

Responses to 'Let us Talk' from St Mary's, Sturminster Newton.

What is the personality of your local church?

Friendly (mostly!), lively, middle-class, edging forward, traditional but open, reflecting qualities of discipleship as listed in Ephesians, not judgemental and readily accepting of people of all lifestyles, the parish motto is 'Making Christ's Love Known To All'.

What are the priorities of your local church?

To maintain what we hope are high standards of music, liturgy and preaching. To develop the excellent pastoral work still further. To deepen the faith and commitment of those who attend at key festivals. To listen attentively. To reach out to all who long to be loved. To continue good work with children and young people but to tackle the big gap with teenagers.

Is there one thing you would like to take on in the coming year (recognising that you may need to stop doing something else)?

Principal ideas were:

1. More effort in evangelism. Sturminster has grown by 40% in the past decade.
2. Meet people with no 'faith history' and help them explore what faith might mean for them.
- 3. Build on the idea of 'Sacred Space'. Develop the good work done in providing resources for prayer and quiet. And most excitingly, to establish a sensory and sculpture garden in the, now closed, churchyard.**

Are there ways in which we can work together to achieve more?

People who cannot or do not actually come to church can still be part of what we do, eg in contributing financially but also in prayer (housebound members). We can involve groups such as 'Equilibrium' for young unemployed in working in the churchyard project.

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

Look around us and keep asking people for their reactions. Feel the mood of worship and social events.

By the willingness of members to be involved at all levels of church life, including the menial tasks.

We are very much in sympathy with the maxim 'growth in numbers and in depth.'