

Our Hope for the Church

The title 'Our hope for the Church' was a workshop at the New Wine leaders retreat in October 2012, with around a dozen leaders present; all of them shared their heart, dreams, hopes and vision for the Church, what follows is a bullet point summary of that conversation where we dared to dream of a...

- Church that is glorious at its best and at its worst – we need hope which is the enemy of cynicism as was shared in this quote, *"I have a long and tumultuous relationship with cynicism. I began courting her in high school, and then we moved in together sometime during college. For a long time, I confused her with a really smart girl named wisdom, but her given name turned out to be afraid."*
- Church that learns from and honours the past.
- Church that is infectious by its love into the community, that people will say 'see how they love each other'.
- Church that has no plan B, that we step out on the edge of the kingdom in an adventure with God with the expectancy of little children – that we may risk more and so stand on the edge of the cliff and dive into a risk filled call.
- Church that waters its own grass, that individual congregations would not have church envy and see that the grass is greener elsewhere, that we cherish our own congregations for who they are and what they are. Valuing our priceless communities of faith that are both beautiful and broken.
- Church that has a voice that is heard in society as both leading and prophetic.
- Church where boxes, labels and agendas do not exist. That Jesus' prayer that we be one as he and the Father are one will ring true more and more.
- Church where the power of the spirit in signs and wonders is clearly tangible.
- Church that is a movement, never static but always heading forward.
- Church that does not lose touch with where people are at in the community.
- Church that builds more holistic relationships inside and outside the walls of a congregation, to become more fully alive people.
- Church that is not in perpetual decline.
- Church that remembers that telling people about Jesus totally changes lives, a passion for the lost is foundational for a hope filled church.
- Church that has confidence in the gospel as openly as we can with the resources that we have.
- Church where people say, 'what I have I give you' and mean every word of it.
- Church where in Aotearoa, New Zealand we get to create our history on an on-going basis, always pushing boundaries.
- Church where generations work together as family and as a team.
- Church that lives audaciously beyond its means.
- Church full of people who are full of humility.
- Church where people would not come seeking life and leave with death.

- Church that knows who we already are, not who we need to try to be – We are the bride, body, household, children of God.
- Church that has a vision and mission; that everybody in the pews knows and is working towards. A people that know where we are going and why.
- Church where we can be hope agents for each other.

The following is an affirmation of faith that was used to close this session of ‘Our Hope for the Church’ ...

“We affirm the central truths of historic orthodox Christian faith, seeing ourselves in a long line of generations taking part in the endless conversation between God and people. We believe the Bible to be the voices of many who have come before us, inspired by God to pass along their poems, stories, accounts, and letters of response and relationship with each other and the living God. To know where we’re going, we have to know where we’ve been.

We have great confidence that God will restore all of creation under the authority of Christ. We believe that every church has to ask the question: “What does it look like for us to live out that future reality today?” We are constantly exploring, questioning, and wrestling with new and creative ways to live out and communicate the teachings of Jesus. Because we see faith as a journey, change is assumed, innovation is expected, and rebirth is welcomed.

We believe that God wants to bring about a new humanity by redeeming every part of us. We embrace the salvation Jesus offers as the only hope for the healing of our relationships with God, each other, ourselves, and creation. We believe that all of life is spiritual, and that all of our fears, failures, and brokenness can be restored and made whole. We value the inner journey because we want to be fully integrated people – mind, body, and soul, emotions and experiences all offered together to God.

We value the image of God in all people, everywhere. We believe that we were created to live deeply with one another, carrying each other’s burdens, sharing our possessions, to pray for and confess our sins to each other, to suffer and celebrate together. It’s in these honest, loving relationships that God transforms us and truth becomes a reality. The way of Jesus cannot be lived alone.

We believe that Jesus is God in human form and that the Church is God’s ongoing presence in the world. Led by the Spirit of God, we are passionate about relieving suffering and fighting injustice, joining the God of the oppressed in living out the transforming message of the resurrected Jesus. Jesus calls his Church to be a compelling force for good in the world, and we believe that the Church is at its best when it serves, sacrifices, and loves, caring about the things God cares about. We were created to live for something larger than ourselves.”

We take great joy in partnering with God to change the world, embracing the truth that all of life is sacred, hope is real, and tomorrow can be better than today. We celebrate the divine in the daily, pursuing lives of hope, gratitude, and worship. God invites everyone everywhere into this way of life, and we believe it is the best possible way to live.”