

## The United Church, Winchester – Our Vision

**Our mission** is inspired by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Deepening our faith and understanding of God's Word, and sharing the love of Jesus, is our reason for being. We are called to be invitational in our discipleship seeking Godly growth that nurtures all.

**Our worship** is creative, progressive and evangelical in outlook. It is grounded in a deep commitment to help us grow in prayer and discipleship. Our Sunday 10.30 service is led by either ministers, local lay preachers or by House Groups, all of whom relate biblical interpretation to contemporary issues and events. Our monthly 9:00am Sunday service is more reflective in nature. There is also a short mid-week service.

*We will continue to innovate in worship, developing audio-visual technology to enhance our services. We will increase the range of musical styles in our worship, reflecting the diversity of our membership. We will continue to emphasise the importance of our House Groups and seek new opportunities to gather for prayer.*

**Our vision** is for a church where all are welcome as we seek to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God, guided by the Holy Spirit. We aim to proclaim the all-embracing love of Jesus Christ through our actions as individuals and as a community.

**We invite all**, regardless of their connection, to feel part of the United Church fellowship: those who make use of activities that we offer, those who cannot attend services or activities in person, and those whose circumstances limit their involvement. We offer **pastoral and spiritual care** to anyone who asks.

*We will explore what "membership" means, to include 'Friends of UCW', so that whether 'churchgoers' or not, all feel included with less of a boundary between church fellowship, church users and community. We will encourage a sense of collective responsibility inspiring one another to contribute both time and money to resource the church's work.*

**Our calling** is driven by our city centre location and premises that enable us to offer Christ-centred worship, hospitality, support, belonging and care in Winchester. Our **coffee bar** provides hospitality, welcome and affordable refreshments to locals and tourists. A listening ear is always available. Profits support the wider church mission.

*We will encourage more volunteers to join the coffee bar team, planning for succession as and when long-serving volunteers step down.*

Our weekly Saturday morning **Meet & Greet** provides sanctuary, friendship and support for refugees and those seeking asylum. The Winchester Ukrainian community has hosted their events and concerts in the church as part of this support.

*We will continue to provide volunteers to serve regularly and build our links with Ukrainian and other refugee communities, regardless of their faith or denomination.*

Our **coffee bar playtime** service has run alongside the Thursday morning health visitor sessions for many years. It provides a weekly meeting point for parents, grandparents, carers and their children and for support in family life. There is potential, through this, to grow intergenerational ministry and find new ways of including families.

*We will invite more people to be part of our Coffee Bar Playtime team and develop a strategy for how this work may become more visible in church life, and how we respond more holistically to people of all ages.*

We host **MHA Communities** local office and work. Members of the church volunteer with MHAC and take part in its activities. MHAC reflects our concern for older people and demonstrates how we value their contribution to the community. We also sponsor the Winchester city centre **Anna Chaplain**, who provides Christian support to care homes, and fellowship to older individuals through regular activities.

*We will encourage more Anna Chaplains to serve Winchester city centre, and continue to build our links with MHA Communities, developing that as part of our mission.*

We support wider Christian activity across Winchester and are active in **Churches Together in Winchester**. We employ **Winchester City Centre Chaplaincy** staff and provide financial management for them and the **Winchester Churches Christmas Project**. Both activities serve Winchester residents, showing Christian love and meeting people's needs *where they are*.

*We will continue to support wider Christian activity in Winchester, proclaiming the love of Jesus together.*

We are an **inclusive church**, welcoming all regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical or mental health or age. We have invested in a street-facing screen to make our activities and welcome more visible.

*We will continue to consider how to make our welcome even more visible and explore partnering with Open Table to develop links with the LGBTQIA+ community. We will continue to offer online Sunday worship, and extended communion to care homes and individuals. We will explore how to make our premises and events more accessible to those with all disabilities, including those experiencing hearing and sight loss.*

We use **art, drama and music** to glorify God and to share what we have with others. We are exploring how we use our piano as a gift for others to share. We recognise that beautiful music and art often provide a spiritual experience that may speak to people in ways that words cannot.

*We will continue to explore how we can use music and art to bring people into the church, and to make it a place that is relevant to them.*

We strive to be **eco-conscious**, making decisions as individuals and a community that care for God's creation. So much of what we do relies on our premises – a large, listed building. We endeavour to keep our premises in good condition, acknowledging the beauty of that which we steward, and reflecting this theology in both our worship and practice.

*We will look to the future on behalf of future generations and continue to keep an eco-conscious perspective alive in our worship, study and prayer. We will keep our facilities and equipment up to date and efficient. We will set up a Property and Facilities Enabling Group to support this and make recommendations to the Church Meeting.*

**Agreed by Church Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025**