

We anticipate much of the money for this project will come from generous congregational giving and occasional legacies. Amazingly, as another sign of God's hand, one incredibly generous Church Member has promised to match-fund, pound for pound, any gifts given in this way up to £30,000. £1 instantly becomes £2 plus the Gift-Aid! We will also be applying for various grants from charitable trusts. Favourable loan rates are also available from funders like the Baptist Union but the more we are able to raise in gifts and grants, the less we will need to borrow and ultimately repay.

#### **How Can I Respond?**

The most important commitment you can make is to pray for God's heart and vision for this project. Having heard from Him, we then invite you to respond generously as He leads. We have set the ambitious target of raising at least £100,000 before the end of 2019 which represents the balance of the outstanding loan for the initial purchase of 51 Bargates (£47,000) plus a surplus which will become the seedbed for funding professional fees and the new building itself! As part of the family/friends of Christchurch Baptist Church, may we invite you to prayerfully and generously respond in one or more of the ways described below using the enclosed response form:

#### **Make A One-Off Gift...**

On Sunday 22 September, we are having a Gift Day when you are able to give a gift or make a pledge to give with a one-off gift. Don't forget, this gift will be match-funded up to £30,000. If you are a UK tax-payer, the Government will also donate a further 25%.

#### **A Regular Gift...**

You are also invited to give regularly to our 2020 Vision by standing order. If you are already giving in this way, might you consider increasing what you are able to give – we are so grateful for your generosity. If you are not yet giving in this way, please consider committing to a monthly donation. Don't forget, any gift will be match-funded up to £30,000. If you are a UK tax-payer, the Government will also donate a further 25%.

#### **Leave A Legacy...**

You may wish to consider the inclusion of our 2020 Vision in your will. If you would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to speak confidentially to our Treasurer, David McLellan, or to your legal advisor.

#### **Pray...**

Please commit to join with us in prayer as we seek absolute clarity from God about the detail of the way forward. God's promise for us: *'Where's God people dwell together in unity...he*



## **An opportunity for generosity on 22 September...**



## **The story so far & the next exciting steps!**

[www.christchurchbaptist.org.uk](http://www.christchurchbaptist.org.uk)

## **The Story So Far...**

150 years ago, our forebears stood on a patch of bare earth in the street we now call 'Bargates' before stepping out in faith to build the brick tabernacle we worship in today. We have an opportunity to exercise similar faith in our day, building upon their legacy to leave an equally wonderful legacy for future generations of worshippers.

Our adapted and enlarged Victorian building has served us well, as has the Christian Centre which was built over 25 years ago, but we now recognise our facilities are constraining us. Our second service is full, our children's and youth work again need more meeting space, and our facilities are no longer fit for purpose more generally. Of course, this is a brilliant challenge to have, we praise God for the growth He's giving us, but now is the time to find a solution. We've faced this need for over 20 years! We've previously investigated various ways to resolve our space challenges, but, for a variety of reasons, until now, there has been no viable long-term solution.

In 2016, God blessed us with a site to develop through the provision of 51 Bargates. In faith and with a view to future development, we purchased the site! Amazingly, through the sacrificial giving of Church Members and friends, we are at the point where the outstanding loan to buy the property and freehold could be paid off by the end of this year...which is 12 years ahead of schedule! It is clear that God is already with us on the journey!

After much prayer and discussion, Members asked the Church Trustees to undertake a feasibility study considering three options. Having employed the expertise of an architect, Members discerned that God is leading us to demolish the building on the 51 Bargates site and construct a new purpose-built building to resource our mission and ministry for the decades ahead.

In partnership with our architect, focus groups have been formed to discern how we want the new building to look, what it will contain, and how it will function. We anticipate finalising the plans towards the end of 2019 when they will be put before the BCP Council for full planning permission. This will involve significant financial commitment to architects and other professional consultants (including heating, electrical and structural engineers, acoustics, and so on) to ensure the plans meet building regulations. After this initial investment, we will then be able to invite construction companies to tender for the overall building work before commissioning them to break the ground. God-willing, we will start fundraising during 2020 and commence building in 2021. We anticipate moving into the new building during 2022.

## **A Vision For 2050 and Beyond**

We are sensing God is leading us to invest now in facilities that will see us through the next two generations, even the next 50-75 years.

Imagine the potential spiritual, numerical and missional growth which a new building could facilitate for God's Kingdom. Our vision is to build a c.250-seater auditorium that could seat up to c.500 attendees across two services. These will be modern facilities, including a high-quality kitchen to cater for large events, a variety of meeting and activity rooms, and a café-style space for the church and community to gather. Our desire is that these facilities will speak of God's love and express welcome to all whilst increasing our presence in the town-centre more generally for mission and ministry purposes.

The new building will be as environmentally friendly as possible. Having already achieved the Eco-Church Bronze award, a greener building would enable us to reach Gold level. This will make a statement to the public that we place creation care at the heart of what we do – an issue which is rightly high on the agenda of wider society.

We will be able to offer larger and more modern meeting facilities to community groups who share our ethos. A new building will offer us greater opportunities for community engagement as God leads us ever deeper into the future mission and ministry He has for us.

Of course, numerical growth isn't an end in itself. Our church vision is to know Jesus more closely, live in Him more deeply and share Him more enthusiastically. Our new building will be nothing more than a tool; a mission hub to help us grow as disciples so we can reach more and more people with the love of God and the good news of Christ. This in turn will bring about transformation of ourselves and the wider community. Our vision is not for bricks and mortar; our vision is for changed lives as we partner in the gospel together and build for the future.

## **How Will The Money Be Raised?**

18 months ago, we were given a picture that such an ambitious undertaking may seem like a mountain to climb! However, if we look behind us, we can see we are already part way up the mountain; looking back we can see how far God has already brought us and blessed us. For example, we have already fruitfully transitioned into a two-service model; we have a developable site; by God's grace we have nearly repaid the loan on 51 Bargates; we sense God is leading into new outreach opportunities in West Christchurch.

Setting out on a project of this scale is an exercise in trust and faith. We trust in the faithfulness of God who has led us thus far, and in the generosity of His people. In June, Andrew Ollerton brought a prophetic word to us as he spoke about the faith of Caleb: *"Don't give fear the microphone...when we put God in first place we put fear in its place...giants fall when we keep God at the centre of the equation."* God is calling us to have the faith of Caleb! What might seem impossible in our eyes becomes possible when God is at work, stirring people to see how they can contribute in whatever way is appropriate for them.

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