

Grace Church Bath

Statement of Mission and Need

Under the Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) which legally establishes Grace Church Bath (GCB) as an Anglican church within the Church of England, in the diocese of Bath and Wells, GCB is commissioned to "Promote the Christian faith and the common good" but with a particular mission imperative:

"Plant a new church focused on families & others impacted by Sunday morning sport."

For several years we have been labouring to that end, and God has kindly blessed us with success, which we measure in the form of people being told and shown the gospel and coming to faith in Christ. We have grown numerically, and are currently >100 regularly attending on a Sunday for our 4pm service. We have also seen growth in spiritual maturity across our church family as we have sat together under the teaching and authority of God's Word, both on Sunday's and in our numerous midweek home groups.

The nature of our mission focus, being the sports community of Bath, means that we have tailored our ministry and outreach to reflect that concern. We have members of the congregation who have taken up sports coaching in order to establish themselves in clubs, members who have committed to support and volunteer at sports clubs, as well as a high percentage of members who individually play a wide variety of sports.

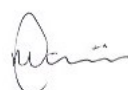
In February 2022 the PCC of Bath Weston St. John were granted a temporary faculty by the Archdeacon of Bath to remove the pews. This was to facilitate a mission and outreach programme that could include physical activity and would require space, to reflect the people we are trying to connect with.

Since that time we have been able to hold a number of events and activities which, were the pews still in place, would not have been possible. These have included a high number of children and youth events focussed on sport and physical activity. We held an all-day event at the time of the Rugby championship, which included partnership with Get Sported, a local Christian charity focussed on sport. We have had sports clubs hold social events for their youth teams in the building, including bouncy castle, small goals, and gym mats. IN February 2024 we will launch our first 'Holiday Bible Club' in t. John's, a sports themed week of activity and Bible teaching in the half-term holiday. None of these events (and more, such as 2 Jazz nights and a church-family supper) would have been possible if the pews had still been situated.

The building is increasingly used midweek, both by GCB and more recently other users, and the flexibility of space would continue to enable a more imaginative and communal use of the building beyond a Sunday.

Over the summer holidays we re-arranged our Sunday services to be around tables, as opposed to rows, as we used the season to introduce a different style of collective worship. This was widely welcomed. Having the flexibility to vary our worship has been a feature of the past two years.

Given that God has blessed our outreach activity with growth, we feel that to replace the pews now would significantly undermine what we are doing and crucially what God is doing. With no congregation at St. John's other than GCB, there would not be any impact on any other church users. Indeed, we enjoy the full support of the whole PCC in making this application.



Revd. Michael Farrier
12th November 2023