

St Faith's News Update

April 2017

Our vision is to be a welcoming progressive Christian community of all ages and all stages of faith, nurturing spiritual growth, and representing God's living presence in our town.

Sunday Service Review

When we began our new Sunday service pattern back in November 2015, the PCC said it would review it after a year. November 2016 was just before Christmas, so we left the review until early 2017, and back in January this year we asked the St Faith's community to give the PCC some feedback on the new service pattern. The PCC met on 28th March, and reviewed our new service pattern, including the comments we received.

The PCC received 73 responses to the Review Questionnaire, and one further comment by letter. Thank you to everyone who responded! We asked respondents to tell us which service(s) they usually attended:

8am	Parish Eucharist	Sundays@11	Evening Prayer
6	56	23	8

The responses therefore came from a good cross-section of the church community. We then asked: Do you think our new service pattern has helped us become more the church we wish to be, as outlined in our vision statement? The overwhelming majority of people replied that yes, they thought this was the case:

Yes	No	Don't know/other
63 (86%)	6 (8%)	4 (5%)

We asked people what they thought is going well, and there was a widely held feeling that introducing Sundays@11 has been a good

thing, because it has diversified and expanded our worship, helped us become more of all all-age church, and has enlarged our church community. The PCC agreed with these comments, and unanimously decided to leave the basic pattern of our three Sunday morning services unchanged. We noted that we should rejoice at the growth in our church in the last year!

We also asked people what we might need to do differently, and if there was anything else they'd like to tell the PCC. There were a whole range of comments, often giving completely the opposite messages; for example:

- Some people would like more contemporary hymns at the Parish Eucharist, others want us to stick with traditional ones
- Some people want us to regularly use the screen at the Parish Eucharist, others don't want us to use it at all, or only occasionally (see more on this below).

The PCC decided that taken as a whole the comments suggested that a good balance is being struck across our services, and that we will continue to offer this range of worship each week.

Within the responses the PCC received, there were three concerns that were raised a number of times. These were:

- The effect of starting a new service is to (further) separate the church community
- We are not providing children's ministry at the Parish Eucharist, which has the effect of excluding families who want to bring children to a more traditional service, and is not helping us fulfil our vision statement
- There are issues around the timings of the services, with particular time pressure at the end of the Parish Eucharist and before Sundays@11, which impacts on what happens in the church between the two services.

The PCC discussed all three of these areas.

The effect of starting a new service is to (further) separate the church community

This is to an extent inevitable when any church has multiple services. However, in planning for 2017 we have made sure there are both worship and social opportunities for the whole church: two joint services (in June and September), and social events for everyone (see the St Faith's Diary for details). We hope that the St Faith's community use these opportunities to come together and get to know one another.

We are not providing children's ministry at the Parish Eucharist, which has the effect of excluding some families who want to bring children to a more traditional service, and is not helping us fulfil our vision statement

The PCC discussed this at length. When we decided to start Sundays@11, it was because we felt the need for a more contemporary service, and as we did not have the people to provide children's ministry at both the Parish Eucharist and Sundays@11, the PCC took the decision to focus our children's ministry at the latter service. Paul would like us to be able to provide children's ministry at the Parish Eucharist, because he thinks it would help us fulfil to a greater extent our vision statement. However, he and the PCC were also aware that there are other areas at the Parish Eucharist which need extra volunteers at present. These include being a server (carrying the candles or the cross), the sound and vision desk, and driving the minibuses.

The PCC would like to ask if there are people who would be willing to lead children's ministry at the Parish Eucharist. If you would be interested in doing so, please do let Paul know.

And if you would be willing to join the serving team, or the sound and vision team, or would be willing to drive one of the ICANGO minibuses to bring people to church, please do also let Paul know!

There are issues around the timings of the services, with particular time pressure at the end of the Parish Eucharist and before Sundays@11, which impacts on what happens in the church.

The PCC also discussed this at length. Some people who highlighted this issue suggested that one way of easing the time-pressure would be to move Sundays@11 to 11.15am. (No one suggested moving the Parish Eucharist to 9.15am!). However, it was felt that moving back the start time of Sundays@11 would mean it would end too late, and would eat into lunchtime. The PCC therefore decided to keep the service times as they are. We could also like to encourage everyone to try to make the transition between the two services as smooth as possible, and ask everyone to be generous with one another during this transition. If someone does something you find difficult, please assume that no offence was intended. If you have concerns, please do feel free to speak to Paul or one of the Churchwardens about them.

Use of the projection system at the Parish Eucharist

For the last 3 months, we have been using the new screen every other week at the Parish Eucharist, and we asked the congregation for feedback about this. The majority of the feedback we have received has been positive. Reasons given include:

- It saves people having to keep finding the page in a book or service sheet
- It allows people to look up and sing out, rather than down into a hymn book
- It is easier for visitors
- The person preaching can more easily be seen
- If we used it all the time, we would have to print far fewer copies of the service sheet
- It allows us to be flexible and to change things after the service sheets have been printed
- It allows us to show pictures for use in sermons

- It is easier for people with poor eyesight (in fact there is one member of the Parish Eucharist congregation who has been able to see the service words for the first time in 10 years because of the screen!)

The PCC has observed that over half the congregation at the Parish Eucharist use the screen when it is available.

The negative feedback about the screen has largely revolved around the look of the chancel - some people feel that the big screen, along with the two choir screens, clutters the chancel, and detracts from their worship.

The criteria for deciding how to use the screen at the Parish Eucharist will be based on our church vision statement, and the positive feedback we have received suggests that using the screen does help us become a more welcoming and inclusive church. However, the PCC recognised that it is still early days and has decided to continue to use the screen fortnightly until July, when the PCC will review the use of the screen again.

If you have any further feedback about this, please do give it to a PCC member.

Charitable Giving as St Faith's

Many years ago, St Faith's used to give a certain proportion of its income to mission and relief agencies both in this country and abroad. This is a common thing for churches to do; often the amount given away is set at 10% of a church's income.

St Faith's stopped giving in this way a number of years ago. However, the PCC has decided to reinstate this giving, because God calls us to give out of what we have received. Last year the amount we set aside to give was 2% of our unrestricted income; this year the figure is 3%, and we hope that it will continue to rise in the future.

The PCC has therefore been considering what causes St Faith's will be supporting in the next few years, both financially and in prayer. The PCC agreed the following principles:

1. A small amount of money (£200) will be set aside for a Vicar's Discretionary Fund, for use when he becomes aware, through his ministry, of a local or personal need
2. The number of charities to be supported in any year should be small (not more than four) in order that each would receive a significant sum.
3. Once selected, the charities to be supported should not be changed for at least 3 years in order to give time for the church to learn about the charity and its work and identify with its objectives. The aim is for our support for these charities to be known to all the church community, and for them to be visible in the life of the church through prayer, information in the Weekly Notes, special events, and information on notice boards.
4. Each charity would be the focus of our services on one Sunday in the year. These special Sundays would be planned ahead in the church calendar, with preachers/representatives invited, videos shown to the congregations and information on the charity included in the Weekly Notes. On those Sundays, there would be a special collection towards the work of the charity, and members of the church community would be encouraged to give, by Gift Aid if they can.
5. The collection at our carol service will also be towards a particular cause, most likely a humanitarian relief effort.

The PCC has considered what causes to support, and has decided that after the funds for the Vicar's Discretionary Fund have been removed, our giving funds will be split equally between:

1. Building a link with a church in West Africa

A suitable church would be identified through the Diocesan IDWAL (Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link) Scheme. Portsmouth Diocese is particularly connected with churches in Ghana. The link between the two churches would be developed over a number of years, with the possibility of church members making reciprocal visits. This link is not only about money, but about St Faith's establishing a two-way relationship with a church in a very different context. You can find out more about IDWAL here: <https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/social-justice/world-links/>.

2. Christian Aid

Christian Aid is a major UK-based charity, which works to combat poverty across the world. We will support Christian Aid through prayer and giving; a major promotion would be planned to take place around the time of Christian Aid Week in May, with the use of church notice boards, information in the Weekly Notes, a visiting speaker etc. (We will not be distributing Christian Aid envelopes around the neighbourhood; as we feel this model of fundraising has had its day). You can find out more about Christian Aid here: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

3. The Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank

The PCC decided to support a very local charity, one that makes a real difference to people's lives in our parish. The Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank – also known as the Food Bank – provides locally donated food for people in real need in Lee-on-the-Solent and beyond. We will support this charity through prayer, giving, and via the baskets in the church, where we can donate food and other items for the Basics Bank. See <http://www.friendsofthehomeless.org.uk> for more information. We will use our Harvest celebrations each year as the Sunday focusing on this charity.

4. Emergency relief following major disaster

25% of each year's funds will be held to give as emergency aid following a major disaster, e.g. war, earthquake, flood or famine. The trigger for giving such a gift will be an appeal by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), a group of UK aid charities who issue joint appeals when there is a real and urgent need somewhere in the world. You can find out more about the DEC here: <http://www.dec.org.uk/>.

You will hear more about these causes in the months ahead, but please do pray for them and the work they do even now.

And finally...

- We are getting new chairs for the Parish Centre! The current blue ones were purchased 17 or so years ago, and many need replacing.
- Don't forget the Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 3.30pm on Sunday 30th April – a chance to hear about the life of St Faith's in the past year, to ask questions, and to consider the future.
After the APCM there will be a Bring and Share Tea, followed at 6pm by Choral Evensong.

If you have any questions about anything discussed in this News Update, please feel free to get in touch with Paul, one of the Churchwardens, or any PCC member. Contact details for Paul and the Wardens are on the Weekly Notes.