

LET US TALK – SOUTHBROOM ST JAMES PCC

AS requested the 'Let us Talk' invitation to taken to a recent PCC Meeting. This came on the back of a recent PCC Away Day when we discussed as a church the following questions:

1. What are we 'St James' known for within Devizes?
2. What is the prevailing culture of our church?
3. What are the areas of ministry that we are currently engaging in & where are we seeing the fruits of those ministries?
4. What are the 3 main 'needs' of the Parish of Southbroom.

These questions led to a wide ranging conversation with each person bringing something of their own unique story. What is clear for us in our context that like the Diocese we have no single 'personality' but are a church made up of multiple personalities. We may have a common story & shared experiences that helps to shape who we are and how we express our faith but we also recognise our unique distinctiveness.

We also recognise that in sharing our story we seek to share only those bits that are positive. Yet the tough stories, sad stories, negative stories also at times need to be shared. One of the beauties of scripture is that God doesn't leave the tough bits out of the bible – the tough bits, mistakes, tragedies, human errors are all recognised as part of our human experience that it is when we share and speak of them that we open the door to the possibilities of God's healing grace.

From our day we also recognised that we need to focus our resources, attention etc on discipleship. Ultimately the Great Commission is a command to make disciples and we felt that as a church what we provide in terms of 'services' 'activities etc' are good, they aren't always rooted in discipleship. Therefore we felt the need to spend time defining discipleship and exploring ways of creating a discipleship making / growing culture. As a result we are in the process of writing a new vision statement, which includes clarifying our values in order to create a language and culture that reflects who we are but also will provide a tool for evaluating and monitoring our progress.

Mission we believe is a natural fruit of discipleship, but rarely can you do sustainable mission without discipleship.

In summary, though this discussion doesn't quite mirror the questions asked in Let Us Talk it does have some common threads which resulted in us as a local church recognise:

1. We don't have one single personality, but are made up of multiple personalities shaped by our individual & shared stories and experiences.
2. Our priority as a local church is to clarify our understanding of discipleship in order to create a discipleship making growing culture that strengthens the body of Christ and bears fruit in mission – we felt that this should be a priority across the whole Diocese. If we are serious about the Kingdom and committed to growing in depth and in number then discipleship should be a non-negotiable and a distinctive factor of the Diocese of Salisbury
3. By having an agreed vision statement and values we put in place a tool to monitor and evaluate – though we recognise we need to think more creatively in terms of using positive methods of evaluating and not simply focussing on numbers and money. (If we get discipleship right, numbers and money won't be a problem!)

Revd Jonathan Triffitt