



Queenswest Vision + Values

Our Seed Passage

Isaiah 61:1-4 (personal translation)

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom to the captive,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.
4 They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall *renovate* the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

Mission

is what you are about, short and sweet.

Queenswest Church lives with Jesus in the **renovation** of hearts, community and culture.

Vision

is not just what *could* be, but what *should* be as a result of your calling.

(short version)

The vision of Queenswest is to engage God's work of renovation - renovation of hearts, community and culture. We get to do this by bringing good news to the poor, binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming freedom to the captive, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, and they in turn, will renovate the ruined city (Isaiah 61).

We are called to this because this is the mission of God to us and through us. He became one of us. This was his strategy of ultimate love. We want to have the same strategy by identifying with the poor to love them, because we ourselves are poor (Gal 5:14), engaging the culture, but not being of it, and being part of a community that graciously and fearlessly embraces the broken. Certain beliefs tell us that we *should* do this. The gospel tells us that we *get* to do this.

(long version)

We want to engage the **renovation** of hearts, community and culture by bringing good news to the poor, binding up the brokenhearted, and proclaiming freedom to the captive - that they may be called oaks of righteousness. And these will then renovate the ruined cities.

renovation

early 15c., renovacyoun "spiritual rebirth," also "rebuilding, reconstruction," from Latin renovare "renew, restore," from re- "again" + novare "make new," from novus "new".

In two words, we are called to be **creative renovators**. Why? Because this is the mission of our God to us and through us. He is our Creator. And he is bringing to bear a new creation, in the fullest sense, in and through his church. Our vision is to be a creative, renovating presence in our unchurched community; that through this

community, many would find hope in Jesus, the poor would be encouraged, the broken would find healing, and the captives set free so that they would become creative renovators to the people and places they are called. Isaiah calls these renovators "Oaks of Righteousness." These oaks provide shade, give fruit, plant seeds. The righteous, in the context of the Old Testament, were always those who fought for and protected the community from those who threatened attack. As oaks of righteousness, we are called to be *for* our community, our neighborhood, and our city.

It begins with God's mission and his mission begins with our **hearts**.

Isaiah 61:1-4 is our seed passage. Its beauty lies in the way it *affirms* the broken but also *empowers* them. And Jesus is the only hero. There is a transformation story in these four verses. The gospel does not simply swoop us up and out of our poverty. The gospel sheds light on the brokenness of our lives. It wrecks whatever illusions we may have built up for ourselves and shows us to be captives in an endless cycle of survival, anxiety, rebellious sin, disappointment, and trying to be good enough. We need to see and accept that we are the poor first. We live in utter poverty. We are the sick - for all have fallen short of the glory of God - is how the Apostle Paul puts it. But in faith, we believe that poverty, sin and the wounds we carry from relationships and life are not the last words. The gospel reveals to us that Christ became poor in every way for our sakes, even to the point of death, so that we can become rich - rich in love, forgiveness, justice, and humility. Our lives are being rebuilt on the foundation of Christ and his loving mercy. Certain beliefs tell us that there is good and bad and that we need to be good to be loved. The gospel tells us that we are bad all the way through but because of Jesus, we are loved all the way through. This is renovation of the heart - turning do-gooders (and those who think in those terms) into followers of Jesus. This is good news. This is the *inward* call of the gospel.

But this inward journey is never made alone. We experience the gospel of Jesus most powerfully and authentically in **community**. God calls us *with-ward*. The call to community is a call to grace. As we lean into this gracious community, we grow in freedom from sin, fear and shame and towards our God given design. We also realize that this freedom is not for our own enjoyment alone but ours for the sake of

one another. Freedom finds its fullness in us when we willingly become servants of one another in love, sacrifice, compassion, confession and forgiveness - for this is what we were created to do. (Gal 5:13)

Within this “one another” community, we seek to work with God’s Spirit to raise disciples who will see ministry in their places of work, play and dwelling. We realize that community is most alive and authentic when we are on mission together. Our vision involves raising and sending workers for the harvest. Jesus said the harvest is plenty, but the workers few. We sense a strong calling to send these disciples out as artists, overseas missionaries, community developers, retailers, burger flippers, bankers, lawyers, parents, teachers, mechanics, activists, scientists, business owners, and church planters - all threading the culture of their fields to bring gospel renovation through individual relationships and the holy work we engage in day to day.

Dallas Willard writes, “Nothing less than life in the steps of Christ is adequate to the human soul or the needs of our world.” We realize our deep need to live **with** our savior, Jesus. And we also recognize the world’s deep need for us to live with Jesus **amongst** them.

The gospel sends us *outward* into our broken **culture**. We hear the call to know our neighborhood and our neighbors - the culture and the culture makers. Our heart is primarily with the poor and brokenhearted. And that is because we know what it is like to be poor and broken. The Scriptures consistently urge us to remember where we come from. When we remember that we are the poor and have been made rich by the grace of Jesus, we can be with others who are poor - those who feel they are lesser and those who have less. We are positionally in places to give generously and be the healing and renovating presence of Christ among the least. Scripture says that whatever we do for the least, we do unto Jesus. We expect to be transformed by those we serve, for in them, we expect to meet Jesus.

We envision partnering with both the poor and the culture makers (many times one and the same) towards measurable change. We can’t do everything, but there are a few things we can do. We ask these questions: What has God put in our hands? What is our pain? Who is our neighbor? What is their pain? It will involve reaching

out to the local unchurched, serving them, and also inviting them into the community through evangelism, ministry and creative partnerships. What could this look like? Keep reading.

Snapshots of Vision

Because images help connect the brain to the heart.

We envision working with local youth through the arts and connecting them to the many artists of LIC.

We envision establishing local support groups for addicts of various stripes.

We envision gathering hurting and broken marriages for encouragement, healing and strengthening.

We envision partnering with local renovators who are taking ground as we speak. Like ERDA, a local community development group who is establishing a local, member owned credit union, providing affordable loans to low income families with local investments.

Or with the Western Queens Food Co-op whose mission is to address issues with access to good, affordable food in the inner city.

Or with a local cafe - the modern day well - where we can engage the community through the arts, community events, and services.

We envision that the hard but soul gratifying work of being a local presence will eventually broaden our global awareness. Being experts at home gives us an edge abroad.

We envision LIC becoming a community where others would want to live because they sense the presence of an alternative culture - a taste of the kingdom of heaven. We need many more churches in our neighborhoods that have a vision to

be the healing, engaging and renovating presence of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 58:12 says, "And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in."

We hope to dwell these streets in the renovating name of Jesus.

Values

are guiding principles. You do church by your values. And they are enduring. Others may come and go along the way, but these will always be there. Collectively, it's worship (upward).

Sanctuary (with-ward)

safe and holy community. misfits abound. authenticity. grace-filled.

Renovation (inward)

good news to the poor. binding of broken hearts. raising wounded healers for the city.

Presence (outward)

renovating the city. threading culture. being the presence of Jesus to neighbor.

Questions we will ask ourselves again and again: Are we willing to be poor so that others might hear and experience good news? Are we committed to being inconvenienced for the sake of a life changing gospel? Are we growing in the kingdom currencies of mercy, justice and humility? Are we living in freedom to the extent that we can give it away when called to do so in love? Are we living in generosity towards each other and our neighbors?

Pain, when touched by God, when alighted with good news, turns into vision - a burn - a fervent prayer. When you realize that your pain and poverty is not outside

the reach of God's touch - his "witness" - then your pain becomes vision for others who need the good news of Jesus Christ. Pain can severely limit us through fear, shame and cynicism. God's love breaks through our pain to reach the pain of our city - a vision worth giving our lives for.

Communicating Our Vision

"Where the hell is heaven" Version

Something you might hear at Queenswest is, "Where the hell is heaven." Not as a question but as a statement. Where we are from, it can seem like hell on earth. Don't get me wrong - we love our city. But it is filled with broken places and broken people in broken relationships. Not the kind of place you would necessarily want to raise your kids. That is the hard truth. The harder truth is that we feel called to this place. It is home. But we call it home with a eye to what is coming. And that is heaven.

Heaven is not some place high in the sky that we are hoping to get to one day after all is said and done. Jesus taught us to pray today and everyday for his will to be done here on earth "as it is in heaven." In other words, to pray (and presumably work) towards heaven breaking into earth. So, when we see NYC, the "hell" we live in, we also see heaven. With lots of faith. And prayer. And with like minded and hearted people who are growing in boldness to proclaim this with us. So the work we are being called to in faith is the work of renovating hearts, communities and culture.

NYC is our home, where the hell is (becoming) heaven, in deed, in faith, in love, through prayer and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who gives us the vision and the courage to renovate the streets to dwelling once again.