

BENEFICE REVIEW OF WORSHIP



Responses

In October 2019 we asked anyone from the Four Parishes of the Avon Valley Churches for their thoughts about worship, as we grapple with planning for the future. All the responses have been included, not always verbatim if they were similar to others, excluding one or two which are noted, but which would identify particular people. We had 30 responses, either on the forms or by e-mail.

(The Response Forms and emails can be used to clarify some responses.)

In the coming weeks, the Staff Team, initially, will consider all the responses, and any feedback from this document, and make proposals to go to PCCs about the way ahead.

I - What one thing our worship most helps you to draw close to God?

- The Fellowship of the congregation and clergy. Unity in friendship. The love and companionship of like-minded people.
- Welcoming/friendly environment.
- Seeing and talking to other like-minded people.
- Worshipping with a loved one.
- Our congregation so inspiring, helpful.
- The fact that others have the same beliefs and are such good friends.
- Seeing and talking to other like-minded people also makes a difference.
- Being part of a worldwide community.
- Providing a friendly, welcoming environment in which to explore our faith and love of God.
- Prayer in a room with others also praying is the aspect of worship that helps me draw close to God.

- Quality and sincerity of our clergy. The way they reach out to us, including us in every part of the Service.

- Well-prepared sermons, helpful in explaining message.
- Sermons give me food for thought, and also hymns, especially traditional ones.
- Prayers, Communion, Music, including modern hymns.
- Music in the liturgy.
- A mix of things - a mosaic that makes a beautiful whole.
- It's the whole package - liturgy, readings and sermon/address. If the readings are the meat, the liturgy and sermon are the 2 Veg! They are all important and contribute to a balanced meal.
- Variety in the liturgy and music.
- Music, prayers, sermons - ✓✓
- Having a state of mind able to pray is enabled by the music, the sermons, and the readings.
- Rituals and routines.
- Simplicity of the 9.30 Service and easy to follow Services Sheets.

- Quiet, attentive space. Times of silence.
- Holy Communion and silent prayer.
- Communion.

- BCP - FB 8.00 makes me feel dynamic and wakeful. Also BM BCP provision. Actively seek out BCP. Like KJV.
- BCP - No unnecessary interruptions to flow of worship. Notices before the Service.
- Choice of style and content across Benefice.
- Taking part in reading, leading intercessions - such an honour.
- Choice. Uplifting.

2 - What one thing would you change in our current Services or monthly/weekly pattern of worship?

- Modern language LP for all services.
- Modern liturgy.
- More songs than hymns.
- Better mix of songs and hymns.
- Would love to sing the worship responses (did so at another church visited).
- More focus on growth and those outside current congregations.
- Indicate more clearly where BCP Services are across the Benefice.
- BCP Communion every Sunday at 8.30.
- A BCP Service in each Church every week.
- Consider whether another time (not Sundays) might work for some people.
- 5th Sundays - Have Benefice Service - doesn't have to be special, just normal Service for that Church. Rotate clergy/leaders so everyone has the chance of a Sunday off.
- Make sure times work for ministers as well as congregations. 10.00 is difficult - only keep if we have enough resources. Keep to 8.00, 9.30 and 11.00.
- Allow time for the clergy to stay behind at the end of a service to chat to parishioners.
- Happy with current Service pattern - ✓✓
- Fewer or no Taize services.
- Change sometimes hard to accept.
- Offer lifts to other Churches.
- Feedback from certain events in which we thank God (not people) for what he has done, how he has answered our prayers.
- Get the speaker system working properly - ✓✓ (More than one Church)
- Please keep Partners going with readings in advance.
- Less ceremonial – it is meaningless to younger generations.
- Concern that formal services are too big a jump for people with no church background (most people these days). Holy Communion comes across as strange and religious rituals may be suspect.
- BM - Nave altar, Communion at rail?
- FB - The opportunity for Healing Prayers and Services.
- FB - Possible service pattern - Allsorts, Service of the Word, simple Holy Communion, Holy Communion (as we celebrate it now).

- FB - Too many Sung Eucharists - perhaps young people find it too daunting. Or maybe not.
- FB - Choir practice end by 9.20/6.20.
- Allsorts - add more in-depth elements - Talk, Reading, more biblical - not just drama. Communion.
- GH – have tried to move services to fit with various holy days, feel this hasn't brought in any extra worshippers and is confusing to regular attendees.
- GH - More Services.
- H&WG - I would not change anything about the current services for Hale and Woodgreen.
- H&WG – Reliance on CDs – wish we could have a regular organist/pianist.
- Hyde - Bring-a-Pet Service. Also love Taize Service.
- Would like Evensong service at Hyde.
- Not a lot! Prefer to keep 8.30am BCP at Hyde but can go to FB if needed.

3 - What one thing would help us to grow our congregations, and especially help younger people to take part?

- Use of Digital Church and prayer apps.
- IT use, especially to connect older people to services - streaming, interactive, etc.
- Joyful, hopeful, optimistic, upbeat message, combating some of the more negative and divisive aspects of social media.
- Greater use of modern communications and technology.
- More adverts, maybe new IT means. Try advertising in other places, like the cinema in town, shops and cafes. Have leaflets for the next month's services.
- More reliable CDs (if used)
- Less formality in language used in prayers
- Modern liturgy, upbeat songs and music - fewer traditional hymns, more modern music – II
- Share the Gospel in a way relevant to the modern world.
- Very difficult to encourage young people. Changing Service times not the only answer.
- Not sure worship is the starting point - to be debated!
- No-one knows the answer to this. Difficult to achieve - III
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- Holding events (Flower Festival, music, etc.) to engage people initially.
- 'Bring your Grandchildren' Service.
- 'Men Cooking Breakfast' Service always popular.
- 'Back to Church' Sunday? Godchildren Sunday – we had one, and it was good.
- More Services/events like Sanctus - bring it to other Churches.
- We have to offer as many different services/experiences to bring in those people young and older who are unassociated with what we are all about.
- Have some short biblical plays with children dressing up.
- H&WH - More varied Services – Café-Style, Pet Service, Picnic Praise, Pop-Up Pub, etc.
- Make Church more visible as a first step - doesn't really matter how (within reason). Perhaps establish reputation as community's top charity fundraisers.
- Need to ask those who don't come to answer this.
- Encouraging young people to feel 'it is their Church', and supporting them in ways in which they would like to be involved.
- Complex question. Changing lifestyles and competing weekend activities.
- More use of GNB, to help younger and older people.

- Fellowship groups like Kate Wilson's for the bereaved, John and Pat Bloomfield's study groups
- Involving local schools to come to church on Sundays.
- Ask people to help then make sure we support and appreciate them (go over the top with thanks to really get through).
- Involve different people (e.g. younger, disabled, people of colour) in being sidespeople, readers etc. to people are more drawn to where there are others like them. A more diverse and inclusive congregation.
- All sorts of initiatives have been tried with little or no response. Maybe repeating some of these initiatives is the answer.
- GH - More engagement with the village, using the church more for community events.
- FB - Invest in a young musician to recruit from schools in the surrounding area to form a Junior Choir to work with existing choir.

4 - What other advice would you give our PCCs and the Ministry Team as we consider our future pattern of worship across the Benefice?

- Joint BM/GH/H&WG Services good.
- More joint services - ✓✓
- When there is a joint Service, don't let there be any other Services at that time.
- Foster (1) BM, H&WG opportunities for worship; (2) FB, Hyde, SH, GH, opportunities for worship.
- Benefice Worship once each month.
- Services across the Benefice should be timetabled to suit as many congregations as possible yet not making services appear on a conveyor belt.
- How to be fair to all Churches?
- Be realistic about resources.
- Streamline what is available, not repeating things which do not work as well in the different churches. Asking for the view of the congregations more frequently?
- No one should have to lead more than 2 Services a Sunday. Need to plan based on 3 fully-trained ministers.
- Inform the congregation of discussions at PCC Meetings - publish minutes. Keep communicating, and discuss matters with them before decisions are made.
- The Ministry Team do their best to please.
- Thank them for their efforts to meet our needs with reducing numbers if participants.
- Thank you for all that you do.
- Deepen faith, and grow more committed Christians. Bible Studies/Housegroups. One a month in each Church, instead of a Service. Wouldn't need clergy input. More likely to get people to come as it's the normal time.
- Growing teaching outside Services.
- Take a hard look at how to manage closure of some churches within the Benefice, or their operation by the laity.
- Difficult – people like to worship at their familiar place and there is a big risk they won't come at all if the service they want isn't available. We are in a time of major transition.
- Be respectful of the people and worshippers you already have. Change for its own sake is not necessarily a good thing.
- Don't just 'pander, to current congregational wants.

- Times and format of Services very important to people.
- All Baptisms in regular services, so no extra service needed.
- Keep Sanctus - ✓✓✓✓✓
- Sanctus to GH occasionally if toilet/kitchen there.
- Allsorts - Start including parents in readings and prayers. Develop pattern to include older children - ask them what they think (including our teenagers).
- GH - later service time - ✓✓✓
- GH - Festival Service pattern BCP Communion every Sunday at 8.30. good.
- GH – some feel that the PCC have almost washed their hands of our little chapel. We don't like this but can see why. We can't use the place for other purposes until it is drastically upgraded, but who wants to spend money on it until we know who will make use of it. Catch 22.
- GH - car park very helpful.
- GH - Sandy Balls links.
- H&WG – A Worship Group to sing/play has been suggested, but need more musicians.
- Hyde - Why not 'Dedicate a Cushion' for elderly people to use on hard, wooden pews?
- Hyde – Even as a regular I get confused about the standing of the Clergy in the AVC. We have a Rector who seems to have a heavy workload outside the Benefice... a Curate (in last year) ... and clergy in the same age range as much of the congregation – who might have retirement dreams. I am wondering where it all went wrong. At Hyde we had a Junior Church... a Youth Group... a Family Treasure Hunt which was well supported. We seemed to do a lot more laughing then.

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