



Congregational Meeting 29 June 2021 Comments and Feedback from Breakout Groups

The Congregational Meeting on 29 June included breakout groups to discuss three issues. Comments and feedback were given through Zoom chat or email afterwards and are recorded here. Some email feedback is edited for brevity.

Worship - “growing the congregation, especially with younger age groups”
We think coffee is important after the Service – congregations that have coffee tend to be larger
A chillout zone in the Cathedral – not at the back where you cannot see the children
People are missing meeting together after the Service. We talked about the option of having coffee before the service.
Passion for creating worship for young families and children.
Could we find creative ways worshipping together as a church family – maybe once a month?
How do we engage and reach out to young families with very young children? Could we have an earlier service on a Sunday?
Perhaps 10.30 am might be the best time for the main eucharistic service and an earlier service for young people on most days – but some Sundays join both combined with Matins later – e.g. every 6 weeks.
There is some worry over a 9.30 am due to St Mary’s at the same time, though the Cathedral is ‘more liberal’ and St Mary’s ‘low church’.
Young people might engage more in the Eucharist if they felt more included and had a participative role?
We’d like a 9.30 family service, no more than ½ hour. Then Eucharist at 10.30 no more than 1 hour, then coffee probably in PK, though better if the congregation should have its own space. Children should be welcome at any service, free to make noise or a mess without disapproval
Difficult in new people meeting with the congregation – ways of meeting new people? Somewhere other than PKs – gets crowded with members of public in too, and sound/hearing becomes problematic Possible to use outdoors in clement weather / Edmund room? Perhaps ministry of befrienders to spot and engage with newcomers? 11 am service quite late for coffee afterwards? 09.15 family service? Meeting for biscuits (good ones!) and drinks beforehand/during? 45 minutes perhaps
We should get the children to give us their experiences of God as adults do. Young people dealing with so much at the moment.
Can I ask what age group a 9.30 am Sunday Service would be aimed at? Most teenagers are not out of bed at this time at the weekend!
Sermons shorter and engaging
Go outside!
At the service when we bring the children in for a ‘show and tell’ we should ask the adults what they have been doing as a feedback of the sermon. This could be done so easily.

What about a 6 pm Family service for those who are busy daytime with activities and sports and busy lives

The desire to introduce a new more family friendly service is good, but when? Sunday morning is already crowded. Would it be possible to have traditional fully choral Eucharist on two Sundays a month alternating with a more participatory Eucharist, which uses congregational settings and perhaps sticks to a set format, so that everyone can become quickly familiar with it and get into their habit pattern. On these Sundays the address could have a teaching content.

A Family Service with the Gospel/ address was dramatised.

After service coffee is a must: a vital pastoral tool. Perhaps we should use the back of the nave, though getting it ready before the service makes things a bit noisier. Using the nave would also make a follow on Mattins more difficult. This service has a small following, but is vital training for in the choral repertoire for choristers

The current timing of the Sunday Eucharist allows for no social interaction afterwards, as any time after midday is really too late for coffee, and people have other things to do at that time, such as lunch or meeting family and friends. This is a very great loss: new people cannot be incorporated into the life of the congregation, and might even think that we are an unfriendly bunch. I know that there is a strong sense that an earlier and shorter service would suit young families better, but that risks losing the adherence of the established (if older) people. I know I miss after-service coffee very much, as that's the only time I get to see many of those who attend.

Whenever we have coffee, there is now the problem of where it can be prepared, served and cleared away. PK is doing so well serving to the public on Sundays, that it is obviously no longer available to us as a congregation. People have suggested the Garth (weather!) or the cloisters (freezing in winter), but both of these lack preparation and clearing facilities. A location in the Cathedral suffers from the same problems, in addition to being in the way of any service that might be taking place. The Deanery has been suggested, but I'm not sure that people will want to trudge over there in poor weather, though it would be otherwise a good place for coffee. Most people would think that the Edmund Room would be a sensible venue, but it has no water and sink (I'm pretty sure that the Education Centre don't want us in their office). Might it be at all possible to install a cupboard "kitchen"? This would be enormously useful for all kinds of events, and would mean that we wouldn't have to order trolleys from PK. It shouldn't be too much of a problem to route pipes from the Education Office in the next room, even if it means evicting the Art Society from their cupboard - perhaps some alternative provision could be made for them.

Given that so many people would prefer to revert to the 10.00; that we ought always to have a sung Eucharist and a Mattins; that a new service for younger people seems to be on the cards, would it not be possible to envisage a shorter 9.30 one Sunday a month with a Sung Eucharist at 11.00 instead of Mattins, and have 10.00 and Mattins on the other Sundays? Coffee could still happen in between whatever services are laid on. I know it will be said that people will forget what Sunday of the month it is and turn up at the wrong time, but we'll get used to it.

Has any thought been given to a later Sunday service, 20.00 or 21.00, say?

St Albans have a Parish Eucharist, less formal, more teaching, baptisms, etc, led by a Parish Choir, at 9.30, followed by coffee and Solemn Eucharist or Mattins at 11.15. Those attending the later service would often arrive early and have coffee before their service. They were doing this forty years ago and, as far as I am aware, are doing it still.

We need young people but the challenge is how to attract them into the Cathedral
A family service would be good and separate 'spiritual devotions' might be considered
A Sunday sung Eucharist and a sung Mattins are fundamental to Cathedral worship
The main morning service on Sunday should start earlier to allow time for 'coffee'
Morning 'coffee' could be served in the Nave, the Cloisters, the Edmund Room etc

We all agreed that we must encourage and welcome all ages and do what we can to adjust to support them. (Are we sure that making changes will have the desired results, have we carried out the relevant research to influence our decisions?)

On providing a short service for young families ... The choir supporting this service would be the younger 'colts' who could then stay on and hear the choristers rehearsing for the next service.

Timings for a Sunday could be 8 a.m Holy Communion 9 am Young Families service (lasting only half an hour) 10. 30 am Sung Eucharist (Finishing at 11.30 a.m.) Coffee after this service at the back of the Cathedral, encouraging the choristers to stay and hoping their families would join as well.

We agreed with other groups that leaving the service at 11 a.m. does not allow the congregation to join for socialising and support. It also makes it difficult for those who have lunch times set.

We need to encourage younger people into the Cathedral to 'take over' from the older generation who give their support now.

I'd be happy to try new systems and new music. There has been an improvement of late but the music was getting long and dreary.

How we join up with the 8 o'clock lot!

I belong to a housegroup and no one seems to be interested when we try to expand: it's one of the most interesting things – good friends, interesting conversations – this intimate worship and prayer is what the church should be about. Cathedral services seem to be superficial in comparison with that.

We are two distinct congregations and the thought of an additional service worries me as I'd be worried to see the 11am congregation split and I'd be concerned about another set of congregations that don't know each other.

If we do an additional service on a Sunday I'm not sure we necessarily have to make this a Eucharist. It doesn't have to be every week. I don't think that every service on a Sunday has to be Eucharistic.

Mission – “the Cathedral as a centre for learning”
Film night
Theatre on the Garth, Lectures, Lent series on Radical Faith, Dean’s Debate
What kind of world are we handing on to our young people? What do we need to put right so their futures are not blighted? Open forums like that.
Radical Faith – what does it look like in BSE?
Some sort of Q&A sessions/forums broadly about the very basis of faith in God, where people can ask questions but not necessarily given concrete answers but led in an exploration of spirituality, encouraging curiosity.
Something like Alpha?
How to square the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the Universe with Christianity e.g. there are books by C.S. Lewis of worlds that never had the Fall! What would be the effect on Society if the Church ceased to exist – e.g. the resurgence of the Church in Russia How does the church as a body with its DNA relate and change in relation to the idea of metamorphosis Would there be an outcry if we closed the churches in the villages~: do they still want to have burials and marriages? We loved the Cathedral lectures and we should have other lectures e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Green issues, Politics before elections, Current world topics. Zoom has brought in the North of the County.
Let’s get some serious debate about the worlds big issues and start getting big names into conversation with us. This would be missional, engaging, controversial and eye catching!
This is theology, enacted in education and outreach. The Lent and other Zoom lectures were a huge success. Zoom meant that it was possible for people from all over the diocese and beyond it to participate. It is also eco-friendly as participants don’t have to drive miles in the dark. The rise of individualism, the loss of a common mind about society makes mission difficult. In the past the purpose of the church was seen by a consensus of the hierarchy and squirearchy as a means to shape a compliant society. Society is now non-compliant. It is perhaps similar situation to the early church, when Jews had to welcome gentiles.
‘Christianity’ may not be the best starting point to attract new people into the Cathedral Musical events, art exhibitions and open discussions might be more effective The Anti-Racism initiative could be another way to reach out and draw people in Weekday Choral Evensong would be another event to which one might usefully invite a non-Christian friend by way of gentle introduction to the Cathedral
When we entered the breakout room after Michael’s introduction, we all felt overwhelmed by the depth of the ‘ask’. We were very unsure as to what age group we were looking at, as well as the intention of the question. When thinking about events we moved away from the very learned choices that some would make. This seemed to contradict the first part of the evening that was looking at encouraging younger people in so we went with suggestions that would involve all ages. 1. A light show that used words and lights in different parts of the cathedral to encourage questioning and thought. This would appeal to all ages. 2. To bring in other things that provide education, The world, the helter-skelter, space and moon walking. 3. A pageant that embraces our history and includes all ages and the town. 4. More musical activities such as Crimson Glory. 5. Embracing the work of the Church of England. Added to this we would like to see more children’s activities especially for holiday periods.

Divide between rich and poor
 Participation in democracy and decision making. People have lost all trust in decision makers – what does authentic democracy look like?
 What is the Church's role in society?
 Inviting people into this space so that they do the speaking and we do the listening. Means asking people who are not like us.
 Local press... articles from Dean Joe and +M and +M are helping to get the Church's position across

Sustainability - "promoting green practice and demonstrating a commitment to environmental action"

Eco survey is very good thanks

I think there are huge areas to join up for environmental sustainability: Wild East lead by Hugh Somerleyton in Suffolk and Tom Coke and Oliver Burbeck in Norfolk. FWAG – Farming and Wildlife Environmental Group – Suffolk has one of the most active groups. The Suffolk Trust is also very strong.

is its name – it is very active

I personally love A Rocha – having visited it in Portugal

Commendation for the survey.

Cathedral litter picking group, for Cathedral and Abbey grounds, possibly wider.

Kitchen Garden for PKs? Youth involvement – passing on knowledge from older to younger generation.

Cathedral Shop having more eco products

Cathedral consumables being produce by craftspeople/artisans of the community, for example reusing wax and creating new candles?

Survey needs comment boxes as cost of cars too expensive at present and not easy for travelling far distances.

Changing habits by not eating meat twice a week – benefits to health

But still supporting local farmers

This is a great way to appeal to younger people and to people outside.

An introduction and a little explanation would be good such as what are eco products.

Also some people may be daunted at the thought of taking part in an environmental (campaign)

Hurrah for solar panels! Not only will they help pay the bills. Perhaps we could spend some of the savings on making the church warmer! The younger generations may not be focussed on traditional Christianity, but they care about ecology. Would there be mileage in an adapted Alpha Course with a liberal Catholic and ecological focus?

Practical actions within the Cathedral would be a good starting point including ...

Underfloor heating, ground source heat pumps and double porches in the Nave

Solar panels on the roofs as suggested (Listed Building Consent permitting)

More use of Zoom and live-streamed services to reduce car usage

Other actions outside the Cathedral would also be important including ...

Extending the excellent eco-survey to the wider community

Cathedral led green initiatives to follow this and help change life styles

Link with other community-wide initiatives like Anti-Racism (see above)

The lack of communication with the congregation and those involved with the Cathedral means that we were unaware that the Hundleby Yard was being rejuvenated, we were unaware of the work of the committee.

We all feel that it is vital that we look after God's world as much as we can, and the introduction of the new light bulbs started us on our way.

The heating is another major issue but not until it can be carried out with the appropriate energy use which will cost lots of money.

Recycling is also an easy win if it is carried out effectively, not just bins placed but details of what can be recycled etc.

When the 'big clear out' happened did we look at the reuse of items by others before we just cast them away, (there is a web site that redistributes unwanted furniture and office items).

The survey looks very good as long as it is available in all forms for those who do not use computers.

We would also suggest that as soon as the vacancy is filled for the digital person, that the new web site reflects the work being undertaken at the Cathedral under the Eco banner.

There's no question. We have to move in this direction and the things that are being started are all very positive.

Where do the answers go?

Who coordinates it?

How will we use the info.

The Cathedral needs to take up and be seen to take up a responsible attitude. To people not involved in the Cathedral it must appear to be a gross extravagance and we need to help people understand that

Consider the ineffectual heating system.

Also a cleaning group as they have at St Mary's where they chat and enjoy themselves – cleaning together is better than praying together!