



## Part 1: The journey so far.

When I (Ps Dek) became senior leader in 2006 God gave me a vision for this church; just one word 'extension'. Isaiah 54 verse 2 a key verse for us is still displayed in our main hall.

*'Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide.'*

Plans to physically expand the existing building began in 2009 and resulted in us purchasing a derelict piece of land that was behind the church building which we converted into a car park in 2013. This enabled us to build on the original carpark. We extended the main hall in church and built Bilston People's Centre which we officially opened on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016.



Financially the expansion cost us £900,000 a large proportion of that came from the generosity of the church people, some from external grants and a mortgage of £498,968

Due to your faithful giving in December 2023 the mortgage balance had reduced to £134,940. A further £17,500 has been paid this year so far.

This has been achieved by us overpaying monthly on the mortgage payments. We are currently paying £3,500 per month. We have also made lumpsum overpayments.

2019 £20,000

2020 £20,000

2021 £30,000

2022 £70,000

2023 £100,000

We are about to make another lumpsum of £40,000!

We want to seriously start to prepare for our next phase of extension. The current interest rate on the mortgage is 6.55% For those of you who have mortgages on your home that will sound a high interest rate. Unfortunately, mainstream banks don't like to loan to charities and so the mortgage options for us as a church are limited and it means we are spending a lot of money in interest payments. In 2023 we spent £13,3038 on interest.

To put us in a strong financial position for what God has in store next for us as a church we would love to be able to clear our existing mortgage this year. So, we are giving you plenty of warning on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November we will be having a special 'provision for the vision' mortgage offering. We would ask you to start to prepare yourselves, consider your finances, pray and come prepared to give. You don't have to wait until November. If you would prefer to give monthly towards the mortgage repayments or would like to give a one of gift before November that's fine just make sure the finance team know that the gifts is for the mortgage so we can include it in the final total in November. Don't forget that if you are a taxpayer with your permission, we can claim back from the government 25p for every £1 that you give so make sure you are signed up to gift aid.



## Part 2: Explorations

Many of you will be aware that in May 2022 we began to explore the possibility of finding a new building or a piece of land to build on to accommodate church growth.

The same week we made the decision to start looking we became aware through a press article that the council had given permission to demolish the Mecca Bingo Hall the venue we have had on our hearts for many years. The plan is to build two warehouses on the site. We made several enquiries with the owners but on the day we met to pray and fast as a church on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 we heard that the owners were not willing to sell the building or land to us and the door closed.



We haven't given up looking. Since then, we have continued to search for a new building and have viewed several pieces of land. In December 2023 we identified a potential piece of land and got as far as drawing designs for a new building but the land sold whilst we were in this process and so another door closed.



This year we approached the planning department about a piece of industrial land we were interested in but we were told that we would not be able to build a church and community centre on the site. Another door closed.

More recently we have identified a potential building and did make an offer to the owner. The offer was rejected and the building is now no longer available. Another door closed.

Several of the properties and pieces of land we have considered have been on industrial estates. We have found that the council's planning department at the moment are not in favour of granting change of use to have a place of worship in an industrial area. However, Dan has met with councillors and our local MP who have opened up the way for us to meet with the lead planning advisor and a meeting is being arranged. Please pray for this meeting that God will make a way for us to gain planning permission when a building becomes available.

Mecca Bingo Hall is still the venue that is on our hearts whether it's for this season or the future we don't know. But just over a month ago the owner contacted us to see what ideas we had. Nothing significant has come from this email but we would certainly value your prayers as we continue to explore the options allowing God to open and close doors. We held a day of prayer and fasting on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**. Please continue to pray with us as we seek God to open the right door at the right time.



### **Part 3: Double Services.**

So, with no current success regarding a building to make room for the growth of Excel, we are faced with a dilemma. We have had services where we have failed to squeeze everyone in and sadly, we have even had people turn up at church, not find a seat, and leave.... We never want that to happen! The experts tell us that when a building reaches just 80% capacity it can prevent further growth.

So what do we do? We have discussed, we have prayed, we have hoped that a building would make the inevitable unnecessary, but sometimes you have to step out before God begins to meet the need.

Some of you will remember the days of double services (pre covid) and we realise that they were not especially happy memories! Particularly for those who were doing 2 morning services *and* an evening service; and as a leadership team we have battled with this...

However we feel challenged that as the song we have been singing says "I will make room for you, to do whatever you want to" sometimes this means doing things that aren't our first choice.

Whilst it isn't necessarily our preference, we do feel it's the right thing to do.

However, we still want you feedback, it can still be tweaked/changed and if it doesn't work, we are happy to think again, but we feel we have to give it a go as a temporary measure to "Make Room".



We recognise that the 3 services was too much for the teams, so the reworked plan is as follows:

2 identical services.

Service 1: slightly earlier time of 10:30

Service 2: Earlier time of 5pm (this is to make it accessible for families with children whilst also accommodating those who only come on a Sunday evening).



The hope is that we will be able to run kids' ministry and have tea and coffee at both services so that people get the same experience. We recognise that some people may not be able to serve at both services and this may not be necessary – we will be working out the finer details.

We also recognise that some who currently come to both services will miss the different service. If that's you, we would encourage you to pray this arrangement doesn't last for too long and also make the most of being able to 'receive' at one service and 'give' at the other by serving, without missing out on parts of the service. If you're not already serving, consider joining a team to help us build capacity and take the strain off the few.

We hope to start this new arrangement from 8<sup>th</sup> September and would encourage you to consider coming to the 5pm to help us create more space for new people in the morning. Change is always difficult – we tend to resist it – but the only way to grow is to be prepared for change. My (Dan's) kids get sad when they grow out of clothes – they like the old ones – but growth means new clothes are needed. We believe that's where we're at as a church and encourage you to embrace this exciting opportunity to Make Room for God to do what he wants to do.

We would love to hear your feedback on the new service times proposals. You can do that by scanning this QR code with your phone's camera:



## Part 4: Mission 2025



Next year we want to mobilize the church into mission. Our heart is that every person who attends Excel Church will have the opportunity to be part of a mission project whether that be through prayer, giving or going.

To this end we are planning 4 types of mission

**Local Mission** – planning 2 local mission's events in Bilston including evangelistic outreach and social action

**National Mission** – serving churches and their communities across England and Wales

**European Mission** – A short term mission trips possibly to Moldova

**International Mission** – Exploring links in Thailand

They'll be plenty of opportunities to be part of Mission 2025

It would be great for every department in Excel Devoted, Courageous Men, Youth, Alive, Children, toddlers, Companions to consider how they can mobilize people to be involved.

More information will be given in the coming weeks.

Make room allow God to use you on the mission field whether that be local national or international. Begin to pray and ask God how you can become involved in Mission 2025

We celebrate how far God has brought us together, but we are entering a new season. It won't be without its challenges but as we make room for God, we are confident that He will lead and direct us into all that he has for us.