

## **The Parish of the Woodford Valley With Archers Gate.**

### **Let us talk.**

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

Our parish is made up of 9 small villages in a rural setting of the Woodford and a large and growing housing estate on the edge of Amesbury. Our worship is traditional and is centred around the 10 am Eucharist every Sunday which is Common Worship, but we also have BCP communion three Sundays per month and two services of evensong which are well attended. These take place in the churches in the Woodford Valley. The congregation is varied, with a mix of ages, but many are retired people.

Our family service is Messy Church which is held once a month in Archers Gate and has a regular congregation of between 40-60 people. We have two primary schools – one of which is a Church of England Primary Academy and runs as a Fresh Expression – holding regular worship, baptism and confirmation services. We hold occasional services at the County School – Amesbury Archer for special occasions such as Remembrance Day, Mothering Sunday and Harvest. We have a ministry team of two priests, two LLM's – our new incumbent will be licensed in July. We have four LPAs and two Lay worship leaders.

#### **What are the priorities of your local church?**

Our priorities are ... Worship and care in our community. We have focused our mission this year on outreach to youth and on the care of the elderly. Our children's work is centred around the schools, regular workshops and holiday clubs and has led to the development of Messy Church in Archers Gate. We want to see how to provide for the age group that are leaving our primary schools and growing too old for Messy Church. We have joined forces with Amesbury parish to do this and are in the early stages of developing a programme of activity evenings for young people staffed by our communities. We are also planning a family pilgrimage this summer. We have many elderly in the parish, mostly in the Woodford Valley who are housebound or lonely. We have also noticed a rise in those who suffer from various forms of dementia and there is a real need to care for the carers as well as finding ways of reaching those who are in their homes.

#### **Is there one thing you would like to take on in the coming year?**

We are awaiting a new incumbent who will be installed in July. At present we are concentration on a project with Amesbury on youth initiatives. This may develop.

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

It would help us to join forces with other parishes and work on a deanery level for projects where we will not have enough manpower or participants – e.g. – teenage activities or visits. We do not have a family or youth worker and this would be a real asset to our work, particularly with young families. We also need training – e.g. caring for the carers and in developing ways to care for the spiritual needs of with dementia within our churches.

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

Some of the success is seen in the fact that people keep coming and give time and effort to the church and church activities. Messy Church and our regular services are all well attended. We have active groups who serve with children's work and the Mother's Union, which has been involved with the local secondary school and the Virtual Babies project. Our church school is very active and brings many candidates forward for baptism and confirmation each year. The school ethos committee give regular feedback on worship and church life from the children. We have excellent links with our county school, with parishioners on the governing body and we lead Inset training there. Community links between the parish and the Police, local government and health professionals are developing.