

A CHURCH FOR THE COMMUNITY



**Ideas, inspiration & resources to help you
pray and explore what it means to become
*A Church for the Community.***



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Welcome to our *Church for the Community* resource – a collection of ideas, inspiration & recommendations to help you explore what it means to serve the community God has called us to.

We're inviting you to dream big and think local; to brainstorm creatively and love practically; to listen in to the Holy Spirit and dare to follow where he might be leading.

We believe that this is a pivotal time for us as a church; one we will look back on in years to come as the beginning of an exciting new chapter for each of us as individuals, and as a wider church family. We can't wait to see what God has in store.





THE STORY SO FAR

Maybridge Community Church began shortly after the Second World War, and has had a presence in the surrounding community ever since.

Sometimes this has looked like groups or projects run by the church staff and volunteers. Sometimes individuals within the church have discovered ministries of their own. Sometimes we've partnered with other organisations, such as the local council who, up until recently, used our building for their Children and Family Centre.

While some of those groups and projects are still going strong, the last few years have seen major changes. The global pandemic has caused many of us to take stock and reassess what God wants for our lives, as well as highlighting and magnifying challenges that many in our community face. And the council's decision to close the Children and Family Centre has given us the opportunity to use our building in new ways to try and address some of those needs.

So while serving the community has always been part of our history – let's face it, it's our middle name – we want to continue that identity and take steps into a new chapter of a story that God is helping us to write.





OUR VISION & VALUES

To build a vibrant church community that resolutely follows Jesus and extravagantly shares the goodness of God.

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER

For us, church is so much more than a Sunday service; it's a whole-life, life-long family. We pursue authentic relationships, sharing good times and bad and supporting and challenging one another in love.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

We believe in doing everything with compassion; focusing our resources on the transformation of our wider community, and being as open and approachable as possible. Whatever life throws your way, Maybridge is a safe place where you can find help and support.

WE GET STUCK IN

We're not content to sit on the sidelines. We believe in going the extra mile to make a difference in our local communities and help empower projects around the world. We take initiative in our own spiritual growth and get involved in the life of the church.

Because...

WE'RE ALL ABOUT JESUS

Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We seek to draw from various Christian expressions as we deepen our relationship with Him, prayerfully follow where He leads us, and passionately communicate why He's good news for everyone.



WAYS TO PRAY

As we continue to seek God's direction and discern how to use our building and resources to further His kingdom in our community, please continue to pray.

We've gathered a few prayer points along with prayers, pictures and poems from across the church family to help you, your family and Partnership Group pray.

You may wish to share and feedback anything you feel is relevant to an Elder or member or staff.

Some points to help you pray:

- Where is God leading us as a church about how to reach out to the community?
- How is God prompting me to be of help in the community or in the running or developing our community outreach?
- Pray that God will guide us in which projects to start and the timing of how to develop them.
- Where is God already at work in the community and how could this be developed further through a 'community hub'?

When we were children, our parents took us on holiday in places like the Lake District where we did a lot of walking and climbing. I used to love to tuck myself in behind my dad and try to walk in his footsteps. He was 6'2 so it was always a tricky challenge but he always seemed to choose the most stable rocks or the driest path to walk upon, so if I even matched two out of three I was doing well.

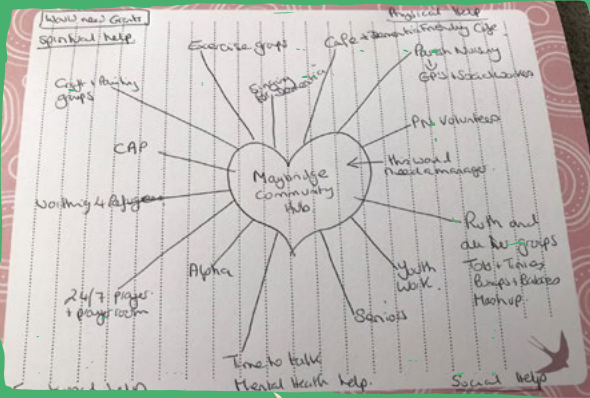
When thinking about what reaching out into the community should look like, God reminded me of those walks, telling me to look at Jesus and the way he lived, how he spoke to people, how he conducted relationships and what he taught- to walk in his footsteps. These are big footsteps in which to try and step but even matching some of them will keep me in the right and best path."

Ros Satchell

Let your voice be our guide and draw us not only into more of you, but towards our community in tangible, practical, serving ways. Father God, enable us to be open in mind and heart, generous in our sacrificial giving as volunteers, staff and members of your family. Help us to use our church building and resources for the good of all people. Guide our hearts Lord. Amen.

A prayer from the 24/7 Prayer Room [2022]





Way back in March 2019 I went on a Ladies Conference in London. It was at the conference we had a speaker who said we all need a vision. Write it down. The number one question, to squash any vision is to say 'How can this happen?'

She said to start with the final scene and work backwards. We then had some time to write things down but I drew a picture. In the centre of my page was a heart with the words MCC Community Hub. Then out from the heart simple lines offering

services to our community: Café, Parish Nursing, Seniors work, Exercise group, Craft groups, Ruth's groups, Youth work, Worthing 4 Refugees, Mental Health support, CAP courses, Alpha, prayer etc.

It was all so simple to be known in the community as a safe place for people to come and get help and support but to do this we would need to be separated from the Children's and Family Centre and that didn't seem possible as we were tied into a long contract.

3 years later and here we are. Covid cut our ties with CFC and Covid has brought us back to Maybridge and Covid-19 has given us a need like never before to be Church in the Community, for the Community. A church with a bigger social vision that reflects the heart of God and the ministry of Jesus.

A Vision for the community from Julie Ward

Lord, our church
Rooted in you
The roof now uplifted in the tree of faith
Exploding through the windows and
fissures and cracks and doors until
The roof is uplifted in the living
breathing vigour of the tree of faith
which explodes under the Maybridge
skies. Leaves uncurling, blossoms
scattering, branches stretching,
reaching, providing shade and
protection and beauty and focus
for the poor, the lonely, the anxious,
the forgotten of Maybridge
Yes, and everyone else beside
Let it be so Lord, let it be so.
Amen

Poem by Sue Wolstenholme

Father God, thank you for building Your church at Maybridge. We pray that You would open our eyes to see You more at work in us and around us.

Please send Your Holy Spirit to inspire us with ideas and dreams of what could be when You are more fully worshipped and known, when Your Kingdom comes as it is in heaven.

We pray that we would hear Your voice, and begin to see the next steps in our desire to be good news to the poor. Give us vision, joy and love as we seek You together. Speak to our children, our older people, our young people, our families, our singles; speak to those who are used to hearing Your voice, and those who are not; show us Your heart for those who don't know You, and give us faith to step forward to where You are leading. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Gay Jacklin





RESOURCES

We'll be continuing the conversations from our Jubilee+ workshop in the weeks to come. Here are a few recommended resources to help you and your Partnership Group continue to explore a biblical basis for tackling poverty and injustice...

PARTNERSHIP GROUPS

SOCIAL ACTION COURSE



The Jubilee+ Social Action Course features 4 videos with accompanying discussion questions, as well as a Bible reading plan and a prayer plan. In it Natalie Williams unpacks the biblical basis for tackling poverty and injustice, and what it means to have a heart like God's.

We highly recommend doing the course as a Partnership Group – it's free to Maybridge Community Church users. Follow the link on their website to register for access and download video talks and discussion points.

jubilee-plus.org/social-action-course

THE TALK

YOU ARE GOD'S GIFT



Natalie Williams | Jubilee Plus

Catch up on the talk Natalie gave to the church on Sunday 20th March 2022.

Natalie encourages us with a reminder of we are 'God's gift' – uniquely created and positioned to impact those around us and in our community.

Scan the QR code or watch the video on **youtube**.



FROM JUBILEE+



A CALL TO ACT



Building a poverty-busting lifestyle

Martin Charlesworth & Natalie Williams

Read this for ideas of how to re-evaluate your lifestyle to prioritise the poor as Jesus did. Learn justice and mercy so that social action is not an add-on project, but the life of Christ living out of you.

Copies available from the church office to borrow

A CHURCH FOR THE POOR



Transforming the church to reach the poor in Britain today

Martin Charlesworth & Natalie Williams

Dig deeper into how churches can change to be radically inclusive of all types of people. This book helps explore moving away from a model of social action projects to the kind of church that Jesus always had in mind.

A DEEPENING CRISIS



Preparing your church for increasing poverty in our communities

A short resource on how Christians and churches can be prepared to tackle the deepening crisis in the UK.

Scan the QR code above or download online at jubilee-plus.org/docs/A-Deepening-Crisis.pdf

FURTHER RESOURCES

WHEN HELPING HURTS

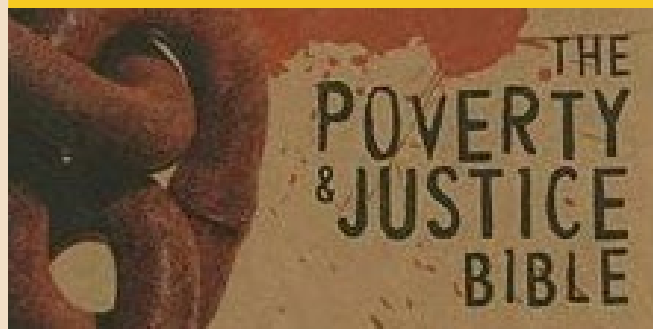


How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor... and yourself

Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

Discover a biblically based framework for poverty alleviation that puts us all on an equal footing before God. Discover how to find a path forward that is not about providing resources to the poor, but by walking with them in humble relationships.

THE POVERTY & JUSTICE BIBLE



Contemporary English Version Bible

Read this to re-discover what God's Word has to say about poverty and justice. Maybe now use the time to invest in a new Bible. Written in the Contemporary English Version (refreshingly direct language), over 2000 verses are highlighted to wake us up to the issues of poverty and justice.

