

Not very long ago I got a call from the Diocesan Office. We needed a statement about our vision of the church and a dream for the kind of ministry we would have from the Kennedy Road site.

I gathered the building Committee and Wardens to prepare this.

I asked them four questions.

The first was, "When you read about Jesus in the Gospels, what were the 3 sorts of things was he doing most in his ministry?" What would you answer here? Take a moment. Actually answer that question. Write it down here.

Then I asked, "If you imagine that Jesus had been incarnated in Scarborough in our times, what 3 sorts of things would he be doing most in his ministry?" Again, write down your answers.

Thirdly I asked, "In your church, in the last couple of years, what three things have you spent most of your time and energy on?" So what will you say? Write it down.

We looked over what we got for the first question, Jesus in Israel. Then the second, Jesus in Scarborough. They were pretty similar. But the third question was answered with "fund-raising, building maintenance, meetings and the like."

So I asked, lastly, "What kind of ministry and activity would you like to see in our new Church on Kennedy to be about?"

Out of that, and the discussion that followed, we got our statement to the diocese. (See attached sheet)

In the last three days I have had about 30 hours of training in Vital Church Planting at a conference run by Wycliffe College's Institute for Evangelism and the Diocese of Toronto. It could not have come at a better time for me. I have been rather overwhelmed by the administrative work of helping prepare for the sale of two of our churches, and in work towards the building on Kennedy Road. You all are aware of the bumps and blessings of amalgamating our four families of faith into Grace's new blended family. There has been a lot to do!

But I have kept looking down the path that God has put before us. The path to the new Church. I have said before, and will say again, "It has to be different. Doing what we did before led us towards the deaths of our congregations. If we don't change we will still be heading towards death and closure." But I have grown aware of how resistant to change we are. We are very committed to keeping our worship as close as possible to the way it was. We want the old fund-raising events and the festivals to be the same. We are pulling hard to make Grace church as close to the old churches, and as comfortable as they were for us. I have been worrying and asking God to help me understand how to lead Grace Church so that we are ready to be that new church, that different church. But how?

The Missional Church leaders who understand about Vital Churches offered me the vision and the way. And, funnily, it was essentially the Vision Statement we had made all that time ago!

Jesus never said, "Go and build Anglican churches which will develop a particular style in England in the 1800's, and do worship in a BCP/BAS way, make ministers wear weird clothes and have budgets and stuff."

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Vital Churches come from gathering people who want to be disciples of Jesus. People who want to be Jesus' disciples are people who have been drawn to God by love. And they are drawn through love by people loving them. The people you love you look after, you help, you care for, you support. You *serve* those you love. That is how they discover they are loved.

We said in our vision that we wanted to *serve*. Then we wanted to *preach and teach*. Then we wanted to *worship*, and then we wanted to *grow in faith*.

Vital churches begin by their leadership team going into their communities to find the serving that needs to be done. You become like Jesus, who went out and looked for the lost and broken, the outcasts and the sinners. He healed those who were ill in soul and in body. He cheered the worn down with good news about love from God. Love not controlled by synagogue or church, and not tied to good behaviour or destroyed by badness. He spoke of a Grace with which God was restoring a broken, a fallen-down Creation. That was his mission with the Father - to remake the world. "Behold! I make all things new!"

He served, he preached and he taught. And those who followed him did so because they knew his love was real for them.

They became disciples because they realized he needed them to help in this great task. In fact God needed their help in the mission of restoration He had already begun. Once they grasped the new Creation that God was inviting them to have new life in, the worship flowed with joy and celebration. And it flowed with confidence because they knew they were always, to the end of the age, in the presence of Jesus.

And then they learned, and deepened their faith by setting out to do what Jesus had done. Not alone, or on their own agenda, but trusting that God would lead and equip and help them to do what God put in front of them.

This is our work now. We need to go to Kennedy Road to serve the people who live in our area. We need to really truly love them, and show that love in our actions. Love is like a magnet. It draws people to ask, Who are you? Why do you do this? What have you got?

And then we preach and teach. And if they can grasp what we show in our lives and say in our words, they may come to offer worship with us. And that worship, like our serving, must fit, not us, but those who we are trying to serve.

So I now know what we need to be doing to get ready to go to Kennedy Road around next Easter (2013). We need to learn how to ask questions. We need to find the team that will lead for us. God, I think knows who they are. They are already here. We need to find out what God is up to, getting ready for us to land in the new site. God is already at work, waiting for us to come and help, just like Jesus was waiting for his disciples to be ready. We need to find our way to help in planting, not so much another Anglican Church, as a new outpost of the Kingdom of Heaven in South Scarborough.

We are not alone in this. There are people I have met who will help us, train us, support us and pray for us.

We are not alone in this. We are just the latest batch of people that God is waiting for to help in his restoration work.

We are not alone in this. When ever two or three gather together to be like Christ, there he is in the middle of us, always, even to the end of the age.

VISIONING FOR THE MINISTRY OF GRACE CHURCH IN SCARBOROUGH

We want our sacred space to have the feel of openness, peace, light; a garden feel; the warmth of a kitchen; a sense of reverence and of quiet; prayer; community; a place of support for the passage of birth, death and the changes of life; a place to meet God.

Gathering Spaces; Small (3-10); Medium (10-30); Large (30-200)

Spaces designed so that people can

Serve others; sheltering the lost; feeding the hungry; healing the sick and suffering; showing the broken the face of the God who loves them forever

Preach and Teach; within the membership; with people outside our membership

Worship;

With singing, prayerfulness; an atmosphere of holiness; space to house and display holy things; joyfulness; where church looks like the body of Christ

Grow in Faith;

Through learning, prayer and worship; Inner healing and looking for miracles

We want a Church Building which lets us stop serving money; Plant running costs are low; Income can be generated; Where the building serves the ministry not the other way around.

We want a Church Building which has opportunities for integration; Boundaries and divisions between groups and individuals can dissolve; Boundaries between members and those beyond membership can dissolve

IN GRACE CHURCH WE WANT FROM THE BUILDING.....

Open Concept Front to the building allowing a welcoming space which could accommodate one of, or several of the following suggestions, or other activities. Café, Books and Gift Store, Food Pantry, Conversational Meeting Place

Access to the building through several doors allowing multiple usage. This could include some, none or several of the following suggestions. ESL teaching office, Doctor's Office, Parish Nurse, Counseling Services. Red Cross Community Support

Several Spaces for Worship and Meeting

Main worship space. Smaller hall (which could serve as a reception area should there be a hall which was in use by an other group) Inclusion of wiring etc allowing AV feeds into different areas of the building and wi-fi (and whatever comes subsequently) throughout.

Flexibility of space to allow redesign of inner space without major reconstruction should that be needed. Flexibility within finished spaces through intelligent lighting and AV design. Flexibility through inner doors and walls designed to move/slide for enclosure or opening of spaces.

Industrial Kitchen facilities

Outdoor (or possibly indoor) Courtyard or garden-feeling space

Music Ministry dedicated space

Offices sufficient for Administration, Clergy, Youth & Children's Ministry, Music Ministry (see above), and possibility to sub-divide rooms for further admin needs.

We need the inclusion of beloved items from founding churches.

That is, with some edits for clarity and decisions since made, what we said in order to guide the architect.