

from LITURGY focus group meetings:

Two things that came out of both groups:

- important to keep remembering the underlying reasons for making a change to our service pattern –
- if there is a good reason for doing something, it will be important to work on it together and help people to get there.

*was good to meet with all the groups, and other interested parishioners on Saturday Oct 15 to hear how each group was going and see where our conversations and planning dovetail and impact on each other...*

The task of our focus group is attending to the shape and pattern of the LITURGY.

LITURGY is a word that refers to the 'work of the people' and is the term used for the way we agree to 'do stuff' together when we gather for worship. So our liturgy is the we choose and agree to use words, actions, music, silence, sounds and images together in our worship.

One definition offered for "Worship" was:

*...us being present to God individually and together, in the best way we can.*

The word "best" can be interpreted in many ways of course...

One musician for instance may think the "best" singing of a song is the most technically perfect.

Another musician might think that the "best" singing of a song is the one in which everyone is participating with enthusiasm, regardless of how it sounds technically.

Another group member said that what we are looking for is something that is *uplifting, that brings us closer to God together*. Again, what is "uplifting" can be quite subjective – one person may love liturgical dance and find it brings them closer to God's presence; another person may be embarrassed by liturgical dance and find it makes them wish they were somewhere else.

So, the task of this group is to consider how we will use words and action and sound and visuals as we put together our new services, and to plan something that has the intention of bringing the Body of Christ in our place together into the presence of God as well as we can.

Some things we will need to consider:

1. We are planning a Liturgy of the Eucharist. Eucharist means – ' THANKS '.

So what we do from start to finish is our response of thanks to God.

In our Anglican tradition in New Zealand the following elements of the Liturgy are outlined as necessary in the New Zealand Prayer Book:

GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PROCLAIM AND RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD (a reading of the Gospel is always included)

PRAY FOR THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH

EXCHANGE THE PEACE

PREPARE THE TABLE AND SET BREAD AND WINE ON IT

MAKE EUCHARIST (a priest prays a prayer of thanksgiving (Eucharistic Prayer) and consecration of the bread and wine)

BREAK THE BREAD

SHARE THE GIFTS OF GOD – BREAD AND WINE

GIVE THANKS FOR WHAT HAS BEEN SHARED

DEPART IN CHRIST'S NAME

The order of these things can be shifted around to some degree, and creativity can be used in the words and actions chosen to fulfil these elements of the liturgy of the Eucharist

eg. Confession and Absolution could be part of the GATHERING, or, part of RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD, or, part of PRAYER FOR THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH....

## 2. Use of language

We are seeking to be a community who show hospitality to all – to the last, the lost and the least (which in some degree is all of us!). We want to provide worship that is hospitable to those who have been part of church for a long time, **and** to those who are new through the door. We want our liturgy to reflect our care for all, so our language needs to be simple and straightforward, but not lack beauty and imagination. Our words need to be inclusive – inclusive of gender, inclusive of different life experience, inclusive of different world views and cultural background, inclusive of a variety of economic and educational backgrounds... quite a tall order and we won't get it right all the time, but we need to be intentional about trying!! Most of all our words also need to reflect the heart of the Gospel. Words that give a contrary message to the Gospel are counteractive!

Note: inclusiveness will also mean being inclusive of those who can't or don't sing - so it will be good to have an intention to include some spoken responses and congregational parts of the liturgy.

## 3. Things we want to keep doing

One of our tasks will be to consider which elements of what is already being done in our present 9am and 10.30 liturgies we want to keep as part of our new 10am liturgy –

...and to ask why we will keep these, and how we will go about doing that (in what way – exactly the same? changed up in some way?) eg. Will we still have Heralds? Will we stand in a circle and sing the Grace at the conclusion of the service? Will people with roles in the Sanctuary wear robes? Will there be a Gospel procession? Who will be eligible to offer the wine?

As we decide (or recommend to Peter and the parish, since Peter in his role as Vicar has final responsibility for Worship) what we think it would be good to keep, what to change, what to introduce, it will be important to be saying to people

“We are going to do this... and this is **why** we are going to do this...”

As we discussed this, we noted that when introducing anything new it will be important to give that new thing time (whether it is an action/way of doing something, a song, a set of words...) - a chance for people to learn how it goes, and practice it for a while, before deciding whether it works or not.

Of course it is going to be a time of experimentation, but some people need longer than others to feel familiar with something and to know whether it will work or not. Helping people to cultivate an openness to trying stuff will be important.... small videos could be posted on our website for people to practice things during the week, like new songs, or prayers in a language new to them.

- A suggestion was also made that we limit the number of songs we use, and introduce new ones once a quarter. We could have a music workshop afternoon once a quarter that anyone was welcome to attend to learn this new material.... This is an idea to pass on to the MUSIC grp

## 4. What happens to the things that some of us really value, that cannot be included in the new shape of liturgy?

Perhaps we can have occasional services that do incorporate some of the things which we are having to let go of at this point.

eg. High Mass on a Saturday night 3 times a year; Messy Church (interactive, informal activity-based gathering of the community of Christ with simple worship included) on a Saturday afternoon once a month; singing a Sung (eg. Mozart) Mass with augmented Choir once a year...

How do we remain faithful to our tradition as Anglicans, while seeking to be open to people who are new to the church...

Being Anglican means being open to doing something new

AND being faithful to the traditions that are important and part of our identity ...

– that's how the Anglican church began... wanting to challenge the ways that the church had become stuck, but not wanting to lose the traditions that still spoke deeply of what it meant to be THE CHURCH.

5. New elements that would be good to add to the liturgy that haven't been part of our pattern yet. Let's keep our ears and eyes open for anything that we could do that will enhance 'how we do what we do to enact our communal worship of God' – ie liturgy 😊 ...also lets take advantage of some of the good things that others have developed eg. Iona Community; Dorothy McRae McMahon

Other thoughts about the way we might do things:

- we want welcome openness, kindness to be expressed in our Liturgy and in relating to people before and after the services – which will include making the effort to stay in touch and engaged with people during the week.
- We'd like to develop the space for people to share and celebrate ways that they are encountering God during the week – and people's mission and ministry
- Some parts of the liturgy that have previously been led by a priest but are not required to be, could be led by other congregation members – eg. The Offertory Prayer
- It will be good to involve others (eg. Children and young people) in designing and writing parts of the liturgy, as time goes by
- Contemplative elements – moments to take in what is being said and done which are not just more words (could be silence, but doesn't have to be) need to be built in and encouraged
- Will be good to have worship leaders develop the ability to do "linking"... informal (but thought through) phrases that make the connections between various elements of the service
- How can we develop Prayer in the Chapel and make it more accessible and understood?