



**We are an inclusive church, called to be caring, loving and welcoming to all.**

We believe in being inclusive churches.

This means we strive to answer God's call on our lives to be caring, loving and welcoming to all. Why inclusive? We believe the imperative for inclusivity is scripturally and theologically derived. What we see in God's action in human history in sending his Son Jesus Christ to us is that God accepts all people through Jesus Christ. No-one who becomes a follower of Jesus Christ can be excluded. The good news of the Gospel is all about inclusiveness (Romans 1:16) – and the churches of this Parish of Harpenden try (and because it is not easy, sometimes fail) to model.

So, what does this statement mean? We seek to welcome all no matter what their background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical or mental challenge. We believe all human beings bear the image of God and are loved by God. As the church, we are called to demonstrate God's love and welcome.

So, why a statement? Some sectors of our communities do not feel welcome and are not sure if all churches are welcoming to them. At the January 2016 meeting of all the Archbishops in the Anglican Communion, it was decided to be more overt in our welcome in church particularly of the LGBT in our communities. Therefore, we want to publish this statement and what we believe in this Parish, in order to help make our welcome known to all.

So, what's new? The answer to that is, nothing. Our statement is completely within the present policy and practice of the Church of England nationally. We are joining with other churches in issuing statements which declare our commitment to be inclusive and welcoming to all, striving to offer God's care and love to everyone searching for God.