



GOD OF RESCUE

LIFE CHURCH



LORDSHILL CENTRAL WEST END

VISION  
2019



*'I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full'* John 10:10

Since launching in 2007, Life Church has had the prophetic call to be a lifeboat.

That is part of our essential make up, it's part of our identity, it's part of what makes us 'us'.

But what does that actually mean? How does that affect our vision? How does it impact the way we use our time, our gifts, and our resources?

Essentially it means that our primary activity in the city of Southampton is to be engaged in rescue.

We are here to offer life to those who are in peril.

People around us are drowning. Some are drowning in the worries of life, some are drowning in debt, some are drowning in busyness, some are even drowning in religion. Most are drowning in the vast ocean of independence from the God who loves them and who calls them to abundant life.

2019 Is the year we rediscover what it is to be a rescue vessel, and the year when we all find our place as part of the crew

2019 is the year we turn our eyes back to the water and scour the waves for those reaching out for help

2019 is the year we throw out the life ring, and see men women and children brought safely home

2019 the year we are offering life

2019 is a year of rescue



## Key Areas of Change:

1. Training and equipping for rescue
2. Finding our place of rescue in our world
3. Crew Call Outs
4. Rescuing those drowning in sickness
5. Rescuing those drowning in debt

### 1. Training and equipping for rescue.

A few years ago our leadership team spent a morning at Lymington Lifeboat station. We discovered that every member of a lifeboat crew will undergo a period of training. In fact, it can be a year before they actually get to go out on the boat. During that year they serve and clean and learn the core skills involved in rescue. They also grow in relationship with the other crew members so that there is a trust and a sense of shared responsibility between them.

For the first part of this year, we shall be growing in these areas as a church. This involves two aspects of TOOLS and TEACHING

**Tools:** We have developed a range of tools to help us all effectively share the gospel. There is something for everyone depending on how you like to communicate with others. (not communicating with others is not an option!)

All the tools contain the same basic content and format and will use similar 'Life Ring' imagery so that there is a consistency to our message, but there are different tools you can choose from. Tool 1 is an App, Tool 2 is a wallet sized booklet, Tool 3 is a bracelet. All three tools will all also link to a web page and a series of videos for people to discover more.

They are all based on the four letters **L – I – F – E**, with each letter representing a key gospel theme to communicate:

**L = Loved** (The truth that we are all loved by God and made to know him)

**I = Independent** (The truth of why and how we have become independent from God)

**F = Found** (The message of salvation as revealed in the gospels)



**E = Eternity** (The joyful truth that we can receive the gift of eternal life)

The idea is that each of us will become increasingly familiar with the core content of the gospel message, and more confident to share it with those in our world. It also makes the connection between the message of LIFE and LIFE church, so inviting people to come and find out more on a Sunday, in Life Group or at Alpha becomes a natural part of our daily conversations.

**Teaching:** To compliment these tools, and to help us become enthralled by the content of our message, we will kick off the year with a four-part series called **LIFE**, and each week we shall cover one of the four themes of LOVED, INDEPENDENT, FOUND, ETERNITY.

This will be followed up by a 9-week series called **EQUIPPED**, where we shall cover the gospel themes contained in Chris Kilby's book of the same name.

During this time, we shall also have a Sunday visit from Adrian Holloway, who will equip us further. Adrian is a former BBC Sports presenter who is widely regarded as one of the most effective equipping and preaching evangelists of our generation here in the UK. He has preached the gospel to thousands of university students at carol services and mission weeks up and down the country, and also to teenagers at the national youth event 'Newday', where there have been thousands of young people making decisions to follow Christ, and many hundreds of extraordinary healings. We are delighted to say that Adrian has also agreed to come and preach for us on the big Saturday of 'Church in The Park' at the end of May, and will make a final return visit at the end of the year to preach at our big Carol Service.

Our prayer is that as we focus on getting ourselves better equipped to effectively share good news, we shall see increasing numbers rescued, baptised, and added to our communities across the city.



## 2. Finding our place of rescue in our world.

Another thing we discovered on our trip to Lymington Lifeboat Station was the fact that each member of the crew has particular roles and responsibilities. They don't all do exactly the same thing.

The same is true of us here at Life Church. We all have a different place to outwork our rescue mission. In Acts 17 when Paul is preaching in Athens, he tells his hearers that God marks out both the time we live, and the place we live in. That means that God has intentionally put you where you are, and that your time is now.

To give an example from the Old Testament, when Nehemiah was overseeing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, he got people to repair the patch of wall in front of their own house.

Putting these two ideas together, we want to grow in our understanding that God has put each of us in a particular home or workplace, in a particular road, at a particular time in order to affect the particular people that make up the communities around us where we live, work or study.

This will include things such as:

- Praying for your neighbourhood, place of work or study
- Chatting and getting to know your nearest neighbours and colleagues by name.
- Serving your road or workplace with acts of kindness.
- Offering help and care where appropriate.
- Keeping an eye on the vulnerable.
- Being public about your faith.
- Inviting neighbours, friends and colleagues into your home, and inviting them to church and events.



- We'd like to suggest that every member of the Life Church Crew gives just ONE HOUR each week to do one of these things. We can call it '**Neighbouring Hour**'. If everyone devotes just ONE HOUR each week, that's 300 hours of community engagement each week!

### 3. Crew Call Outs

For a lifeboat crew, much of their time is spent in the boathouse in preparation. All the equipment is kept 'ship-shape', and they keep themselves fit and alert. The reason for all this attention to detail and preparation is that in a moment they need to be prepared for action. They all need to leave what they are doing and respond to a call out. It's a life and death issue. Their preparation now proves its worth.

At Life Church this year we have several key initiatives that we are calling all the church to be on board with. A number of 'Crew Call Outs' that we want each one of us to be prepared and ready for.

- **Church in The Park - May/June.** We are teaming up with the other churches from Southampton Christian Network. This is a great way to get involved and have lots of fun. This year there will be lots more family fun activities and barbecues happening outside of the main meetings, and there will also be some great testimonies shared in the evenings. We are calling the whole crew of Life Church to get involved, to be on deck, to offer LIFE to all who come. Please consider taking time off work, it will be during half term, so whole families can be involved together.
- **Alpha at the Movies - Autumn.** We are working with one of the local cinema chains to show the Alpha films over a series of midweek evenings. These will be what we do as Life Groups during the autumn term. We'd love everyone to be thinking about who they can invite. The evenings will be relaxed, we'll watch the movies, have some refreshments, and have some Q and A times. We want to fill the cinema, so please begin praying for your neighbourhood and your friends and colleagues.
- **Come to Church Sundays** – Each month in the second half of the year we are inviting a number of excellent nationally and internationally respected evangelists to come and speak on key Sunday mornings at our sites. These are a big 'Crew Call Out'! We want to fill each of our sites with guests to come and hear these engaging and outstanding speakers. Details are yet to be confirmed, but amongst others we are hoping to have Lex Loizides (Cape town), Steve Wilson (Kings Arms, Bedford), Steve Lee (Miracle Street), Kieran

Dunne (Kings Church Mid Sussex) and Adrian Holloway (Everyday Church London). These are all great speakers, but it will be down to the crew of Life Church to bring people to hear the message of Life!



#### **4. Rescuing those drowning in sickness.**

One of the marks of the early church was that 'The apostles regularly performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people.' (Acts 5:12) We are keen to build church in the same way. And as a consequence over the years we have regularly prayed for the sick, and seen some incredible miracles.

Jesus has such deep compassion for those who are suffering, and when we see and follow his example we will see more of our friends set free from all sorts of sicknesses and diseases.

We will have a couple of opportunities on Sunday Evenings to grow in faith and confidence in praying for the sick.

We will more publically offer to pray for the sick, and will see this as an integral part of our rescue mission. We will have a team on Sunday's to particularly pray for people, and we shall also offer a regular drop in at The Life Centre for the public. We want to continue to grow in this vital part of what it means to be an authentically powerful Christian community, and we are excited about the stories that will flow from our adventures.

We shall keep a log of transformed lives and regularly share stories of healings on Sundays at our meetings.



## 5. Rescuing those Drowning in Debt.

When James, Peter and John agreed that Paul and Barnabas had a grace upon them to take the gospel to the gentile world, Paul commented *'All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.'* (Galatians 2:10)

At Life Church we also carry this apostolic burden to 'remember the poor', and in 2019 we shall be making some great progress in this area thanks to the generous giving at the 2018 One Church Conference, which we tithed to initiatives that will bless and serve those in need.

We have for many years now been running the Breakfast Club, which has regularly given a hot breakfast and good company to over 50 people who are in need every Saturday morning. We shall be continuing with that, but shall also be multiplying the work to two Saturdays a month, so there is plenty of opportunity for many to join the teams.

There are three new initiatives that we shall also be launching this year to add to this:

1. **CAP Befrienders.** We will be in partnership with Christians Against Poverty and Above Bar Church. Our plan is to raise up and train at least 12 people (6 from Central, 3 from West End, 3 from Lordshill) who will become CAP befrienders. This means that they will build relationships with people as they come out of debt, and support them in their journey. Above Bar currently have a backlog of potential clients, and we would like to resource and serve the wider church and the city by offering help in the areas where our church sites are located. This is just the start of the journey with us, and we hope eventually to establish a full debt centre in the city.
2. **Life Support Fund.** This is a fund that anyone from Life Church can add to, and can apply for gifts and loans from. All of us come across situations of need, but we don't always know how to meet that need. Now we will be able to point people to the Life Support Fund. Biblically our first priority is those in the household of faith, the church. We will have people among us who may need a little help, and so can apply for that help from the Life Support Fund. Gifts and loans will be agreed by a team of elders and trustees. Secondly, we all have friends outside of the church, and it may be that we are made aware of a need among them, and so members of the church are able to apply or point others towards the Life Support Fund. Lastly, there may be other projects in the city which we want to support and encourage, so we may also direct some funds towards such projects. We have only just started this, but we supported a





CAP client by paying for a washing machine for them, and also helped a family with a daughter who was born blind to buy her a Braille Tablet for Christmas.

3. **Recovery Course.** Last year Adie and Kerry Smith ran a Recovery Course in Eastleigh. It is a 12 week course for anyone affected by addiction. We would like to facilitate a course here in Southampton, and work with other churches to see people set free.

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