

Vicar's Blog

October 2018

Building bridges

The photograph on the cover of this October magazine was taken at a barn dance that was held in our Church Hall in September. It was an evening of sharing food, laughter and conversation with Swedish visitors, members of a church choir from Leksand, who were spending a long weekend with us.

For over 10 years, we have been blessed by several opportunities for members of Holy Trinity to visit Leksand and for us to host our Swedish friends in Longlevens. Most of us speak very little, or no, Swedish which means our conversations are largely dependent on the fact that English is taught as a second language in Swedish schools.

The link we have with our Swedish friends is thriving as relationships continue to grow, building on the wonder of difference and the joys of experiences shared. We have been able to overcome barriers of language, culture and politics. Such relationships of mutual value and trust seem to be even more special at a time of religious and political tension in this country and in Sweden, as there is within and between many other nations.

Through our church link, we come together transcending the barrier of language: Swedish v English; transcending the barrier of church: Lutheran v Anglican. We come together learning through and enriched by our differences. We come together united in our faith, our belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus know all about barriers, difference and adversarial confrontation, which can lead to hurt and destruction. Jesus proclaimed peace and lived what he taught: respect for others, inclusion not exclusion. Jesus's life-enabling teaching and actions were encapsulated in his mission statement: 'I came that they may have life and live it to the full'. John 10.10.

Last Saturday evening, when Swedish visitors and Longlevens hosts responded to the instruction of the caller at the barn dance, hands and hearts were joined in common purpose and, for a while at least, we lived life to the full.

Gwyneth