



ST. GEORGE'S CRYPT, LEEDS

Mission Statement:

Our aim:

- to meet the basic needs of everyone in a safe, non-judgmental and caring environment
- to support people who are living on the streets into finding accommodation
- to help people gain skills and confidence so that they can take an active role in their futures
- to be good stewards of all that we receive in an open and transparent manner
- to enable people to make positive choices in their lifestyle by accessing employment and freedom from addiction
- to engage with local communities by identifying opportunities to share the Crypt's resources
- to find the most appropriate solutions by creating effective partnerships across the city

We offer:

- Care, compassion and hope, a place in which people can choose to change
- Immediate practical support in terms of getting fed, cleaned up and clothed

- 40 bed spaces, 354 days a year, covering our three projects: Faith Lodge, Regent Terrace and the emergency Overnight Centre
- Opportunities to gain skills, self-confidence and a sense of achievement
- Prayer, support and initial counselling

Faith & the Crypt:

We are a modern, thriving Christian community living and walking the Gospels hand in hand with the homeless, disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Leeds. Our ministry and calling is woven into every aspect of our work from hospitality to counselling, from the street to a home. We demonstrate the love and strength of Christ's faith in people through our values. There is a rhythm of prayer throughout our working day with chapel service at 9am for all staff and any residents who wish to attend and regular chapel services are held for all clients seeking answers.



A brief history:

1930 – 1939

The challenge was given in the first evening sermon preached at St George's Church by the new Vicar, Revd Percy Donald Robins. He saw the familiar signs of the Depression: enforced idleness, hunger, hardship and despair. Beneath the Church lay a Crypt, full of vaults and coffins with gaping holes in the walls. Don and a few brave members of the congregation opened up the Crypt and cleaned and cleared it as much as possible. Members of the congregation brought milk, sugar and cocoa; food and clothing was brought in and men poured in.

1939 – 1949

During the Second World War, Don's ministry shifted to support those affected by the onset of hostilities and the Night Shelter became an Air Raid Shelter. After the War, the Crypt reinvented itself to meet the changing needs from those seeking work to men seeking rehabilitation and shelter. Don died in February 1948, aged only 48. But his spirit and vision are an unfailing inspiration even today.

1949 – 1959

Faith Lodge, Leeds, which opened in 1954, is a half-way house – 'half-way for the down-and-out between the park bench and a proper home, between prison and a respectable life, between degradation and self-respect. A daytime drop-in centre was also opened for women and families. In the first nine months about 50% of the residents were resettled into society.

1959 – 1969

The Crypt became a registered charity in February 1967, the Trust Deed stating its objective as being: "the promotion of evangelism, and the relief of poverty, hardship, sickness and distress among needy and destitute persons."

1969 – 1979

In 1975, Revd Don Paterson returned to the Crypt as its Warden. Where there was poverty, suffering, loneliness or failure he saw a person, not an abstract social problem, and he believed in offering dignity and hope in practical ways.

1979 – 1989

St George's Crypt continued to provide services to over 130 homeless and disadvantaged people every day. The work of the hostels (Faith Lodge and Regent Terrace) also continued to grow in importance. St George's Church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1988. The commemorative booklet for that occasion says: "The work of the Crypt is respected throughout the Church of England and beyond. It is crucial the Church and Crypt are kept spiritually and practically together".

1989 – 1999

In 1995, the Trustees launched a major capital appeal- 'More than a roof' - to update the Crypt's facilities. The redevelopment work had cost over £1.4m.

1999 – 2009

Seven decades on, and in response to new and changing demands, the work of the Charity has expanded considerably. The vision towards 2005 was launched in 2000 and the Charity aimed to provide professional standards of care within a framework of Christian faith and witness to the service users, all of whom are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or religious belief.

The Crypt continues to demonstrate a capacity for change and innovation. Key strategic partnerships have been brokered with Leeds City Council to provide continuing services for rough sleepers and residents with alcohol dependency issues. The Government has invested a grant of £1m as a significant contribution towards a further redevelopment of the Crypt aimed at increasing accessibility, individual bedrooms for rough sleepers, new skills training and arts programmes, and an updated café space.

The Crypt has developed robust partnerships with a wide range of corporate businesses.

Priorities obviously change - the focus now is much more on younger people with multiple needs including addiction and poor mental health - but the core principles remain the same.

2010 - 2011

The Crypt's social enterprise – St George's Crypt Nurture Community Interest Company – was set up in 2010 to provide training and engagement opportunities in catering and horticulture.

2011 – Present

A second retail outlet – a former Co-op property – was purchased