from full-time work, and we face the challenge of reaching the under-50s with in-depth and relevant biblical teaching and training that they both want to and are able to attend.

Conversely, Small Groups are more successful at attracting not only more people but a greater age range. We feel that Small Groups are very important to the future of Riverside (see p14) and we plan to invest greater time and resource into them.

We, therefore, propose that we end our current arrangement of Evening Services by the end of June. This will free-up preparation time to invest in devising a new programme to compliment the teaching on Sunday mornings and at Small Groups. This could include:

- a monthly late afternoon service aimed at bringing different age groups together;
- a range of 'short courses' throughout the year to build biblical and theological understanding, tackle particular 'hot issues' and provide practical advice or training (e.g. parenting issues, entering the workplace, preaching/ communication).

These can take place at times that are most suitable to the majority who would like to attend.

We need to be willing to be bold (and possibly sacrificial in terms of our own preferences) in order to help a greater range of members and adherents engage with Sabbath in a way which will increasingly make a positive difference to their lives throughout the week.

Services

9.45am - 10.30am Early Communion (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays)

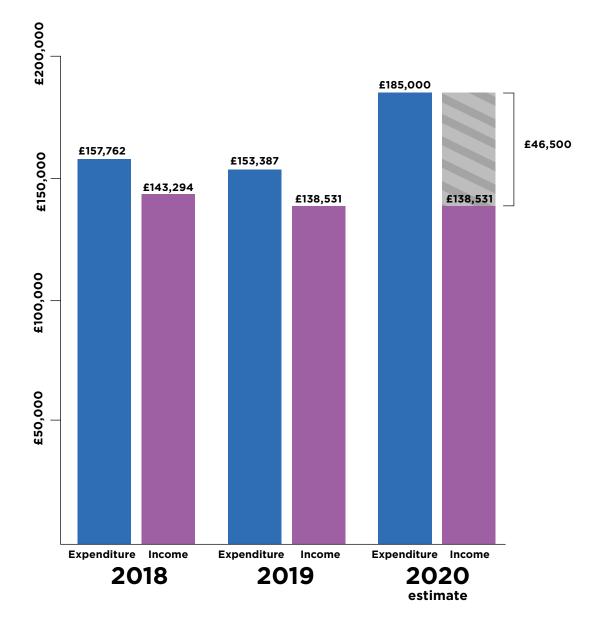
11.00am - 12.15pm Family Service

1.00pm Shining Stars (3rd Sunday)

2.30pm Creggan Bahn (2nd Sunday)

6.30pm Small Groups (2nd & 4th Sunday)

Finance



On this page is a summary of our income and expenditure based on our annual accounts and showing the increase required to support a staff team of three. These figures do not include proposed church renovations costs, which would be dealt with from reserves, donations and fund raising.

The leadership team is committed to continuing the trend of keeping expenditure down where possible, but we ask that in light of this vision for Riverside we all assess the contribution we make prayerfully, financially and practically.

Our estimated expenditure with a staff team of three is **£185,000** with a required annual increase in income of **£46,500**.

This is a required monthly increase of **£3,791** or 60 new or increased standing orders of or by **£63**.







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