

Benefice Aim:

“by the end of 2026,
to register net numerical growth”

Why

Jesus says: “Go and make disciples
of all nations, baptising them in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit” Matthew 28 v19

Method:

Commit your life to the Lord, and he will act on your behalf
Psalm 37v5

Expressing our commitment to Jesus through lives led that convey His:

Faith Hope Friendship Love

This Lent:

Unpacking what our life together means

Week	What this means for us
Week 1	Faith
Week 2	Hope
Week 3	Friendship
Week 4	Love

Faith, Hope, Friendship & Love - *what do we mean ?*

Faith is about:

Trust in God

- Begins with a decision not trust in God.
- Trust that things will be OK, because God has prepared the way beforehand

Relationship

- Faith is about a personal relationship we have with God.
- Faith also about us encouraging others to have a personal relationship with God.

Reliable: Not pie in the sky, but proven

- Faith is a trust in what we do not see -made on the basis of the experience of countless others.

This commits us to taken on Christ Jesus in our every day life:

- Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

St Theresa of Avila

Hope is about:

Based on what God has done

- Hope is not in random events and nor is hope half hearted
- Based on the absolute conviction of what God has done already

Listening to God, in hope.

- We listen as individuals and respond to God as a community
- Our hope, based on the knowledge that God acts on his terms.

Expectation that God acts

- Expectation that God will answer prayer.
- About living a life that witnesses to the fact that I have been transformed by Christ.

Rejoicing in Hope that does not disappoint

- Conviction that Christ will return, as he promised us he would.
- On Christ's return, all things reformed as God created them.
- This hope means that our sufferings are short lived, and this fosters perseverance of character
- This hope does not disappoint us, and enables us to withstand all things.

Friendship is about:

God made friends with us.

- God made friends with humanity when God became one of us in Jesus
- Jesus calls us friends, not slaves or servants.
- Jesus loves us so much he wants us to be with him in the presence of His Father.
- Since Jesus befriended us, we are called to befriend others in Jesus name.

Cross shaped friendship.

- Jesus tells us to take up our cross and follow him.
- We are called to follow Jesus, imitating him so that others seeing us believe in him.
- When there is mutual trust present, friendship characterised by a mutual willingness to go the extra mile for another.
- After the example of Jesus, friendship means seeking out those on the margins going the extra mile for the unlovable.

The sign of a healthy church.

- Those who live alongside us in the community should know that we are Christians on account of the love we have for one another, and for those in need of that love.

Love is about:

A word or emotion used imprecisely.

- Love can mean many things, and we can love many things.
- Love can be used as much in relation to a smartphone or a person.
- When God's love is occasionally spoken of, it is based on the conviction that God is a harmless, elderly doting grandfather figure, who sits in heaven.

Can be used to exert power (Safeguarding concern)

- I'll love you, but only if you will do...
- I'll believe in God, if God ends etc...

The love of Christ strongly contrasts these.

- 1 Corinthians 13 - the hymn of love- describes not an emotion, but the person Jesus the Son of God.
- In Jesus' life, we see how God loves. We learn from the Gospels, that God's love is cross shaped
- If we are followers of Jesus, our 'loving' should be cross shaped

Our practice of love: self sacrificial, cross shaped

- Not about 'grey love', but about putting others first and being clear why.
- We live sacrificial lives, so that Christ gets the glory not us.
- Not about us, but about Jesus (Ref John the Baptist)
- We love with God's love, not our own human love
- How much can we let Jesus into our hearts.

Channels through which God can love all people

- Hardest part, remembering that we are loving in God's name -not our name.
- Love our enemies, because if we don't - then God's love cannot be shared.
- Our capacity to love is not the issue - the challenge is our capacity to allow God to love through us.
- Love therefore keeps no record of wrong.