

Vicar's Blog

October 2016

Singing from the same hymn sheet

In 2014 we held a Songs of Praise service as part of the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the Consecration of our current church building. It was much enjoyed as a joint initiative involving Holy Trinity, Kendal Road Baptist Church and Lonsdale Methodist Church. Today (as I write this piece) we held another Songs of Praise, bringing the three churches together once again. Over 170 people attended, mainly from our three local churches, but the congregation also included people from further afield, most notably a visitor from Canada who enjoyed the occasion so much she was planning to take the concept back to her own church. We were greatly blessed that Faye Hatcher from BBC Radio Gloucestershire was able to be with us as compère.

Hymns were accompanied either by our organist or members of the Kendal Road Worship group. The songs we sang were chosen for a variety of reasons including: 'it is so joyful and easy to sing', 'the words provided strength and hope at a time of bereavement', 'the words speak of the heart of our faith'. People lingered after the service to share conversation and tea and cake and there was a real buzz of togetherness and happy conversation.

Perhaps most importantly this was an event that transcended difference and created a feeling of togetherness rather than division. We came together as people of faith from different traditions and different churches, respecting our differences yet celebrating what we have in common. Through our singing we worshiped together in the name of Jesus Christ. This was not only a time for churches to come together: we were also community together. Through his teaching and ministry Jesus pointed us to inclusion rather than exclusion, to togetherness rather than isolation, to relationships that foster peace and yield shared fruitfulness.

It was truly a time of singing praise, not only for that time together but for the promise of a future where joining voices in harmony is a parable for communities and nations seeking shared fruitfulness through working together.

I pray that this was truly a time of building relationships that will grow in strength and fruitfulness.

'Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place, he comes to cleanse and heal to minister his grace'.

Gwyneth