Listening exercise Saturday 13 November 2021

Group: consisted of 4 parishioners with 3 PPC members (plus PPC chair joining in). This is a summary of what was discussed. Not necessarily the view of the whole group.

**What do you think is the biggest problem facing the Church today?**

Dwindling numbers

Secularisation of society outside the church. The church finds it difficult to keep up with rapid pace of change. The world is smaller and the church struggles to keep up to date.

Covid 19 has had an impact – people attending church pre Covid are now drifting away.

Lack of ability to ask questions rather than being told what to think.

Handling of abuse scandals by the church, covered up/swept under the carpet/lack of honesty. This has caused reputational damage with some not wanting to be seen to be connected with the church

Faith:

* “faith is caught rather than taught”
* not talked about within a community
* embarrassing to talk about faith
* societal pressure putting down faith
* no instilling the faith in adults/children.

Lack of encouragement of young men by society/parish to become priests.

Lack of youth involvement in the church. No Sunday school scripture classes for primary school age children.

**How do you think that problem can be addressed?**

Reflect on our personal relationship with Jesus

* Individually
* House groups
* Parish

Abuse scandals should have:

* a root and branch investigation
* Transparency into the factors that allowed it to happen
* Change of wording by church leaders – language should be warmer/ more apologetic
* Safe guarding policies should be implemented.

Ecumenicalism

* working together inter-denominationally.
* Link our values back to religious faith

Religious teaching:

* Recognise that not one size fits all
* Variety of teaching methods/solutions.

Have a community based church

Permit priests to marry

**What would you like to see changed about the Church?**

Truth about everything:

* Abuse
* How decisions are made
* Why the traditional Latin Mass was stopped.

The church should not change at all.

Church should be a reflection of society.

Involve women in the church.

Laity should valued and involved more.

Church hierarchy should be properly accountable.

Encourage bible reading individually or as a group/parish.

Encourage dialogue where questions can be discussed//debated in an open environment

**Who is the Church?**

Not bricks and mortar. It’s Jesus dying on the cross

Priest/bishops – recognizing that they too are flawed people

*Prompting by facilitator – what is the church community?*

In the past it was a community – all supported the same football team

**Who is left on the margins?**

Women  
Young people  
Church has lost its stranglehold