

Reimagine UV **Frequently Asked Questions** **January 2021: Part 1**

What is *Reimagine Upton Vale (UV)*?

Reimagine UV is:

- A recognition that things need to change at UV.
- An opportunity for everyone to join in the process of prayerfully reimagining that change.
- An umbrella term for some specific areas of work that we are undertaking this year to deliver the foundations of that change.

Why do we need to *Reimagine UV*? Why does anything need to change?

- Fundamentally it is because we believe that God, by His Spirit, is using the lockdown restrictions to renew and refresh us so that, when we return to gathered church, we do not go back to the past, but back to the future.
- We believe that God has been speaking prophetically to us during lockdown from Isaiah 43: *forget the former things ... God is doing a new thing.*
- Everything UV used to do before the restrictions was good and worthy. However, long before lockdown began, we shared at successive church meetings in 2019 and 2020 how what we were doing was unsustainable. There was also a sense in the church that change needed to happen and this was a major reason for appointing me (Andy) two years ago.
- The mistake Christians often make is to think that being faithful to God means we have to faithfully maintain traditional models of church. The opposite is true. The world has changed dramatically and the church needs to adapt if we are to meaningfully make disciples and remain faithful to God.

How far does *Reimagining* go? What is its scope?

- Put simply – everything other than our statement of faith! *Reimagine* includes *Reimagining Me* – our own individual lives and what changes Jesus wants to make in us, *Reimagining Torquay* - how we can be better salt and light in our community, and *Reimagining UV* – how everything we do as a church might be better aligned with making disciples.
- This does not mean that everything will happen all at once! Neither does it mean that everything will change. We will still meet on a Sunday to worship, there will still be Small Groups etc. *Reimagine* does mean though that, over time, everything we do will be reviewed.

What are the specific areas of work under the *Reimagine UV* heading that we are addressing this year?

- Purpose vision and values
- Staff and team review
- Discipleship culture
- The Wardrobe Project
- Good News to Torquay
- A phygital future

(A FAQs will be coming out later this week about these six areas of work. We didn't want to make this one too long!)

Why the rush? Surely we can't do anything about all this until the pandemic eases?

Many people are struggling in lockdown for a variety of reasons. For some, uncertainty about the future at UV just adds to their worries and concerns, as does a sense of feeling isolated from the church.

As I have prayed about this, I have actually come to believe that if we get this *Reimagine* process right it will actually help people during lockdown. It will be used by the Holy Spirit to bring peace to our hearts, a sense of belonging to one another, and a sense of excitement about the future.

We have two options. We either put everything on pause until it's safe to meet together again (which sadly is going to take longer than any of us would like) or we can begin to prepare to return.

I am excited by the pastoral opportunity we have to give clarity about *Reimagine*, to communicate clearly and continually, and to engage in meaningful consultation together. We will repeatedly reassure people about a transparent and open decision-making process. This is not my church and my aim is not to drive decisions through the church meeting. Far from it. My job is to create clarity around the vision and ensure a really loving and healthy decision-making process which helps us move on together. We will do everything in a prayerful and gracious and inclusive manner. I believe we can do this in a way that is helpful for individuals and good for the church.

We've been here so many times before. Isn't this just the latest version of yet another review? Are we going to be radical enough that this makes a difference and feels different and creates culture change, or will we fall back into the same routines?

Both at work and in the church most change initiatives do not succeed in bringing about the change that was hoped for. When this happens, people understandably become sceptical that any change process is not worth the pain. My sense though, is that there are a growing number of brothers and sisters at UV for whom change is no longer an option but a moral imperative. A growing number who simply cannot pretend any longer to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and just continue to do what we have always done. Faithfulness requires more. Our hope for lasting change through *Reimagine* is not rooted in our ability or willingness but in Jesus and the work of His Spirit amongst us.

I don't understand/can't keep up with all the different initiatives. I'm confused and don't feel part of it all. What do I do?

I am really sorry about that. It's really hard to do this at the best of times, let alone during COVID. We will make sure that we communicate regularly and in a variety of ways. We will ensure that there is genuine and real consultation and discussion in a variety of contexts, and we will do everything we can to help us all move on together.

What is expected of me now as a Member or attender at UV? Is it a process the leadership do on their own or can I be involved? Will it actually involve or include me? What is the expectation on us? How do I personally engage with *Reimagine*?

As ever, people come first. If you are struggling with lockdown to the degree that you just cannot begin to engage with *Reimagine*, please let us know. We want to support you. For those who can, I would really appreciate it if you were able to read and listen to the emails and videos we put out, that you keep asking questions, and please pray that God will lead us on together.

Where/who can people speak to if they, or you, are unsettled about the direction that *Reimagine* is taking?

I love this question! We do not want anyone to feel excluded from the process. The first place is our Small Group Leaders. If you are not in a Small Group please phone or email the office and we will arrange for someone to phone you. It cannot be stressed enough that we really want to invite everyone to join us in this journey of reimagining the future of UV as we are led by the Spirit of God.

What happens next?

In the meantime we will be working very hard to communicate with everyone. Another FAQs sheet will be coming out this week and we will be making a video for everyone to watch before the Church Meeting on 26 January. Please do join us at that meeting if you can as we will be laying out the plans for the *Reimagine* process.