TREASURES IN OUR COMMUNITY

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES IN MICC
These treasures: our mission, vision and values, have been part of MICC since 2001. They’ve been posted on our website and part of our shared church culture. But they haven’t been declared often enough.

So in an effort to move from a passive to active position, from holding them unconsciously to holding them consciously, and from expressing them casually to declaring them intentionally, we spent some weeks in August/September 2015 reviewing these and distributing the treasures in new booklets.

May we all read, respond and rejoice together as God renew our commitments to declare his glory.

Munich International Community Church was founded in 1985, and by God’s grace continues to proclaim the good news in 2018.

On the cover: detail of a photograph by Rainer Viertlböck
FIFTY OR SIXTY YEARS AGO, the idea of an English speaking church in Munich, Germany struck many Americans and others as odd, but upon reflection, most of these realized that it made sense as some kind of a necessity for the military presence in postwar Europe.

By 1985 this idea was somewhat more common, yet it was still regarded as something of a curiosity, a church in which English speakers, mostly citizens of the US and UK would gather for worship during the time of their stay in Germany.

However, having crossed via globalization into the twenty-first century, such a church can no longer be regarded merely as a necessity for a pocket of English speakers, nor just as a curiosity on the Bavarian landscape, but rather as a strategic opportunity to reach the nations of the entire world with the message of grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today, huge numbers of people groups are eagerly learning English to engage in global business enterprise, diplomacy, education, banking, and information technology.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* (November 2000), Barbara Wallraff observed:

English has inarguably achieved some sort of global status. Whenever we turn on the news to find out what’s happening in East Asia, or the Balkans, or Africa, or South America, or practically anywhere, local people are being interviewed and telling us about it in English. [In 2000, Ted Anthony, writing for] the Associated Press, observed, “When Pope John Paul II arrived in the Middle East last month to retrace Christ’s footsteps and addressed Christians, Muslims and Jews, the pontiff spoke not Latin, not Arabic, not Hebrew, not his native Polish. He spoke in English.”
Indeed, by now lists of facts about the amazing reach of our language may have begun to sound awfully familiar. Have we heard these particular facts before, or only others like them? English is the working language of the Asian trade group ASEAN. It is the *de facto* working language of 98 percent of German research physicists and 83 percent of German research chemists. It is the official language of the European Central Bank, even though the bank is in Frankfurt and neither Britain nor any other predominantly English-speaking country is a member of the European Monetary Union. It is the language in which black parents in South Africa overwhelmingly wish their children to be educated.

In MICC over 50 nations of the world are represented, gathering with a common language to worship an uncommon Lord. International churches like MICC have an unprecedented opportunity to equip, train and then deploy men and women all over the globe to serve and spread the fame of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in order to assist us in that opportunity, we have formulated our mission and vision and values. These offer us a direction and boundaries for developing fruitful ministries and exporting disciple making disciples to the ends of the earth.
Mission and Vision in MICC
Glorifying Christ • Following His Leadership • Fulfilling His Purpose

Imagine for a moment that you walk out one morning to catch a tram so you can connect to the S-Bahn and get to work. At the stop, the tram pulls to a stop, you get on board, sit down and open your reading material for the morning. Perhaps you do your devotions on the tram, perhaps you read the newspaper, or you get ready for a meeting in the morning. But this morning, you’re just sitting there reading on the tram, and you realize you’re not going anywhere. Hmm....

And so you sit there a few more minutes and you’re still not going anywhere. Not many of us would just stay there, would we? We would ask a few questions, then get up, and then walk, and we would finally try to find some other way of getting to our destination.

So, wouldn’t it be odd, if on Monday you get on the tram at 7:40, sit on it for 15 minutes and get off and then walk to the S-Bahn? And Tuesday, you board the tram once again at 7:40, sit on it till 8:00 and get off and walk to the S-Bahn. Wednesday comes around and you routinely say to yourself, “Well, I’ve got to go to the tram stop.” So you go and sit on the tram for 20 minutes and then walk to the S-Bahn. Really, there are not many people who enjoy boarding buses or trams that aren’t going anywhere, simply for the experience of sitting on the bus.

Churches can also be like that.

Every Sunday, they open up their doors and people get on. And they sit down. They occasionally ask themselves, “Where’s it going?” and they say, “We don’t know.” Or they ask, “When’s it moving?” And they tell themselves, “We haven’t figured that out yet. Let’s come back next week and see what happens.”

There are a lot of churches like that. In any community, but especially in a city with a rich heritage like Munich, there are old, historic, but motionless tram churches. These are churches that may have been around for many years, but don’t have a clear sense of their purpose, direction, or identity.

Since any church can drift aimlessly into stillness, we as leaders of this local church family choose to take the time to ask and answer three very important questions.

*Why are we here?*
*Where are we going?*
*How are we going to get there?*
Continually asking and reviewing our answers to these questions gives us confidence when we get on that “tram” with the bold sign on the front that says “MICC.”

We gain confidence when we know that it’s going somewhere, and that each individual person’s involvement will make a significant contribution. You can have confidence that your presence really matters—you know that you are more than a passenger but an active, sharing participant in the journey.

**QUESTION ONE—MISSION: WHY ARE WE HERE?**

Our founding documents state,

*We exist to glorify God through Jesus Christ as we help to meet the spiritual needs of English speakers in the international community.*

*We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.* —Colossians 1:28

If we had a flagpole, we would run up a flag that declares just that. Now that’s our broad purpose, a broad sense of our mission. And that’s why we are here.

But what does that really mean? How does that work out for us as we’re gathered together in this international community?

It means that in all we do we magnify God’s surpassing greatness, majesty and beauty, inviting others to taste and see that He is good.

It means that we encourage the worship of the Triune God.

It means that we draw people into the worship services and the experience of learning from His Word, and responding to His Word in worship, service and adoration.

It means that we seek to develop a caring community of followers of Jesus Christ.

It means that as a caring community, we seek to reach out to people who are in Munich’s English speaking community and help them come to know Christ and grow in Christ.

It means that we seek to equip the saints so that each individual believer might grow to his full potential in Christ.

One of the unique features of our church is that we’re made up of people from all over the world who have converged upon Munich, Germany. We are exiles, aliens and strangers. We are not tourists. Many of us live here for a period of time and then move somewhere else. And if, as a believer, you’ve been equipped and challenged and you’ve grown in your time here, when you go someplace else—whether to your home country, or to another nation, then you go with a heart to extend God’s fame in that place; you leave with a desire to extend His kingdom and rule and authority in your new home.
And so in this way we have a huge number of missionaries in our congregation—people who join with us for a while and then go taking the name of Christ with them.

But in all these activities and relationships, as first priority we seek to glorify God and extend His fame. We are to declare His glory to the city of Munich, to Germany, to Europe, and ultimately the world.

That’s why we’re here—that’s our mission.

**QUESTION TWO—VISION: WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

We believe that God’s desire for us in Munich is this: to build a growing church that welcomes cultural and ethnic diversity, a place that is intentionally reaching out to people and drawing them into life in genuine community, a place where believers can introduce their friends, their co-workers and their neighbors to the gospel and to life in Jesus Christ.

*We believe that God is calling us to be a significant, growing presence in this city.* We believe He wants MICC to grow large enough to be a distinctive focal point for the gospel in this city. He wants us to be more than a small storefront church that exists and happens to hold meetings in English for expats and locals; He wants us to be a place where people from Germany and other nations around the world come and worship and exalt the Lord Jesus together.

*We believe that God desires MICC to be a genuine community, a place believers can call home.* No matter where you’ve come from, you want a place where you can enjoy close fellowship. We want to be large enough to be a distinctive presence in the community, but also small enough through our small group ministries so that people have a place to connect and be involved. MICC is a place where those who join us can see that their lives matter to other believers.

*We believe that God is calling us to be a developing, growing and equipping place.* MICC is a training center where the members of this community are trained and equipped to effectively live and reproduce their lives in this community and city, as well as in the other places in the world where God may eventually send them so that His name might be made known.

We desire over the long term have the privilege of glorifying God through Jesus Christ by presenting to Him hundreds, even thousands of disciple-making disciples that have passed through the city of Munich and through the ministries of this church. They will be people that have been blessed, encouraged, equipped and grown and then go on to encourage, bless and invest in others’ lives as well.
Finally, we believe that God is calling us to a reproducing ministry. God wants to grow MICC in terms of our leadership, our strength and our worship, so that we might be instrumental in planting other churches in this city, in Germany, in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

And that's where we're going—our vision.

To find out how we are going to get there—how we believe God is equipping and calling us to achieve this vision, keep reading to get to the next section, "Worthy Treasures in MICC" beginning on page 9.

But before we go on to that, we'd like to offer some encouragement through some illustrations of the power of a compelling vision in an individual's life and in the life of the local church. Larry Crabb offers some insight and application:

The first reformation recovered with liberating clarity the truth of how we're made right with God, how we receive God's life and the guarantee of enjoying it forever. I suggest that the reformation needed in the church today would focus on why God gives us life, on the real reason that Jesus died. "It is not for your sake...that I am going to do these things," God said, "but for the sake of my holy name" (Ezekiel 36:22).

[In that new reformation] the Spirit would cut through our narcissistic nuttiness to make clear that God saved us in order for Him to receive glory, not to help us feel good about ourselves and lead exciting lives.

We were saved to glorify God. Realizing that one truth is the heart of the reformation that the modern church must experience. And our salvation provides us with all the resources we need to pull it off. That realization and learning how to draw on those resources will begin the revival. Our lives can actually be all about God and not about us. That's the coming revolution.

Think about it. Let your heart dream. From narcissists to worshipers. From people trying hard to make our lives more pleasing to us, to people who make it our priority to please God. Men would turn away from pornography. Lonely women would no longer date still-married men. People with limited means would be glad when their friends become rich. Children would spend time with their aging parents and count it a privilege to do so. We'd stop being so dammably selfish and actually be more concerned for others than for ourselves, even when the price is high. The church would shift from a fractious society of ego-driven competitors whose souls never meet to a gathering of broken, grateful saints ruled by the passion of grace. We'd become a community.

If the Spirit reforms our understanding of why God bothered to save us in the first place, if He revives our passion to live sacrificially for Him without focusing on our own immediate sense of well-being, a revolution will be set in motion. The church will be on its way to again being the church, never perfectly of course, but perhaps as substantially as in the days of Acts.
And from the French writer, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry we can gain some perspective on vision and its impact on individuals and communities:

If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

In MICC, we are setting a course which will not let the daily ministry tasks of recruiting, planning, budgeting and managing crowd out our godly yearning for the vast and endless sea—the infinite glory of the eternal God.
Worthy Treasures
OUR CORE VALUES IN MICC
GLORIFYING CHRIST • PRIORITIES FOR MINISTRY • GROWING IN UNITY

QUESTION THREE—HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

Let’s review: In MICC, we believe that God is calling us to be a significant, growing presence in this city. We believe that God is calling us to be a developing, growing and equipping place. We believe that God is calling us to be a reproducing church. We believe that we’re to be a home for many people from many different lands, a place where believers can introduce their friends, their co-workers, their friends, their neighbors, to the gospel, and to life in Jesus Christ.

But the question remains: how are we going to get there?

Today, the trend is to identify an organization’s “core values” to help them know how they’re going to fulfill their mission and vision. We’re a little hesitant to call these “core values” exactly because it is a little trendy. The idea of “values” can be different from what God reveals as ministry priorities for us. Three or four of us could get together and say, “we value this” but the bigger question is, on what does God place a high value? What is it that God is calling us to and how is it that He would have us use the cultural diversity and the individual giftedness that we have in MICC? How would He want us to achieve His purposes?

Since we’re looking for something more established and eternal, we’re calling these Worthy Treasures. These are ten sound premises that we believe are worthy of building upon.

1. God-centered ministry

God’s first commandment is, “I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, you shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20). In Revelation 5-6 we see the worship of the Lamb enthroned in heaven where all the angels and the elders bow down and cry, “Holy Holy Holy.”

There’s none like Him, He is the only one worthy to receive our praise. Our ministry seeks to be centered upon Jesus Christ; He is at the core of all we’re doing. That’s the only thing that will give Him honor. A man centered ministry won’t do it. A fun-centered ministry won’t do it, a people-centered ministry won’t do it.

If we don’t focus upon God then we’ll invariably center on other things that are not worthy treasures—not worthy of our affections, our focus, or our energy.
2. The Authority of the Bible
We believe that God’s Word—the Old and New Testaments—are utterly reliable, truthful, and inerrant. God has spoken and He has not stuttered, and our ministry relies on the final authority and sufficiency of the Bible for all matters of faith and conduct.

We are not to study the Bible simply to gather information—to fill our minds with trivia and to satisfy our curiosity. Jesus prayed in John 17:17, “Sanctify them through your truth, your Word is truth.” The Word of God is God’s primary instrument in changing us. It is His tool to change the way that we think, live, act and feel—so that our thoughts, our emotions, our affections, and our commitments are transformed by His Word. The Word of God is a tool; it’s not a toy.

Also, the Word of God should not be used as a weapon. We don’t use the truth of God’s Word to beat someone who believes a little bit differently than we do. That’s not the right use of God’s Word. It is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) but it is to be used as a sword against the enemy of our souls, and not against our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

3. Penetrating our Community
In the Great Commission Jesus tells his disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). This call means we are to be making disciples, penetrating the community around us with the Word of God. As a church we will penetrate on a personal level; our reaching out to others will be personal and relational, not programmatic.

The primary way that we will penetrate the community is one family, one person at a time. Why? Because some of us live in Eichenau and we have a community; others live in Neuperlach and they have a community, and others live in Schwabing and they have a community... and God sends us out from this place to those other places where we can be salt and light individually in those communities and we can penetrate those communities. This is also true of our workplaces: some of you work for BMW, some of you work for Starbucks or Siemens, others work in health care professions, still others have an office in your home; some of you are in University, some are in German schools, some are in international schools. Every one of us has a community to penetrate as an ambassador of Jesus Christ and to declare “The Kingdom of God is here and I am a messenger sent from God to bring a message of reconciliation.” That’s what 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 is all about—penetrating our community.

4. Giftedness and Ministry Passion
As a church we want to encourage a kind of ministry and personal development in which people serve according to their gifts and passions. You can develop ministry in a church by standing up and saying, “We need 16 people to serve in this ministry, and we’re going to lock the doors until we get 16 volunteers.”
That’s one way to do it, but it’s not effective—you have four people that are happy about doing it, four who couldn’t care less and eight people who say “I really wish I was doing something else.” The Bible describes how, through identifying and deploying spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4), and combining those gifts with individual ministry passion (1 Pet.4), we can be fulfilled and fruitful (Gal. 5:22-23) as we glorify God in our service.

5. Lifechange in Small Groups
Jesus had a small group. He called them disciples—twelve men that he met with regularly, that he was involved with in ministry training and personal development. Jesus knew that there were huge numbers of people he couldn’t humanly reach. He spoke to the large crowds, but he invested his life in twelve and even more intimately in three.

The early church met daily in homes and devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42ff). The New Testament commands us to love one another, to pray for one another, to encourage one another, to rebuke one another, to restore one another. It’s very difficult for us to obey the “one another” commands while we are in church between 4:00 and 5:30 on Sundays. The only way to obey these verses is to be involved in a smaller group of people. If you’re not in a small group, get in one! Join one for encouragement, for discipleship, for growth, for your walk.

In the course of ministry in MICC, the small groups are the central place where discipleship, leadership development, equipping, pastoral care and evangelism take place. In small groups we’re reaching out to people and drawing them in to the life of the church.

6. Strong Children’s Ministry
We have a good number of families at this church with a lot of children. We have about 50 children from birth to age 18.

So why do we have children’s and youth classes on Sunday? Have you every thought about why we do that? Is it because that’s what churches traditionally do? Or because you have to have a place where you can stick the kids while the adults meet and talk about things that are over the kids’ heads? Is that why we do it? No.

Do we do it because we’ve always done it that way? No.

Do you know why we do this? Because we have a heart for the next generations. We’re not just concerned with the short term issue of holding meetings today with no regard for the church of the twenty-second century. Just as Paul says in Romans 1 that the gospel has been passed from faith to faith, from generation to generation, we recognize that we have the privilege of communicating the gospel from parents to children—from one generation to the next. Additionally, Psalm 78 reminds us of the historic pattern, “Ask your father and he will tell you what God did for the people of Israel.”
Having a heart for the next generations means we think of what God might do with our lives. The reason that we are here as believers today is that there were faithful men and women in the 17th through 20th centuries who passed on the gospel, who treasured the word of God, who encouraged the worship of the Triune God, who penetrated their community, who served one another according to their giftedness, who saw their lives changed in relationships. We are their legacy, and God intends for us to leave a similar legacy and inheritance after us for His glory.

7. **Prayer is Essential**
   We ought to ask ourselves: “Is prayer crucial to our ministry or is it essential?” To answer that, let’s talk about air and breathing. Is air crucial, or is air essential? It’s essential. You’ve got to have it. If you don’t have air—life will be over soon. That’s pretty convicting when you talk about prayer that way, isn’t it? Is prayer essential? Prayer is essential for everything that we do. Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:7 “The end of all things is near, therefore be clear minded and self-controlled, so that you can pray.” Notice the order there: the end of all things is near. We might think it’s time to pack up and go up on the mountain and just wait. No, he says, *get your head straight. Be clear minded, be self-controlled*. Why? So you can get out and do all the things that need to be done and minister because the end of all things is here? No, so you can *pray*.

8. **Developing Leaders**
   Paul, in Ephesians 4:11-12, says that God gave gifted men—apostles and prophets and evangelists and teaching shepherds—to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up and mature the body. In a church our size, the pastor can’t do everything. That’s why we have elders and deacons and other leaders. The elders in MICC share the responsibility for the oversight of the ministry; they’re personally accountable to God for the spiritual care of the families that God has brought to MICC (Heb. 13:17). We have small group leaders and Sunday school teachers and others who also share responsibility for this kind of personal ministry.

   Ours is not a centralised, bureaucratic kind of ministry, but a decentralised, active and involved network of caring leaders. As Paul challenged Timothy to select and train faithful saints who would be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2), we train leaders to unleash continuous, powerful waves of ministry to extend God’s fame in the world.

9. **Unity in Diversity**
   In Colossians 3:11, Paul describes the New Covenant community as a place where “there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.” Here at MICC we express the truth that there is no British, no
Irish, no German, no Italian, no American, no Turkish, no Singaporean, or no Japanese, but Christ is all and in all. Our common bond in Christ is stronger than any family or national ties. It is a blessing each Sunday to see a foretaste of heaven, knowing that God has called out for Himself a people from every tongue and tribe and nation and we get to experience it right here.

10. Communication in the Body
This means that we value communicating individually with one another. We strive as leadership within the church to communicate effectively with everyone else. We let people know how they can be involved, we let people know of prayer needs. We’re committed to communicating with you and hearing from you the needs that you have, the concerns that you have.

For us, healthy communication—praying for one another and encouraging one another daily—is a vital element in getting to the place where God is calling us to go.

And Last, Boasting Only in the Cross
All these treasures must be traced back to a very significant foundation. Paul writes in Galatians 6:14 “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

It may seem strange to you to boast in the cross. If you had been there when Jesus was crucified, it would not have been a pleasant sight; it was shameful and repulsive because the righteous Son of God died a cruel death by execution in an unjust way. Yet it’s on the basis of what Christ completed on the cross that everyone of these ministry strategies, every one of these ministry priorities is grounded (1 Cor. 15:16-19; 57). If Christ is not raised, we have no hope. Let’s go out to the pubs and get drunk. Let’s stay away from work. Let’s waste our lives on all kinds of useless, high-spirited, fast living in this world, because we have no hope.

But the good news is that Christ has been raised and because of the cross, all of these ministry strategies are not about MICC. It’s not about us and what we’re doing, but it’s all about Jesus, His glory and His fame.

We have one more question, whose importance we learned after posing the previous questions. That question is asked and answered in a third booklet, *Are We There Yet?*