

Seven marks of a healthy church



You are all one in union
with Christ Jesus.
(Galatians 3.28)

Expressing the life of Christ
through the local church

1. Energised by faith

rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive

- * **Worship and sacramental life** - moving people to experience God's love
- * **Motivation** - energy coming from a desire to serve God and one another
- * **Engaging with scripture** - in creative ways that connect with life
- * **Nurturing faith in Christ** - helping people grow in, and share, their faith

2. Outward-looking focus

with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern

- * **Deeply rooted** in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks
- * Passionate and prophetic about **justice and peace** - locally and globally
- * Making connections between **faith and daily living**
- * Responding to human need by **loving service**

3. Seeks to find out what God wants

rather than letting our own preferences set the church agenda

- * **Vocation** - open to the Spirit's leading about what we should be and do
- * **Vision** - developing and communicating a shared sense of where we are going
- * **Mission priorities** - consciously setting both immediate and long term aims
- * **Able to call for and make sacrifices** - personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith

4. Faces the cost of change and growth

rather than resisting change and avoiding failure

- * While embracing the past, daring to take on **new ways** of doing things
- * **Taking risks** - admitting when things are not working, and learning from experience
- * **Crises** - responding creatively to challenges that face the church and community
- * **Positive experiences of change** - however small, are affirmed and built upon

5. Builds community

rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation

- * **Relationships** are nurtured so people know they are part of a community of faith, with opportunities for service
- * **Leadership** - lay and ordained work as a team to develop appropriate expressions of all seven marks of a healthy church
- * **Lay ministry** - the different gifts, experiences and faith journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church

6. Makes room for others

being inclusive rather than exclusive

- * **Welcome** - works to include newcomers into the life of the church
- * **Children and young people** are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith
- * **Enquirers** are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ
- * **Diversities** - coming from social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities and age differences are seen as a strength and sought after

7. Does a few things - and does them well

focused rather than frenetic

- * **Doing the basics well** - especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration
- * **Occasional offices** - making sense of life and communicating faith
- * **Being good news** as a church in our attitudes and ways of working
- * **Enjoying what we do** and being relaxed about what is not being done