

Confirmation at Christ Church Burntwood



Trying a different approach.

Week 1

It was decided to be inclusive and put people at ease by having a café style approach to our confirmation course for this year and for it to be held as part of our 10.30am worship.



So week one had the church laid out with round tables and chairs and the tea trolley could be seen to one side on the north aisle. Leading this week was Marg Mattocks our own vicar and after setting out what confirmation was all about carried on with a story which made us reflect on **“Is there more to life”**. How two cousins viewed sounds and smells and sights having one lived in the city and the other the country. The moral was –What you see and hear depends on what you are looking for.

When we think about the idea of Church and faith we can assume that it's about something that is dull, boring and insignificant. We may well be asking questions like, how can a man born over 2,000 years ago mean anything to me now, And you know it's interesting when in our lives this question of, 'is there more to life' comes to the forefront. Usually it is when we are in despair things are going wrong and we have hit rock bottom, the loss of a relationship or a job or a dream. Maybe ill health forces us to face our own or our loved ones mortality. Or it's at times of great joy usually at the birth of a child when we want to offer them all that the best has to offer and somehow we look at them and think, surely there has to be more to life. More than speeding through it from birth to death, there has to be something that can take cells and form it into something so beautiful.

Bear Grylls wrote a letter to the world wide scout movement and in his letter he said this. “If I'm going to enter a difficult jungle or uncharted mountain range I always make sure I have a good guide” – life is the same. Go it alone by all means, but you make the journey so much harder. For me my simple faith has so often brought light to a dark path, joy to a cold mountain and strength to a failing body. So who better to have as a guide than the person who made the path or the mountain in the first place.

The Bible reading gave an image of something as small as a mustard seed and grows into something as big as a tree and then it offers rest and shade and refreshment to others. However it has to be planted. Faith is not a one moment thing, it's a journey - a life long journey of discovery and it starts with one seed, one step, one decision to maybe, perhaps allow God to show you just how much he wants to give you. Treasures that cannot be brought or stored away.

We may be wondering if faith in Jesus and ultimately God offers so much - why aren't there more Christians – why isn't everyone a Christian.

It's hard not to be in control – not to have the last word even on our own lives and so some seeds of faith do not grow.

And these were the questions to look at our tables.

Where do you think you need to let go? What stops you?

What would make you happy? How long would it last?

This is what we did as groups and as we discussed, Marg and Steve came round with Tea/Coffee and biscuits. Then we came back together as a whole to see how we tackled the questions and the responses that came. We left week 1 as a congregation thinking about our lives and even if we were already confirmed we do need to re-engage with our faith.

Week 2



Rev. Dr. Lindsey Hall was our speaker for week 2 and we were looking at “**Who is this Jesus?**”



Again in our café style layout groups got together to talk about the questions posed. What surprises you about Jesus?

A lot of discussion about such things as him losing it with the Pharisees, Spitting in the mouth, turning a few loaves and fish into food for 5000. Turning water into wine, raising people from the dead. So each table had stories they could tell of Jesus which surprised or

amazed them.

Then considering who we thought Jesus was? The groups came up with a number of thoughts from the son of God, loving, a leader, part of the trinity, redeemer, and the future and clearly a number of viewpoints. Leaving us to reflect with some thought of Jesus and who he was and how he affects us.

Week 3



Rev Philip Swan came with an array of items and an advertising banner of the community of St. Chad. He was looking at prayer and “**The Inward Journey**”. He spoke to us about reverence and pray and ways to help us to focus and have a world perspective. Examples brought included a shower curtain of the world a blow up atlas, newspapers (cut out pictures and words to make a collage or mood board), example of a Taize cross. We were invited to light a candle at the cross to remember a friend and place another candle on the sheet of the world for a country of a friend.

Also looking at the Prayer book of the community of St. Chad and the 5



rhythms of grace.



Then we were asked in our groups to think about questions we had about pray. Responses ranged from can we pray anywhere, do we have to pray only at church, can we pray in our mind. Also do you know if your prayer has been answered? Led discussion allowed a better understanding of some of those fears people had about pray and we felt it was ok to have a conversation with God in any format.

Week 4



Rev Ruth Brooker came to talk to us about “**The Outward Walk**”.



Ruth is part of the Transforming Communities team and gave reference to Discipleship.

As she talked she posed the following questions:

Where do you enjoy walking?

What sort of walking do you enjoy?

A brief discussion followed with responses such as wildlife/with family/on the beach (especially the Mediterranean). Then we had a slide which had various styles of shoes and footwear and Ruth describe what each could be associated with. Making the point that what we wear can decide our walk.

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. **Micah 6:6-8**

Looking at this Passage we related to our spiritual walk and asking what does God want?

Justice, love and walking with humility.



Then talking about our feelings and how we react to being treated justly, with kindness and compassion and the reverse. Explanation of how we react to situations with justice & love and walking with others.

Discussion then took place around the following questions:

What are the issues that need addressing?

Where could you:- Act justly?

Love mercy?

Walk humbly?

What would it look like to do these things?

Responses from the tables were about work/charity and the pace of life.
Then Ruth talked to us about the six projects Transforming Communities are involved with :
Gravetalk – talking about death/dying and funerals
Enabling church – Disability, Wholeness & Christian Theology
Develop an environmental initiative in your church – as we have done at Christ Church with planting of daffodils, a Poppy Field and improving the habitat of the churchyard.
For Richer, For Poorer – linking wealthier churches with the poorer churches and how to help each other.
Welfare Reform and becoming an Appeals Companion
A recap of the talk which was about ways to do justice with love and walk humbly.
Then the session was completed with the poem “Doing Justice” which was a reflection of Justice and Humility.

Week 5



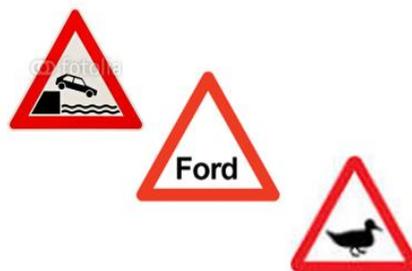
Revd David Ash, Parish Development Officer for the Shrewsbury area and an associate minister to a Wellington Church.

“The Road to Confirmation”



He posed various questions concerning Baptism and Confirmation. This was particularly relevant because of the Baptism of a young child called Harry earlier in the worship.
David asked what Baptism and Confirmation meant to us and what experiences occurred when we were involved. He also posed the difficult question of how Christian are those who have been Baptised and then do not become involved in church activities.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.
And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” **Mathew 3:16-17**



The roadside signs to help show the sort of difficulties on the route to being an active Christian.

What might an ideal Christian upbringing look like?



Are those Christened as babies but who don't really get in involved in Christian things really Christians?



What difference does Confirmation make?



Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." **Mathew 28:19-20**

After five weeks a lot of questions posed and discussed and clearly laying the foundations for being able to take the steps to being 'Confirmed' and continuing on the road of spiritual learning.

Also leaving us who have been 'Confirmed' reflecting upon our journey and those issues we still have to confront.