

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Growing together.....

Dear Friends,

The PCC will be having an Away Day in October thinking and praying about how All Saints' can grow together further in faith and love, and reach out to others.

In the Gospels, Jesus invites us to follow his way and to make disciples. We are all called to invite others into the fellowship of those who follow Jesus Christ. From time to time it is helpful to pause and consider how well we are doing this, whether we can improve our witness, through our shared life and our compassion for everyone. The away day will really help us to reflect together.

As we are numerically quite a large church there is always a need to grow in our relationships with one another and we have been able to do this with our welcome team, the many outreach events that we hold in our church and hall and physically by enlarging the area at the back of church where we have room to meet and socialise. We are currently applying to remove the pews on the other side of the church so that we have a symmetrical look to the church and even more useful space for gathering and growing in mutual care and concern.

Growing Together in Faith.

Every service is a time for worshipping God and for building up our shared life. We hear the Scriptures and contemplate their meaning, we pray together and gather around the altar to show our shared reliance on God and our solidarity in faith. As we gather, and yet more so after the

worship, we meet and look out for opportunities to welcome and encourage others – or perhaps we may have needs which we hope they will show concern for and remember in prayer.

We have worked hard in the last few years on growing together in faith by our developing Messy Church, Bible Study and Fellowship groups – all designed to support and strengthen us in living God's way.

Growing Together in Relationships

God has gathered us to be part of a community so that others can feel something of God's love through our shared experience. We say every week at the Eucharist: *"We are the body of Christ; though we are many we are one body"* Romans 12:5. While it is possible to be a Christian alone – some people have no choice – we can't support others if we never or rarely meet them (and they can't assist us in our time of need), and the quality of relationships can speak volumes about faith. Of course, relationships need work and it is truly grieving sometimes to notice the thoughtless or unkind things that are said even in Christian circles not at all far from here. Christ is our Peace, and we are called to be channels of peace and love – and that is the most convincing witness to God's love. *"By this everyone will know you are my disciples – if you have love for one another"*.

Growing Together in numbers

The Good News of Jesus is nothing to be ashamed of, it really is good news. He gives us a purpose in life, he brings us hope for

the future, he is a rock to stay secure on in changing times, he reflects the fullness of God's love and invites us to live lovingly day by day. We reject false faith that causes pain, fear and death, and seek to offer a truth which is all about acceptance and freedom.

On the Away Day it will be good to think about how to offer a refreshing, relational and relevant church experience.

Refreshing; like an ice-cold drink on a hot summer's day or longed-for rain on parched ground our church can revive as we enter more fully into the experience of God's Love: and sharing our faith gently with others can renew our own commitment as well as bring them to wholeness.

Relational; so that we can be a place of loving warm friendship, where weekly (or more frequent) sharing our common life is more than polite conversation or empty gestures but based our fellowship in the love of Christ.

Relevant; we know that problems beset everyone – it's our human lot – but through care and prayer there can be real support and healing when the real issues are faced together. A community of faith where people's needs are noticed and cared about, and brought to God for His will to be done means that our shared faith is indeed relevant to the lives we live today.

All this means that we can be a life affirming community, which God calls us to be, where everyone feels they have a part to play and where we can make a difference through working for God's kingdom of love, peace and eternal life.

Love, Jo