**GROWING IN FRUITFULNESS**



**The Vision | John 15 v. 1-17 (New International Version)**

**Listen and pay attention to the images as the passage is read. Which picture illustrating John 15 did you find most striking? Why?**

1 ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 ‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: love each other.

**Fruitfulness in challenging times for the Church: > < =**

*More than merely faithfulness to the way we have always done things in a changing world;*

*Often less than success in the eyes of a superficial world;*

*But always the growth of His Kingdom that is not of this world.*

**Unpacking the vision a bit more… back into John 15**

**Picture** – Church: It’s a field, not a factory v.1

**Pain** – Growth: It involves pruning v.2

**Promise** – Expectation: Look for the fruit v.5

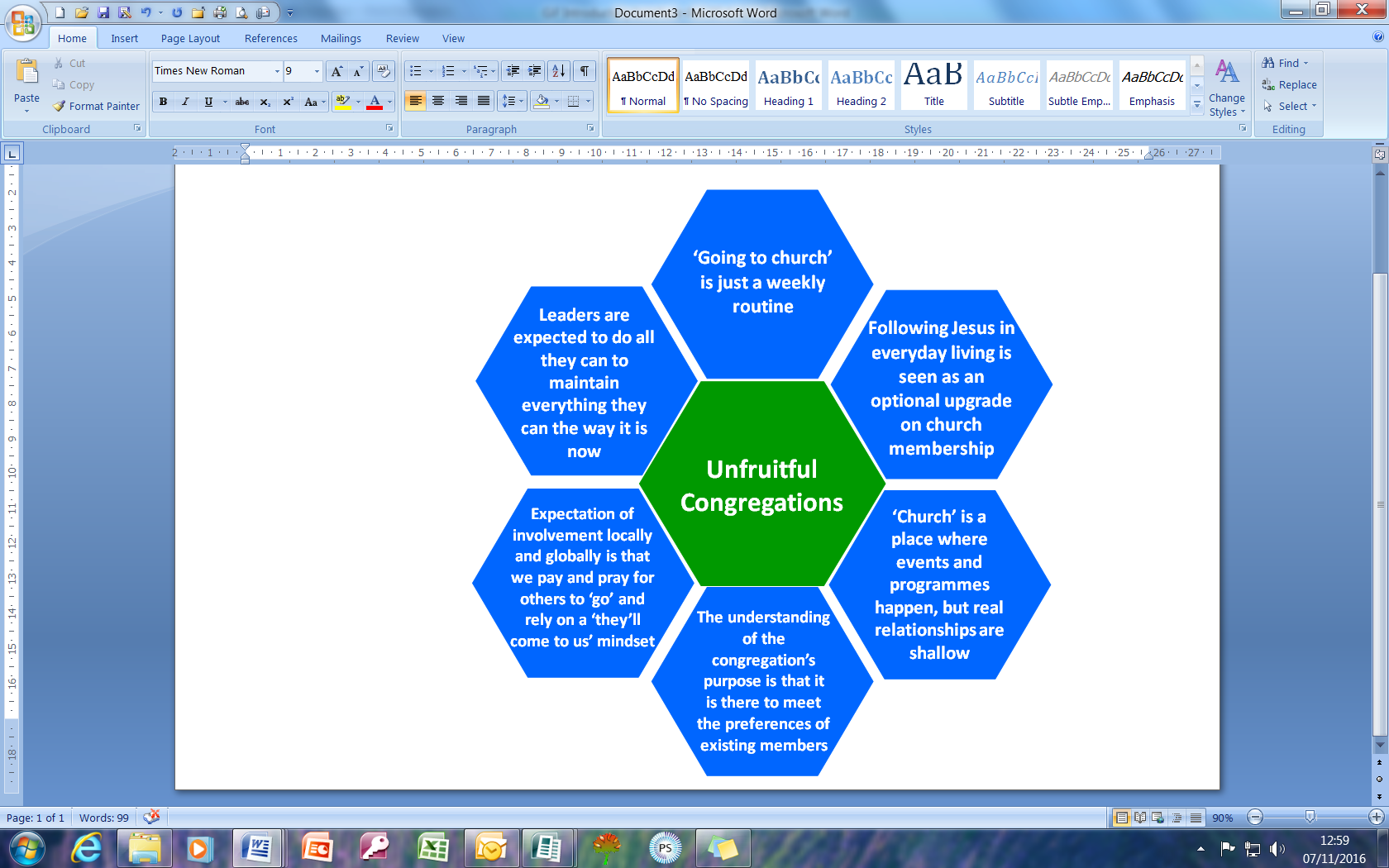
**Prayer** – Ask: Fruit is given from above v.7

**Purpose** – Him: It’s not about us v.8

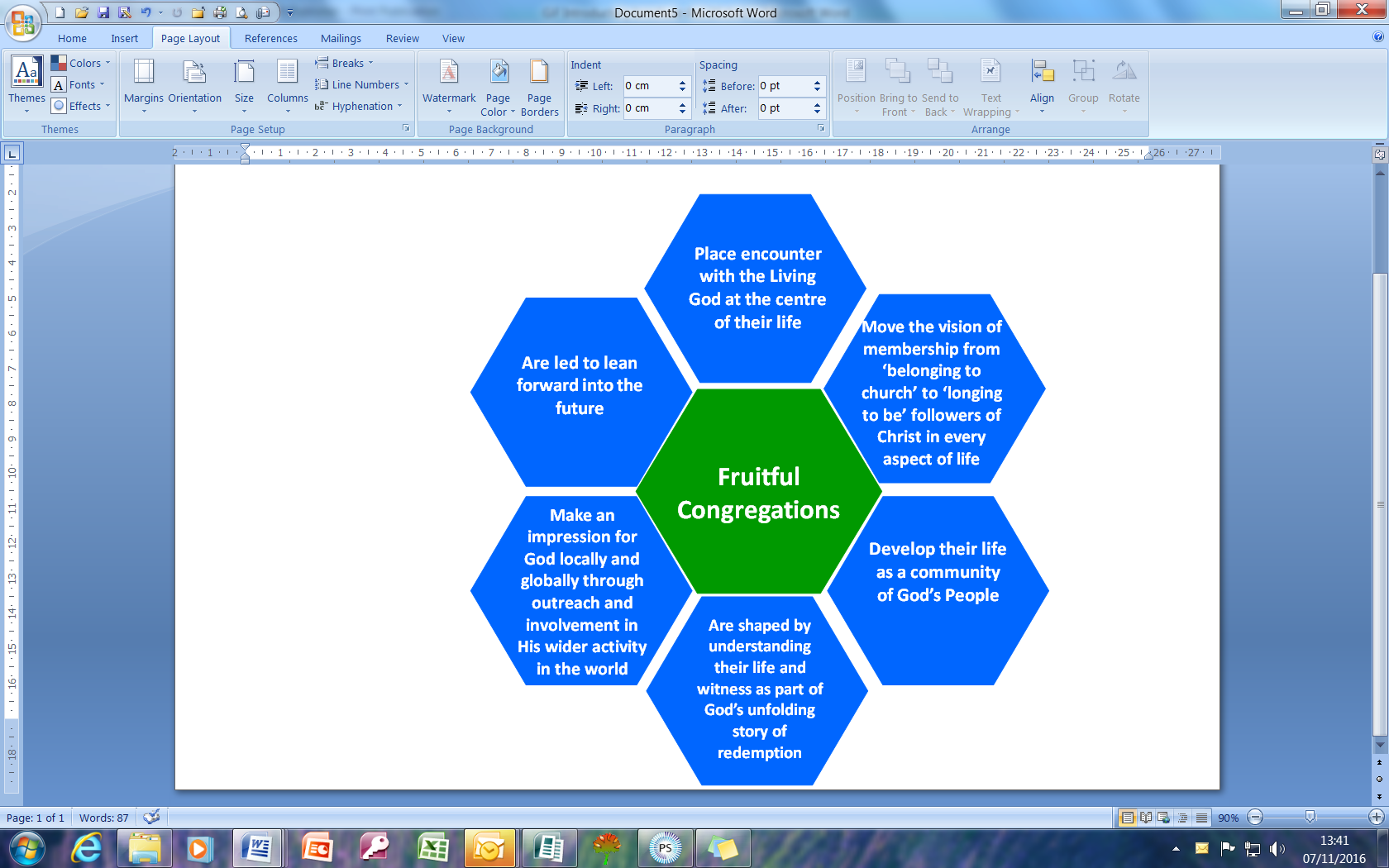
**Pathway** – Follow: It’s modelled by Jesus v.9-15

**Privilege** – Appointed: Right here, right now v.16

**Surveying the landscape of your congregational life and witness: Fruitful or unfruitful?**

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**AS A GROUP: Discuss the area of greatest unfruitfulness in your congregation’s life and witness**



**AS A GROUP: Discuss the area of greatest fruitfulness in your congregation’s life and witness**

**Growing the fruitfulness conversation in your congregation: Three key seasons**

**Season 1 SEEDING:**  Introduce God’s vision of fruitfulness to your members

**Season 2 RIPENING:**  Identify two areas in which you want to prioritise growth

**Season 3 HARVESTING:** Implement the development of habits and ways of doing things which, under God, work the ground and sow the seed for a local expression of fruitfulness

A conversation that is yours to grow: Know, plan, pace your own particular journey toward greater fruitfulness

**Resources for growing the fruitfulness conversation in your congregation**

**All resources available at** [**https://www.presbyterianireland.org/fruitfulcongregations**](https://www.presbyterianireland.org/fruitfulcongregations)

**Season 1 SEEDING*: Introduce*** God’s vision of fruitfulness to your members

– Web-based, flexible launch resource and material for 6 follow up sessions

**Season 2 RIPENING: *Identify*** two areas in which you want to prioritise growth

- A second evening gathering to take stock February/March 2017

- A discussion tool to choose two areas in which to work for use in Kirk Session, working groups or whole congregation settings

**Season 3 HARVESTING***:* ***Implement*** the development of habits and ways of doing things which, under God, work the ground and sow the seed for a local expression of fruitfulness

– Signposting resources, stories and ideas

**In every season WATERING*: Interceding*** in prayer

– Fruitful Congregations Prayer Journey [www.presbyterianireland.org/Prayer/Prayer-Journey](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/Prayer/Prayer-Journey) or copy from CLW office

**A closer look at resources for Season 1 - SEEDING: Introduce God’s vision of fruitfulness to your members**

**AS A GROUP: Discuss how best you could seed the vision of fruitfulness in your congregation?**

**A look ahead to seasons 2 and 3 - RIPENING and HARVESTING**

