

**MISSION - One people in mission for God's glory;
growing in Christ and making him known in love through word, sign and deed;
because all people matter to God**



Embracing Our Mission – Shaping Our Future - East Taieri Church Strategic Direction 2014-2019

This strategic plan is for the next 5 years. It contains six key areas: Worship, Discipleship and Evangelism; Community Ministry; Communication; Mission Facilities; and Collaboration with Other Churches. Each of these has a few focus areas, objectives and some strategic action detailing high level actions that we believe will be relevant for the next 5 years. A more specific action plan for each year will be developed as part of the annual planning cycle. Some of the detailed plans that came through the strategic planning groups fit better into the annual plan and will be included there.

As with all mission planning, we are aware that we need to pray for God's leading and provision each step of the way. We are committed to taking intentional steps in mission and the strategic plan is our best effort at discerning what God has for us, but we are always open to being surprised by God doing things we hadn't expected. Apart from the Lord we can do nothing.

One way we express this dependence on God is through prayer. We pray for God's help in carrying out the plans we have made. We also pray to submit our plans to God, trusting in God and not our human plans or strategies. "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Prov 19:21)

While we have many things to be thankful for at East Taieri Church, these are very serious times. Offerings for the last financial year were lower than the previous year. This is the first time in living memory that has happened. Overall attendance at worship is down. It seems to be harder to recruit volunteers to take on ministry roles. We urgently need to take prayerful, courageous steps in mission. We also need an inspiring, exciting goal that will galvanise people to action. Such a goal may come out of the ongoing prayer and strategic action contained in this strategic plan, but we need to admit that we don't know the solutions to these complex problems. Simplistic answers will not do, and neither will answers from the past which don't fit our new reality.

This strategic plan seeks to identify the key processes and steps we can take to build momentum toward achieving our vision:

One People in mission for God's Glory: We are united in our mission. We recognise that people are different, so we offer a range of worship styles in various locations to help people of all ages and stages of Christian maturity worship God, grow as followers of Jesus, and experience more of the Holy Spirit's life-changing power.

One People in Mission...making Christ known in love through word, sign and deed: We believe all God's people take part in God's mission every day. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news." Our mission is proclaiming the good news in words and demonstrating it in actions. It involves both right beliefs and right living. Faith and obedience are inseparable. It leads to the salvation of individuals and the renewal of all creation. Our vision is society benefitting in spiritual, physical, emotional, social, and economic ways by God's mission, with people ultimately becoming disciples of Jesus and communities being transformed. We believe discipleship is at the heart of mission. Christians grow as disciples as they live as citizens of the kingdom of God and help others to become disciples.

Growing in Christ and making him known...: We are committed to opening the Bible together so we can grow in our relationship with Jesus and help other people come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. This happens in various settings including biblical preaching in large, vibrant Sunday services; smaller interactive gatherings often

incorporating a meal; and bible study in small groups meeting in people's homes during the week. Our goal is growth in the number and maturity of people who are worshipping and glorifying God.

We are committed to prayer and other spiritual practices to deepen our relationship with God, and seek God's leading in his mission. Integrity is important to us. We trust in the power of the Holy Spirit, but are also real about the struggles and suffering of life. Some key practices for our mission are hospitality and simplicity. Hospitality means we invite people to our homes and to well organised church events and treat them well. Simplicity is a challenge to our lifestyle. We seek to spend less money on ourselves and reduce the number of things we are trying to do so that we have time for spending with people, and spare resources to help those in need.

We are gathered and sent. God gathers us for worship, encouragement, equipping and celebration. Then we are sent out in mission. We believe God's mission is carried out with people and not just to, or for, people. Consequently, we commit significant time and resources to building partnerships with community organisations and agencies, and discovering what the community actually needs.

Because All People Matter to God: We believe God loves people who come to church events, and those who do not. Sometimes our mission means inviting people to come to the church facilities for various programmes ranging from Mainly Music, and craft activities, through to Marriage Courses, Christian Counselling and Alpha. Some events such as Christmas Eve services gather hundreds of people. Other times our mission means going out to serve in the community in various ways.

We believe children and young people matter to God. We are a family friendly church. We commit substantial resources to a wide range of programmes for children and youth in both our church facilities and in local schools and communities. We believe elderly people matter to God. Our pastoral care network includes visiting home care people who are no longer able to come to church services. We also offer chaplaincy and worship services in rest homes.

East Taieri also has a regional mission encouraging and supporting the wider church. This includes hosting large numbers of church leaders to our annual Ministry Conference, as well as hosting Training Days for such things as preaching and evangelism and regional Presbytery resource events.

We believe that people of all nations matter to God. In addition to helping people think in missional ways about their everyday life, we are committed to supporting God's mission in other countries. We support missionaries in Thailand, Malawi, Egypt and the USA, with a particular focus on Thailand.

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 - WORSHIP

Overall Goal: Growing numbers of people engaging with God in Spirit-led, joyful worship that glorifies God, challenges and helps the worshippers and includes a whole range of worship elements.

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective (where do we want to be in 5 years)	3. Strategic Actions (How do we get underway)
Existing Worship Services	Deep and focused worship so that Christians experience God in community, are fed from the Bible, respond in worship, and are inspired and equipped for service.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review our Guiding Principles for worship. 2. Undertake a survey reviewing our worship. 3. Gain insights from other churches 4. Move toward developing a more flexible multi-purpose worship space at East Taieri (flat floor, movable seating...) 5. Greater emphasis on building community before worship.
A New Fresh Expression of Church	To have established another new missional Fresh Expression of Church (Reaching New People at a New Time in a New Place)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek God for God to raise up people with a passion for it. 2. Teach about what a missional church is like.
Sunday Evening Youth Discipleship	Growing numbers of young people growing in Christ through Sunday Evening.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intergenerational mentoring relationships. 2. Involving young people in music and technology (Planning is Already Underway)

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 - DISCIPLESHIP & EVANGELISM

Overall DRAFT Goal: Growing in the relational art of wisely running after Jesus who compels us into disciple-making

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective (where do we want to be in 5 years)	3. Strategic Actions (How do we get underway)
Small groups	That all people at ETC are linked to a small group which provides pastoral care and encouragement / mentoring as a disciple of Jesus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find out who is not in a small group 2. Explore how the groups are working and find out what would assist them e.g. study resources, communication of opportunities to serve etc 3. Find leaders for groups that fill identified gaps – e.g. geographic, age/stage, interest area etc 4. Match people with existing and new groups – through invitations 5. Break the stereotype of what a small group should look like (e.g. hospitality team, walking group) 6. Strongly encourage all small groups to seek opportunities to serve others outside their group in some way
Mentoring	Develop a culture of intentional mentoring of others for discipleship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify mentors appropriate to ministry area (e.g. youth, marriage) 2. Provide training and outline of role to support mentors on how to get started 3. Communicate well (e.g. use of stories, studies, dramas) 4. Provide opportunities to gather and create community (e.g. church events, Board Games Night e.g. Settlers) 5. Training in relational evangelism

<p>Creating pathways to faith for people in our communities</p>	<p>Strengthen the links between church and the community programs that we run (e.g. Mainly Music, Go Girls)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least one social gathering per year per ministry group (e.g. Go Girls dinner) 2. Profiling these groups to the church and telling testimonies from people involved 3. Advertising our church programs and events and circulating invitations 4. Stepping Stone approach (i.e. making sure that kids finishing Ground Zero know about Dynamite)
<p>Being an Alpha Resource Church</p>	<p>Faithfully and Creatively running Alpha, seeing people coming to faith, and supporting other churches to do the same.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore new settings for Alpha 2. Increase the number of invitations being given, and so the number of guests attending, Alpha 3. Partner with other churches in running Alpha 4. Contribute to the training and mentoring of Alpha leaders for our region.

Appendix: A Theological Vision of Discipleship at East Taieri Church—2014

'Follow me.'

-Matthew 4:19; 16:24; Mark 1:17; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 18:22; John 1:43; 21:19

'We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.'

-Colossians 1:28-29

Christian discipleship always begins with Jesus' call, 'Follow me' and the immediate response of obedience. In essence, discipleship is, in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'running after Jesus'. Three key words are **relational**, **growth** and **wisdom**.

In terms of **relating**, the call to discipleship is a call into relationship with Jesus. This forms the fundamental core of being a disciple—or being 'in Christ' which is language that is used throughout the New Testament epistles. The call to discipleship is a call to follow the Jesus of compassion, love and hope, but also the Jesus who calls us to take up our cross and follow him (Mark 8:34-9:1). If discipleship is 'running after Jesus' then the depth of one's relationship with him will dictate the depth of one's discipleship. Discipleship is the constant renewal of faith in Christ's death as his act of grace for us as experienced in our baptism.

Discipleship is an invitation to join with the church. It is not an isolated existence. When Jesus called his disciples, he called twelve to be with him. Discipleship occurs in genuine and authentic relationship with other disciples of Jesus. Contrary to our individualistic world, discipleship should unashamedly occur **in** Christian community and should be undertaken **by** that community.

In the New Testament, believers are called to **grow**. Christian maturity occurred through a range of spiritual practices including: the gathering of the saints in worship and celebration (Matt 18:20; Acts 2:46-47; Col 3:16; Heb 10:24-25), teaching and preaching (Jesus' teaching; the epistles; 1 Tim 4:11; 2 Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:3), Scripture (New Testament use of the Old Testament; 2 Tim 3:14-17; Heb 4:12-13; Eph 6:17), serving (Eph 4:11-13) and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:27-31; Rom 12:4-8). Growth, however, is not programmatized. Discipleship is organic and ongoing, there is no 'end'. We are always seeking to become more Christ-like. We grow and mature by following Jesus and by following the example of another who is following him (1 Cor 11:1).

If there is no 'end' then a key aspect of discipleship is **wisdom**. Tom Wright defines wisdom as, 'A sense of understanding how the ways of God and humankind work.' Wisdom is important in discipleship in two ways. First, because discipleship is 'running after Jesus', it is significant that wisdom is employed when discipling another person to discern what 'running after Jesus' looks like in any given culture, context or situation. One who is mentoring, teaching or discipling needs to have wisdom. Secondly, biblical wisdom is an attempt to pattern one's life on the life of Jesus which calls for wisdom. Discipling done well will naturally lead to cultivating wisdom in the one who is being disciplined, enabling them in turn to exercise that wisdom to disciple others.

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 - COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Overall DRAFT Goal: To love and serve others in our community by connecting; caring for physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs and fostering community development.

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective (where do we want to be in 5 years)	3. Strategic Actions (How do we get underway)
Evidence-based research on Community needs, and measurable outcomes from community ministry	Continue to develop evidence-based research on priority community needs in Mosgiel and the wider Taieri area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop home-grown research drawing on the skills of Social Work and OT students; 2. Draw on the research of other local / regional churches and social service agencies; 3. Monitor project planning / delivery to ensure we are addressing priority need; 4. Improved planning, delivery and measurement of outcomes.
Focusing effort on a smaller range of high impact activities	Acknowledging both ET's strengths and limitations, focus community ministry on a smaller number of high impact activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus activity on ET's strengths and comparative advantage as a church. 2. Focus activity on small number of priority areas – e.g. seniors and families; 3. Improve project management capacity for planning, budgeting, delivery and evaluation of projects;
Sustainable Community Ministry	Address the medium to long-term sustainability of community ministry by developing structures and approaches that support financial and human resource stability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress restructuring of SHFT to create dedicated fund-raising / administrative support for community & youth ministry; 2. Seek to move to multi-year funding arrangements where possible; 3. Enhancing capacity for community ministry through training opportunities;

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prioritize issues in order to make the most effective use of resources 5. Build a Community Ministry Team 6. Foster the missional imagination of the congregation, in their everyday roles in the marketplace.
<p>Community Connections, Networks and Partnerships</p>	<p>To build and maintain good connections, networks and partnerships in our communities, including the Mosgiel Resource Group.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the Mosgiel Resource Group to develop formal structures, including the possibility of legal incorporation; 2. See organisations & agencies (e.g. food bank) empowered to achieve sustainable community development outcomes. 3. Consider formal partnerships with other Churches and community organisations. 4. Explore options for a community hub or alliance of service providers. 5. Explore a commercial café at FUEL

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 - **Communications**

Overall DRAFT Goal: To effectively communicate East Taieri Church's ministries and mission, so that they are well understood within the Church and the wider community.

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective (where do we want to be in 5 years)	3. Strategic Actions (How do we get underway)
<p>Our communications and information-sharing are consistent across all congregations.</p>	<p>Our aim is to ensure that we are consistent in our communications so that all congregations have access to the information they need and feel included and valued as members of the ET family.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a parish-wide communications plan; 2. Share notices and information across all congregations as appropriate via powerpoint; 3. Encourage congregations to share their information with others through insight slots; 4. Making better use of community notice boards to promote ministry and mission opportunities; 5. Providing regular updates on Church finances to enhance transparency and promote giving.
<p>Information technology supports more effective internal and external communications.</p>	<p>To improve use of information technology in order to communicate more effectively with members and the wider community. Reducing the amount of printed material we produce, and thus the burden on the environment, also supports our aim to be wise stewards of God's creation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a common 'community notices' powerpoint for use in all services; 2. Reducing the size of the weekly bulletin by moving notices to other media (e.g. website); 3. Enhancing our use of email to share information with members (e.g. weekly email round-up); 4. Broaden use of Pastor's blog – e.g. updates from ministry leaders and missionaries.
<p>ET's on-line presence reflects and enhances the parish's vitality and passion for the mission.</p>	<p>Our aim is to enhance ET's on-line presence so as to better reflect the parish's vitality and passion for carrying out the mission of God and to enhance ET's ability to carry-out that Kingdom work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redevelop ET website to offer more attractive, informative and user-friendly experience; 2. Enhancing our use of the ET website through more regular and interesting posts; 3. Develop teams of volunteers to contribute material to our website; 4. Consider establishing separate Facebook pages for individual congregations 5. Incorporate more mixed media (e.g. audio / video files) on the website and Facebook.

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 – **Mission Facilities Group**

Overall DRAFT Goal: *That East Taieri's mission is well supported by appropriate and high quality facilities.*

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective	3. Strategic Actions
Future mission facilities	Our aim is to identify what facilities may be required to support ET's mission and ministry in the future. This is an Asset Management Plan that details functionality as required by our mission, and covers: maintenance and use of existing buildings, modification and/or sale of buildings, and purchase or construction of new buildings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawing on the strategic plan, develop thinking on the future shape of mission at ET; 2. Identify the optimum location for ET facilities – e.g. current site vs Mosgiel 3. Consider how cooperation with the wider church might impact on facilities use / need; 4. Give advice on mission activities that may have a commercial element and integrate those needs into the overall plan.
Effective management of ET's existing facilities	Our aim is to use the Asset Management Plan to align the management of existing ET facilities with the missional priorities of the Church.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a mechanism that ensures decisions on maintenance and use of facilities align with the missional priorities of the Church; 2. Develop a plan for maintenance and use of all ET facilities and other physical resources; 3. Reform of Resourcing for Mission (R4M) so that it can more effectively resource mission
Earthquake prone buildings	Our aim is to develop a credible response to the risk posed by earthquake prone buildings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor Government policy, Historic Places Trust views and community attitudes on earthquake prone buildings; 2. Contribute to the development of a new Synod earthquake prone buildings policy; 3. Consult with relevant ET members and other stakeholders over the future of ET's buildings; 4. Prioritise and undertake Detailed Engineering Evaluations in accordance with ET's mission priorities;

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Strategic Direction 2014-2019 - COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Overall Goal: Churches on the Taieri collaborating in God's mission so that more people are reached with the gospel, more people are worshipping and growing in Christ, unnecessary duplication is avoided, and kingdom work in the community is stronger.

1. Area to focus on	2. Objective (where do we want to be in 5 years)	3. Strategic Actions (How do we get underway)
Unity among Church Leaders	Greater Levels of Trust, Understanding and Support among Church Leaders on the Taieri.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater emphasis on Church leaders meeting for prayer and encouragement. 2. More willingness to promote one another's events.
Collaboration in Youth Ministry	Youth on the Taieri see themselves as part of the whole Christian youth ministry on the Taieri, and not just their youth group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater communication between youth leaders 2. Holding combined youth events 3. Cooperating on Youth Discipleship
Sharing of Resources	Sharing and rationalising our resources, including buildings where appropriate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperative approach to addressing earthquake prone buildings, and facilities for mission in central Mosgiel. 2. Recognising each Churches strengths and not seeking to unnecessarily duplicate ministries. 3. Explore cooperation in evangelism 4. Explore cooperation in administration