

Let Us Talk

Response from

St Mary the Virgin, West Moors

(Wimborne Deanery)



What is the 'Personality and Character' of your local church?

We are a growing and friendly family of Christians who meet to share and enrich our faith that God calls all people to himself through Jesus Christ and empowers us through his Holy Spirit. Our worship is mainly based around The Eucharist (Holy Communion). At 10.00 am COSMIC's (Children of St Mary's in Church) generally leave us after the beginning to go into the adjoining Hall, and then rejoin us later on during the service. On the Fourth Sunday monthly we all worship together ('Our Family Service'). We are a family friendly church within the modern catholic tradition. .

We want to draw closer to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through worship, prayer, study and sharing our lives with each other and the community as Jesus taught us. This is both serious and fun.

We are a vibrant, active church with much to celebrate; a recently built new hall, a strong Mothers' Union, small but regular children's groups (incl a mid-week Mothers and Toddlers, COSMICs on Sunday morning, and occasional Messy Church – a new venture) and good links with three schools in the village, especially our neighbouring CofE Voluntary Controlled First School. We have monthly events which reach a wider community – Men's Breakfast, Tea @ 3 and a large number of organised events such as concerts. Many of our congregation are actively involved in local organisations – we value the 'seat at every table' idea – and we have a strong presence in the community at the Remembrance Service and Carols on the Petwyn. A strong group of LPAs help us to care for others. Several study groups are available – three Home Groups for bible study and prayer and a relatively new INSIGHTS programme offering a series of talks and visits exploring aspects of Christianity and other faiths (we have visited the local mosque, synagogue, had talks on Canon Law, Signing in Church, the Salvation Army's work with the homeless, the story of the Passion in Art etc). A 40page magazine, produced monthly, with a clear Christian message and teaching, also contains regular contributions from all local schools and organisations and is distributed free in the village.

What are the priorities of your local church?

At a recent Vision Day (in April), the following priorities emerged

- Our belief and faith that enables us to do other things
- Good teaching, study and prayer to strengthen our understanding and our faith
- Being a church family based on fellowship, love and care for each other
- Being a strong and welcoming community accepting people for who they are
- Working together to spread the good news
- Outreach into the community
- Making our message and activities relevant to all, including young families

We also explored the importance of recognising, not just **WHAT** we do, but **WHY** we do them.

Key ideas that emerged were: We are Jesus' representatives here and now / Something good that we want to share, the love of God / We want to be open to learn more, open to what God wants us to do / We want people to feel part of a family

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

Extend our work with Young Families

- revamp our monthly Family Service
- increase the frequency and scope of Messy Church

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

- Improving communications – we want to build on our existing use of a website, to introduce 'Facebook' etc
- Deanery level – sharing good practice / expertise / initiatives

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

The following points emerged from group discussions:

- When you talk to people do they know what is going on?
- People are inquisitive about coming into church
- People asking questions
- Do they know where our Church is?
- Listen to what people say
- Make links with the people
- Visibility of church in wider community – new notice board – new hall
- Feedback from magazine
- Press mentions/releases
- Feedback in general, and from funerals and weddings
- New people in church / attending groups

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