

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



All welcome

Dear Friends,

How do we make someone feel welcome when they step into Church?

We have been pondering about our welcome at All Saints' and had hoped to hold a welcome course but some key research has found the simple answer. Help people to feel welcomed by talking to them! Apparently if a regular church member talks to the new person this is the best way to make them feel welcomed to church.

According to research from *Mission Under The Microscope*, 48% of church visitors said this was the most significant factor in making them feel welcomed. Not a chat with the Vicar. It's not even necessary to invite them to lunch (although that may well be great), just a conversation with a member of the church.

The impact of other approaches were:

- 28% said "the Vicar spoke to me".
- 19% said the "Vicar followed up".
- 9% said they were "invited to a meal".
-

So the best thing we can do to welcome new people who come to church, is to talk to them when they get there. But we need to be quick, as this needs to happen in the first 7 minutes of people arriving and then over a cup of coffee afterwards! Yes, we do have a great welcome team but they cannot notice everyone and it is really useful if you can spot the person or couple who are looking a bit by themselves at coffee time. Otherwise they will be the ones who will want to slip away quickly as

they feel that everyone else seems to have someone to talk to apart from themselves.

At the Family Service in February we will be developing this and learning more about each other as not only is it vital to get to know one another better but when we do meet new people we can then introduce them to other members of the congregation as well.

We may forget how it feels to be new when the Church feels like home, but we have all experienced that awkward feeling at a party or meeting when everyone else seems to know one another and is chatting and we feel rather left out as we don't know anyone!

As it says in 3 John 1:5-8:

Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you; they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God; for they began their journey for the sake of Christ, accepting no support from non-believers. Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth

And I love the idea in Hebrews 3:1, *Let mutual Love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*

So let's all work together to welcome and get to know one another more.

Love,
Jo

Welcome Facts

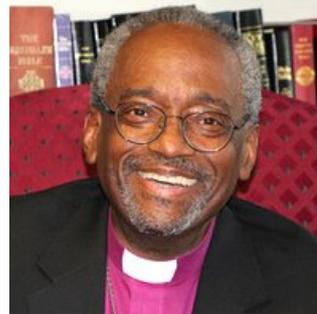
Here are some interesting ideas from the research on welcome:

1. Every church member is a **host** and not a **guest**. Making visitors feel welcome is primarily the responsibility of members, not the nebulous "church."
2. The most important person for a visitor to talk to in order to feel at home in a new church is **you**. It is not the vicar or curate, or the welcomer, but a regular attender. "One of the most impressive gestures we can extend to first time visitors is for people with no official position to take the initiative and welcome them."
3. Treat first time visitors as **guests of God**, not **strangers**.
4. Smile at **everyone** and offer your **hand**.
5. Look people **in the eye and smile**.
6. Take the **initiative**, don't wait for visitors to initiate conversation with you.
7. Learn people's **names** and remember them.
8. Ask **questions** and learn about **your guests**. It is better to express interest in them than it is to try to "sell" your church.
9. **Listening** is a very effective way to show love.
10. Greet children at **their level**.
11. Invite people to fill out the **New To All Saints' Card**
12. Tell people you're **glad** they are **here**.
13. **Pray** for them throughout your week.

14. **Be yourself!** You are loving! You have a good thing going! You have the capacity to love more people, and to love more deeply. "Practice making people feel special, and what you give to others will be returned to you."

An Affirming and Inclusive Church

After the Archbishops meeting last month, the presiding bishop, The Most Revd Michael Curry said:



"Our commitment to be an inclusive church is not based on a social theory or capitulation to the ways of the culture, but on our belief that the outstretched arms

of Jesus on the cross are a sign of the very love of God reaching out to us all.

While I understand that many disagree with us, our decision regarding marriage is based on the belief that the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians are true for the church today:

All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for all are one in Christ."

