

Let Us Talk - St. Mary's, Shrewton

1. What is the 'personality and character' of your local church?

Our church is friendly and welcoming. Most members of the congregation take on responsibility in the church or community.

At church it includes opening the church each day, bell-ringing, singing in the choir or playing the organ, maintenance of church fabric and church-yards, cleaning, sacristan duties, flower-arranging, sides-people, reading, intercession, lay chalice assistance and providing and serving refreshments.

Of great appeal to the village is the Remembrance Day Service and Parade; and our social functions such as suppers, quizzes, Christmas tree and Flower festivals. More regularly members of our congregation visit the sick at home and in hospital and help with the Till Valley Link which provides transport for those unable to drive.

In the community Church members are involved in many organisations and are well represented on the Parish Council. We are committed to working in partnership with Churches Together. Our annual calendar of events includes an annual Ecumenical Service in the Village Hall, a Village Supper and 'Women's World day of Prayer'.

2. What are the priorities of your local church?

Our main focus is to enable everyone to use their gifts in ministry.

Our first priority is to reach out to young children and their parents;

- *Providing an interesting Children's corner in church*
- *Involving ourselves in our Church Primary School as governors, helpers and with 'Open the Book'*
- *Helping at the Village Toddler group.*
- *Regularly running Messy Church in co-operation with our Methodist church*

Our second priority is to sustain and support the older generation;

- *a thriving branch of the Mothers' Union*
- *seasonal or monthly study groups.*
- *helping at the weekly Day Centre*
- *serving coffee and biscuits for those who enjoy Coffee and Chat at our Methodist Church.*

3. Is there one thing you would like to take on in the coming year?

We are hoping to recruit a new incumbent and are considering how we can better enable our new priest to exercise his/her priestly ministry. The four parishes on the Plain are planning to work together to reduce the number of meetings and provide administrative help. With his/her help we hope to extend lay ministry.

4. Are there ways we can work together to achieve more?

During the interregnum we have been well supported by visiting clergy, our Archdeacon and Rural Dean. The four congregations have also grown closer together especially at Churchwarden level. For many people outside the church the unfamiliar words of the liturgy are off-putting. Styles of worship need to be carefully constructed to meet the needs of people where they are. We need help in this area.

5. How can we best measure the quality and impact of church life?

If there is harmony between members of the congregation and everyone feels valued and empowered to develop their gifts and reach out to others then congregations will grow.