

# HeartStone:

the paired Parish of **Sacred Heart** and **St John Stone**



## Our Parish Vision Statement

*Jesus Christ is uniting our community of HeartStone in its Vision and Mission so that all might find a place of welcome, prayer and loving outreach when in need*

## **RECORD OF PARISH OPEN FORUM, 13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

Apologies: Anne Bradshaw, Mike Thornber, Debbie Gerrard,  
Kathi McCully

The meeting was chaired by John Sullivan, and opened with the Synod 2020 Prayer

SINCE THE LAST FORUM...Time demands with extra responsibilities (e.g. fewer priests on hospital ministry, Creation Time extended liturgies and activities, additional school ministries, line managing of our Pastoral Associate) meant Fr Tony had not enough time for a Parish Priest's Report as has been the custom, but he decided to put his concerns to the Forum for discussion.

### **SYNODING**

#### **1. Synod Members feedback**

HeartStone Synod Members held two open meetings on Theme #1 "All called and gifted by God": low turnout, but excellent discussion, with proposals generated.

Our Synod Members invited church team leaders Gina and Mike to join the discernment of which 5 proposals will be sent in to the co-ordinators: 6pm Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> Nov.

*Meetings for Theme #2 "Sharing the Mission of Jesus" Sunday 8 Dec, 10am in SH hall and 11.30 in SJS hall. Eleanor urges people to come to these meetings.*

#### **2.**

### **The Listening Phase/Theology Group**

Over 20,000 took part in the Listening exercise: with views condensed into a document called "Together On The Road". John Sullivan summarised this, broadly picking out major recurring priorities:

- Strong desire for a more inclusive church: empowering people to be affirming; appreciative of the situations, needs and gifts of others; to be outward looking
- Need for greater accountability of clergy and church leaders to the people of God
- Is there scope for more emphasis on ecumenism, learning from, praying with, co-operating with other Christians – to tackle issues raised in the Listening process?
- Are we fostering social responsibility? Are we fed, challenged, enlightened by our Christian faith? Are we helping people to live more Christianly in the world?
- Glaring need for ongoing faith formation for adults
- Need to reduce gap between faith & culture/between the sacred & daily life
- Are we nurturing, supporting and blessing the sources of belonging, meaning and life-giving relationships i.e. affirming these sources?
- Need to deepen our appreciation of the implications and responsibilities of our baptism and vocation.
- A need to promote a richer and more diversified theology of ministry (not necessarily all linked to celebrating the Eucharist; not all linked to ordination).

Fr Tony shared that many priests have echoed the need for a more diversified theology of ministry, and for the Church to revisit how it recruits and trains priests.

### 3. Appreciation/critique of our Church

JS invited those present to consider “at this moment in time, from your own personal perspective, what is it about the church that makes you glad.... And what makes you sad”

**Sad...** that the church sweeps things under the carpet.

When young people with families say marriage doesn't mean anything to them

The lack of children in church - that young people feel they can live without faith

That there are only 20 people here, instead of 120

Sad if Synod not followed through.

We did parish dementia training but it faded away... Archdiocese offered no practical suggestions!

About clericalism, which infects many of the laity as well as the clergy

That Christianity is dismissed as “a crutch”

That more people haven't experienced faith or God's love: we have a personal responsibility that we have failed people by not attracting them,

That Church Leaders lack the ability to adequately train priests.

About the big gap between what goes on in church and in church-goers lives.

**Glad...** we still have a church - we are listening to each other - there are still people with faith

That we have a Pope who focuses on social justice

To belong to this church and the ecumenism existing in Ainsdale

The church is looking outside itself to what is happening in the world - the Diocese is listening and asking for input from those who actually keeping the Diocese going

To feel she belongs, and to grow personally within the church

That Synod is taking place and we are involved - Will it bring change?

Of the Synod seriously listening to the faith experience of the people.

Of the energy and empowerment that we feel - to be taken seriously - glad

Synod is happening - glad people are being helped to be more real

That our community see faith as a strength and a comfort

That Jesus is with us in all our struggles, personally and in the church

Of Pope Francis, and his worldwide inspiration.

### 4. The Archdiocese renewal and HeartStone renewal: Fr Tony's Input

“Fresh Vision from God” and “Becoming the Church God is calling us to be” is the purpose of Synod 2020. Proposals for action for improvement will be voted on at the Synod Assembly on Saturday 17 Oct 2020. It is a good time for us to review HeartStone's Vision and Priorities alongside this Synoding process.

Our current Vision Statement and chosen Mission Priorities were worked out together from January 2015 to Pentecost that year, with the Parish meetings, personal listening conversations, Discernment Team, then the Parish Vision Team.

The 4 themes we are discussing now in Synod 2020 match very well to our outlook in HeartStone, as listed here. Our 5<sup>th</sup> Priority **Communications** is intrinsic to these:

Synod 2020 Theme #1 “ <b>All Called and Gifted by God</b> ”	This matches our commitments to <b>Collaborative Ministry</b> which includes Lifelong Learning the Faith, Shared Leadership, Parish Open Forum, etc.
Synod 2020 Theme #2 “ <b>Sharing the Mission of Jesus</b> ” (from Nov 17 <sup>th</sup> onwards)	This matches our <b>Loving Outreach</b> which includes both our efforts to spread the faith to others and to serve people in need through Justice and Charity
Synod 2020 Theme #3 “ <b>How We Pray Together</b> ” (From Jan 19 <sup>th</sup> 2020 onwards)	This matches our commitment to <b>Spirituality</b> and to be a “ <b>place of prayer</b> ”, to grow in holiness and justice
Synod 2020 Theme #4 “ <b>Building Community, Nurturing Belonging</b> ” (From Feb 16 <sup>th</sup> 2020 onwards)	This matches our priority of <b>Welcoming</b> with our services to inclusivity, ecumenism, social life and the two churches partnering.

Future discussions on the Themes serve our HeartStone reviewing of our Vision Statement naturally. They can be served at the Parish Open Forums in June 2020, and then November 2020 after the Archdiocesan Synod itself.

This is all leading us to Pentecost 2021, when Fr Tony expects we will be relaunching a revised Vision Statement and implementing our own Synodal priorities in harmony with the Archdiocese and Southport Pastoral Area.

## DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE PARISH

Fr Tony thanks the church teams for the redecoration of Sacred Heart, and for the refurbishment of St John Stone's Club.

He was enormously impressed by Place2Be's achievements and wants everyone else to hear:

- **Place2Be and future dreaming (what would you like to see)**

The Place2Be has a Community Market offering very low cost food (20p-£1), which fosters self-worth as it isn't "charity". Place2Be collects food from Co-op/Tesco/Lidl - still fit for purpose but on sell-by date. It attracts people who may not go to church. It promotes community and belonging. 15 volunteers run this, serving hot soup, bread & cheese. The prayer tree is there for people to add prayer requests. Church is open; some go in, including youngsters who asked about "The God Prayer" (Our Father).

Place2Be are putting on a panto again this year on 21 Dec. As the cost has been covered by donations from Southport and beyond, the children won't be charged. 200+ tickets given out via local schools and places are full.

Now talking about extending the opportunity. Perhaps having something during Summer for Woodvale. We will talk to WACA to find out how we can work together.

On 5<sup>th</sup> Dec there's an Improve Woodvale meeting, 7pm in SJS Games Room. Place2Be will give input. Please attend.

- **"Family Groups": beginning the conversation only**

EL & Fr T met Sue Falkner from the Archdiocese to talk about groups for all ages and circumstances, to get to know other parishioners better. Not to take the place of the amazing groups we already have: but to deepen the friendships among people. *LACE'S DVD was viewed at the forum.*

Is this something the Parish would like to do? Would it help us link better with schools, baptism families, community? Would it help us follow through with Synod themes? Perhaps this should be Community Family Groups, rather than *parish* Family Groups (the name doesn't really help).

Can people think about the hows, about the possibilities? This is something for discussion and consideration. It will also be discussed in other leadership groups.

- **Pastoral Associate's Report**

Suggestion Box item: concern was expressed that EL should not be doing things that are already happening, but doing new things. EL's priorities are pretty clear from Fr Tony her line manager. She is part of the ministry team so doing some things with others and what she does is a combination of new and existing, e.g. working with RCIA, Come & See, LCR, CTiA, Advent lunch bible study (similar to Lent bible study), Synod open meetings, working with CtK's Chaplain and runs a lunchtime "Be Kind" club, and celebrated World Kindness Day. Also working at Impact Xtra, Southport School Workers trust, working towards a "Higher" tour in 2020 with rock n roll, witnessing and a concert. Links with Animate Lourdes Coach 7. Is now a Eucharistic minister. Is studying liturgy through Hope Uni with the other Pastoral associates. Working on Cert of Pastoral Leadership through Chicago Uni. Has support from Ellie McEwan. Working for RCIA core team.

Feedback: how does she fit everything in? She is very friendly and approachable. We would miss her if she wasn't here.

## FEEDBACK FROM LAST FORUM

- Finance Committee: Nothing yet done, but it will be developed

- Youth and High School

People asked for a **music group** from CtK to visit Southport parishes: Fr T has yet to discuss this with the Music Department. There were concerns about **sex education** in schools, especially with gender equality issues: the Deputy Head said they are dealing with the new policy in a softly, softly respectful approach. Fr T is attending Governors training which includes a workshop on the new sex education policy.

Fr T's continued concern is to find a way to **support parents in the faith education** of their children. He hopes that the new Confirmations in January 2020 with year 8 will turn out to be a "way in" to doing this.

Erin Wheeler, the new Head Teacher will come to Masses on the feast of Christ the King to introduce herself.

He is delighted with the work Eleanor is doing with CtK chaplaincy, and she and Anne Pickup are doing ecumenically with the Higher Music Tour in March 2020.

### Mass Intentions

Suggestion box item: "Should we pay for mass intentions". We could not make this a formal item because the proposer was not present, but Fr T felt it was good chance to say: you do not "pay for a mass", it isn't "your" mass, it is when we include your intention explicitly in the prayer of the mass. It is tradition to give a donation but only if you wish. He allows Augustinian tradition that more than one intention can be included.

### Information Sharing

**The God Who Speaks** begins this Advent; to engage Catholics more actively with scripture. Devised by the Bishops of England & Wales and the Bible Society. We will get copies of The God Who Speaks brochure Every week when you come to Sunday Mass you can get a copy of the **Wednesday Word**, written for parishes and easy to follow. There is a link on our parish website (and on Southport parish websites). A very accessible **Sharing Scripture group** meets on Wednesday evening, it looks at next Sunday's readings, and doesn't need scriptural knowledge, 7.30 in SJS Red Room. We will also get the Bible Society quiz from the Methodists

### Looking ahead

What have we been doing to prepare for Christmas

- Blue Christmas: a Christmas service at the Village Church will recognise that not everyone is happy, that they may be struggling with loss, addictions, grief, money-worries, depression, loneliness. It is an ecumenical service, with candles representing Christ as the light of the world. 21<sup>st</sup> Dec at 4pm
- Carols in Ainsdale is also on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm starting at MeCycle and then down Station Road into all the bars and restaurants. Come dressed as character in the Nativity story or angel!
- Robins & Roses: an afternoon of relaxation with music, slides, legends, refreshments. All welcome including children. 2pm in SH hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> December
- CTiA have decided not to have Christmas Cards. Each church will have an illuminated star and a banner displayed to join in the church services
- After Christmas everyone will receive an invitation to follow the star beyond the stable, and to come to the Methodist Church on four Tuesdays after Christmas to learn more about faith.
- The Methodist Church tree festival on Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Nov/Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Dec will include a tree decorated by HeartStone
- Churches Together now have a Facebook page and website [www.ctia.org.uk](http://www.ctia.org.uk)
- Christ the King's collaboration with Queenscourt Hospice "Lights for Love" is 30<sup>th</sup> Nov at 4pm in Christ the King School

**What do you think** about inviting baptismal parents to something at Christmas? Should Fr T invite them to come on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December, 3pm? Who would help – Anne Pickup, Gina, perhaps Bernie, Anne O'Callaghan, Valerie Stroud?

Thank you for the useful discussion....it was a yes – we think!

In the Synod talks put on by Hope University the next one is about Faith in the Family, on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 7.30-8.45pm

**Question Time** will happen again on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January, beginning at 7pm in Sacred Heart hall

**The meeting closed in Prayer at 9pm**

### Synod 2020 prayer:



Father, we thank you for the love you have shown us  
in the gift of Jesus, your Son.  
We thank you for the gift of the Church,  
through which you show us that you are always with us  
and always at work in our lives.

As we journey together to Synod 2020  
help us to become the Church that you are calling us to be.  
May your Holy Spirit be powerfully at work among us.  
Strengthen each of us and guide Francis, our Pope  
and Malcolm, our Archbishop.

Help us to respond to the challenges of our times in new ways  
to bring your love to all our sisters and brothers.  
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ Our Lord.  
Amen

*Saint John Henry Newman, pray for us.*

